

COVID 19: Contingency planning for partial or total school closure

Updated: 17/09/20

Information for parents

The Department for Education released updated guidance about contingency plans for schools on 28 August 2020.

Under most circumstances the Departments for Education and for Health and Social Care envisage schools remaining fully open, including during local lockdowns. In the event that additional restrictions are required, a phased or tiered system has been put into place (see below). It is the Secretary of State for Education, and not individual schools, who will make the decision about when a given tier should be applied.

In the event that schools are not able to remain open to all children, schools are required to ensure that they have plans in place to support remote learning. This includes the daily provision of Free School Meals to eligible students who are not in school.

If, at a point in the future, the instruction is given for Gateshead schools to partially close, more detailed information will be published to students and parents. Clearly we hope this will not happen, but it is sensible to have a contingency plan in place. As part of this planning we are ensuring that all students are familiar with our remote learning systems, including new students in Year 7.

Tiered phasing of restrictions to school opening:

Tier 1- Schools remain fully open

- This is where there are particular national and/or local restrictions to certain sectors.
- Schools will remain fully open, and face coverings are worn by staff and students when moving around communal areas where social distancing cannot be easily maintained.

Tier 2 - Reduced pupil numbers (rota system)

- If national and/or local restrictions are put in place that are significant, the school will move to a rota system where students will be in school for two weeks then supported through remote learning for two weeks at a time.

- Key worker / vulnerable children will be in at all times in bubbles however they will join their year groups when they would normally be in school.
- Fortnight A will involve:
 - Years 7, 11 and 12 coming in for a period of two weeks
 - Years 8, 9,10 and 13 completing remote learning for a period of two weeks
- Fortnight B will involve:
 - Years 8,9,10 and 13 coming in for a period of two weeks
 - Years 7, 11 and 12 completing remote learning for a period of two weeks
- The rationale for a rota system is that it serves to break transmission chains, by allowing enough time at home for symptoms to present and pupils to self-isolate and avoid spreading the virus to others at the school. This is an important way to reduce the risk to pupils and their families.

Tier 3 - More significant reduction in pupil numbers

- If national and/or local restrictions are put in place that results in a rota system being deemed inappropriate we must limit on-site attendance to just vulnerable children and young people, the children of critical workers and selected year groups.
- Decisions regarding which year groups are selected will be based upon available information at the time.

Tier 4 - Schools open only for vulnerable children & children of key workers

- If national and/or local restrictions result in tier 3 measures becoming inappropriate the school will limit attendance to vulnerable students (AEN, FSM and those deemed vulnerable by the school) and the children of key workers.

For further information you can view the DfE guidance [here](#).