

Covid Addendum to H&S Policy March 2021

This document covers the sections of the All Children's Integrated Primary School Health and Safety Policy which are affected by the Coronavirus Guidance for Schools and Educational Settings (issued:5th March 2021)

This guidance provides an overarching framework for schools and education settings in Northern Ireland, with the aim of ensuring broad consistency and equity across local areas. It should be read in conjunction with the Department's [Guidance to Support Safe Working in Educational Settings](#) published on 23 June 2020 and wider COVID-19 related [guidance](#) issued by the Public Health Agency.

This is subject to constant change and should be read with that information held in mind. The school will add to this guidance as it is made available to the Principal by the Department of Education.

18/03/202

The regulations and safety measures brought in to control the spread of Covid 19 in schools and to allow pupils and staff to be in school to educate pupils on site or remotely have permeated almost all aspects of school life.

Therefore the Guidance of 5th March 2021 is relevant to all members of the school community,

Governors

Principal

Vice-Principal

Teaching Staff

Non-teaching Staff

Building Supervisor

Catering Staff

Pupils

Visitors

Volunteers

Parents and Carers

It is incumbent on all the above to be made aware of and adhere to the Guidance in order to allow education to continue in a safe and effective way whether the pupils are learning remotely or face to face depending on regulations at any given time.

Below are the key elements of the current H&S Policy affected and the necessary steps all above mentioned groups must adhere to as is reasonable and achievable within our school setting.

Sections of the H&S Policy and affected and cross-referenced sections with H&S Policy and Coronavirus Guidance for Schools and Educational Settings (issued:5th March 2021) **hereafter called CG5/21**

Accident Reporting page 9

Although not an accident as we would previously have categorised it a suspected case of Covid 19 requires detailed handling and reporting protocols see **CG5/21 Section 8 - People Who Become Symptomatic Onsite and Operation of the Test and Trace system**

Contractors page 10

All contractors (and visitors of any type) must adhere to the **CG5/21 Social Distancing for Contractors and Deliveries page 21**

COSHH (COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health.)

PPE is a part of this section but not similar to advice for the purposes of Covid 19 reduction of risk/infection control/staff safety/use of face masks etc. in CG5/21 it will be referenced in next section

Dealing with health and safety emergencies page 11 (dealing with infectious diseases and Emergency School Closures

Prior to the current health emergency a board policy existed for the management of infectious diseases and emergency school closures.

This addendum relates specifically to Covid 19 outbreaks whether suspected or confirmed. School closures and openings will be in line with PHA and Dept of Education regulations.

School must adhere to Public Health Agency guidance See also CG5/21 section

[Section 8 People who become Symptomatic on site and operation of Test and Trace System](#)

and

[Use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) / Face Coverings](#)

Fire and Evacuation Procedures page 15

Fire Precautions page 16 CG5/21

Evacuation Procedures - If the layout of the setting is changed, and/or circulation routes or entry/exit points are altered, consideration should be given to evacuation procedures (e.g. in the event of a fire or other incident). Evacuation points should also be considered to ensure appropriate social distancing arrangements are maintained between individuals/groups as far as practically possible. This should be included as part of the risk assessment for the setting. Evacuation arrangements for children with complex needs or disabilities should be reviewed in light of any changes.

First Aid page 17

[Use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) CG5/21](#)

The above guidance should be taken into account when administering First Aid

[Section 8 People who become Symptomatic on site and operation of Test and Trace System:](#)

These situations, while appropriate to be classed as “first aid” , should be treated as guidance outlines.

Health and Safety information and communication

Health and Safety training

Health and Safety monitoring and inspection pages 18-20

All the above are subject to regulations on the pausing of visitors, attendance at staff training events, limits on school governors face-to face meetings etc.

Lettings page 20

Paused due to regulations on visitors

Moving and Handling page 23

All moving and handling of equipment should be done with usual risk assessment and with social distancing adherence.

Social distancing requirements between pupils were relaxed by the Stormont Executive in Northern Ireland from 2 metres to 1 metre with restrictions from 29 June 2020. The Stormont Executive agreed that people should keep 2 metres distance where possible, but from 29 June 2020 can come within no less than 1 metre where appropriate mitigations can be made but will remain in place between adults (at 2m) and, as far as is practicable between adults and pupils.

Occupational health and work related stress page 25

See below section on staff related guidance CG5/21

Section 6 – Workforce

Absence, Pay and Staffing Guidance Relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Detailed Absence, Pay and Staffing Guidance Relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) updated 11/02/2021 has been developed for Principals and line managers to support staff returning to schools.

Off site visits page 25

These are paused at present due to regulations

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) page 25

CG5/21 **Section 2 - Hygiene and Physical Protection**

This section gives detailed guidance for the appropriate use of PPE and its disposal in whichever setting it may be required in the school setting.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The PHA has published [guidance to support safe working in educational settings in Northern Ireland](#). This advises that routine use of PPE within education settings is not required other than for certain tasks deemed to be of higher risk of transmission.

PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases. These are;
working with children, young people and pupils whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE, due to their intimate care needs; and
giving children medication.

PPE in the following situations means:

- fluid-resistant surgical face masks;
- disposable gloves;
- disposable plastic aprons; and
- eye protection (for example a face visor or goggles).

Where PPE is recommended, this means that;

- a facemask should be worn if a distance of 2m cannot be maintained from someone with symptoms of COVID-19 (**symptomatic children should not be in school**);
- if contact is necessary, gloves, an apron and a facemask should be worn; and
- if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of fluids entering the eye (e.g. from coughing, spitting or vomiting), eye protection should also be worn.

When PPE is used, it is essential that it is used properly. This includes scrupulous hand hygiene and following guidance on donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) PPE safely to reduce the risk of contamination.

Face masks:-

- MUST** cover both nose and mouth;

- MUST be changed when they become moist or damaged;
- MUST be worn once and then discarded - hands must be cleaned after disposal;
- MUST NOT be allowed to dangle around the neck; and
- MUST NOT be touched once put on, except when carefully removed before disposal.

Children should not wear PPE.

Educational settings should develop a clear procedure, in addition to following the strategic guidance outlined here, for what staff should do if a pupil starts to display symptoms of COVID-19 when at school, including guidance on the appropriate use of PPE adhering to the above PHA guidance.

PHA guidance makes clear that staff should continue to use PPE in line with current health and safety policies and risk assessments. Staff should only wear PPE when it is appropriate to the task they are undertaking. The exception is where, following an individual or organisational risk assessment it is found that a higher level of contamination, such as respiratory secretions, may be present or the risk assessment identifies that there is an identified need for PPE, then it should be readily available and provided in line with guidance. Staff within catering teams may need to use PPE regularly as they will be serving meals to children and young people across a range of 'protective bubbles'.

The EA is leading on procurement of suitable quantities of PPE for educational settings and further advice will be provided directly by the EA.

Face Coverings

There is a clear distinction between PPE and face coverings. PPE is specialist medical grade equipment that has been and will continue to be used when working with some pupils whose hygiene or care needs involve the possible spread of liquids or aerosol dispersion such as vomiting or spitting. The guidance on the use of PPE is led by the underlying health need of the pupil and is unchanged. Public Health guidance recommends that face coverings are used in particular circumstances - short periods in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible. Coronavirus (COVID-19) usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing your hands first.

The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others while also providing some protection to the wearer. Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the wearer, from coronavirus (COVID-19) they are not a replacement for social distancing and regular hand washing. The wearing of a face covering will not automatically exempt an individual from being identified as a close contact, if they come into contact with a positive case and other close contact definitions are met as outlined previously.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires cleaning of hands before and after touching - including to remove or put them on - and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and should be replaced carefully.

This advice covers all education settings including EOTAS, Special Education provision and boarding schools.

Risk Assessment page 26

Risk Assessments CG5/21 sections 10 and 11

In addition to a risk assessment for any scenario that is allowed to take place under current legislation the risk of Covid transmission and the environment for the activity must take account of the above cited guidance.

School security and supervision of pupils page27

The general guidance (on visitors and contractors see above) and specifically the detailed guidance on all aspects of social distancing should be considered here.

The Stormont Executive agreed that people should keep 2 metres distance where possible, but from 29 June 2020 can come within no less than 1 metre where appropriate mitigations can be made. but will remain in place between adults (at 2m) and, as far as is practicable between adults and pupils.

Transport page 27

The entirety of section 3 CG5/21 relates to all aspects of Transport and should apply to all pupils and staff except the sessions that specifically reference post-primary pupils.

There is advice on ni.gov on how to travel safely to and from school.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/safer-travel-guidance-public-transport-users-walkers-cyclists-drivers>

Work at height Work equipment and Workplace safety page 29

These are all affected by the regulations for safe working regarding CG5/21 specifically in regard to social distancing.

The Stormont Executive agreed that people should keep 2 metres distance where possible, but from 29 June 2020 can come within no less than 1 metre where appropriate mitigations can be made. but will remain in place between adults (at 2m) and, as far as is practicable between adults and pupils.