

Frequently Asked Questions around SEND and returning to school

About our support and guidance

The Inclusion Advisory Team have received over the last days a variety of SEND related COVID 19 questions relating to returning to school. There has also been a considerable amount of information given by the government and different parties. The purpose of this document is to draw some the SEND information provided together in one place. However please do beware that this is an ever-changing situation and answers may change according to the latest government guidance. The information here is intended to help you. You will always need to refer to your own **school's** guidance and policies.

What should schools do to reduce the risk of transmission as more children return?

The guidance on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) states that educational settings should use a 'hierarchy of controls' to reduce spread, including:

- ensuring pupils and staff stick to [the guidance on self-isolation](#) if they or a member of their family displays symptoms;
- cleaning hands more often than usual;
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene ('catch it, bin it, kill it');
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often;
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times).

The [guidance on protective measures](#) sets out the measures schools should take, which include:

In all settings:

- Pupils and staff should only mix in a small, consistent group which stays away from other groups (but notes that "*brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk*").
- The same teacher(s) and other staff should be assigned to each group each day, "*recognising for secondary and college settings there will be some subject specialist rotation of staff*".
- Shared areas such as halls and sports facilities should be used at half capacity. They can be shared as long as different groups don't mix and [adequate cleaning](#) between groups between groups is in place.
- If there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a group or class, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

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In early years settings:

- The staff to child ratios within [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) should be used to group children.
- The guidance anticipates that *“unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff”*.

The guidance contains a list of actions for education settings to prepare in advance of 1 June 2020. Please read alongside the [Preparing for Reopening of School Guidance](#).

Do staff or pupils need to wear PPE?

The guidance on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) states that wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Face masks are actively advised against for those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

The guidance does not recommend PPE for staff in education settings, *“even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others”*. The examples given of the *“very small number of cases”* where PPE would be required includes:

- children or young people whose care already routinely involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs;
- children or young people who begin displaying symptoms of coronavirus and need direct personal care until they can return home.

Resources and Templates to Support returning to school

These will be on the SENCo Zone and discussed at the SENCo Virtual Challenge Groups

- **Reintegration Plan Template and Guidance**
- **Social story about what is happening now**
- **Social story about changes to schools**
- **Social story about new school arrangements**
- **School Anxiety Pack**
- **Transition Templates**
- **Strategic Operational Plan for SENCos – *What we are doing now, What should we start planning for, What is our longer term plans***

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Additional Organisations providing resources (links on the SENCo Zone) There will be a range of other outside resources do keep checking back.

- Barry Carpenter
- Transitions Toolkit by Nurture UK
- NASEN
- AET