

Moray Council Phased Re-opening of Schools Risk Assessment Guidance Updates February 2021

Schools have been open since Tuesday the 5th January 21 for staff to access facilities, pick up resources, arrange home learning packs, support online learning activities etc. Normal arrangements for staff to inform HT/ line manager / administrators of their presence within the building should be in place.

Schools have also been open to support initially childcare and subsequently learning and teaching for pupils of key workers and vulnerable pupils.

The following additional information should be considered alongside the 4 documents previously provided to schools as follows:

**Moray Council, Re-opening of Schools Risk Assessment Guidance Update Appendix 2
January 2021**

**Moray Council, Re-opening of Schools Risk Assessment Guidance Update Appendix 1
August 2020**

Moray Council, Risk Assessment Form SMS 8.4 – information for staff and pupils – August return.

Re-opening Moray School – COVID-19 Response Planning Generic Risk Assessments – June reopening for staff

Following announcements on Tuesday the 16th February, the following information aims to highlight a number of important changes to the above documents and should sit alongside any documents that are already held within schools, specific to their own school risk assessments or indeed specific to any individual staff or pupil risk assessment. The changes are highlighted according to the **Task** number contained within the original documents and should be shared initially with school trade union representatives and subsequently, once agreed, with all staff.

These new additions are specific to the phased return of pupils in primaries 1,2 and 3 and to senior pupils requiring to access subjects in the senior phase with a specific practical element that can't be supported remotely.

1 Shielding - clinically vulnerable staff and learners

Following consideration by clinicians of the increased risks of transmission of the new strain of coronavirus, new guidance for individuals on the shielding list has been issued for the duration of the lockdown period. This makes clear that:

• **Staff at the highest clinical risk (individuals on the shielding list) should work from home, and if they cannot do so, they should not go into work as long as the area they live or work in is under lockdown.** The Chief Medical Officer issued a letter to everyone on the shielding list on 5 January to advise that if your employer cannot arrange for you to work from home, then you should not attend work. If employers cannot make it possible for employees to work from home, they can use this letter (Shielding Notification), which serves a similar purpose to a fit note, as evidence that they should not go into work. A separate GP fit note is not required. The letter is valid up to 31 March to cover any times during which the person is living or working in an area under lockdown. This advice remains regardless of whether people have had 1 or 2 doses of the vaccination.

The arrangements for all other clinically vulnerable children, young people and school staff as set out in the reducing risks in schools guidance should be followed.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/pages/scientific-and-public-health-advice/#specialconsiderations>

This guidance makes clear that individual risk assessments should be in place for clinically vulnerable staff. Managers should ensure that clinical advice is taken fully into account when updating these individual risk assessments and agreeing appropriate mitigations with employees.

Updated guidance for pregnant employees is now available and should be followed (note that staff who are both pregnant and on the shielding list should follow the guidance for staff at the highest clinical risk above).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees>

2 Infection Risk (symptoms)

Any Moray Council employee who develops symptoms should complete the online form available from [here](#) or contact their local GP practice and follow their advice as appropriate.

For staff and pupils returning to school on a phased basis from the 22nd of February 2021 lateral flow tests should be made available.

Eligible staff include teachers, classroom-based support staff, administrative staff, facilities management staff (cleaners, janitors, etc.), school transport staff and other school-based staff who are critical to the effective delivery of school education.

Testing is voluntary and nobody should be required to undergo testing without consent, or excluded from school or work if they do not wish to test.

Staff who are concerned that they have been at risk of infection and do not have access to lateral flow testing, may still request a test whether or not they have symptoms and should do this through Moray Council's employee portal by following the link below:

http://interchange.moray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_132882.html

3 Infection Risk (special measures)

- Face Coverings

All staff and pupils in the senior phase should wear a face covering in classrooms during lessons. Only those exempt are not required to wear a mask.

Additional guidance, practical demonstrations, or communications for children, young people and staff to support the correct wearing, storage and disposal of face coverings, including the use of hygiene products when doing so, would support better efficacy of face coverings.

- 2m Distancing

Two metres distancing between staff and pupils should be adhered to across both primary and secondary schools.

It has also been decided that, as an additional protective measure, 2m distancing should be put in place at the current time between secondary-aged learners, in addition to continuing to be in place for staff in secondary schools. This applies to all learners in secondary schools including vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Physical distancing requirements in primary schools remain unchanged, eg 2m distancing between adults not from the same household should be maintained. There should also be 2m distancing between adults and children whenever possible.

- 2m distancing and face coverings on transport

2m distancing should also apply on school transport for secondary schools. This is in keeping with current advice that dedicated school transport should be regarded as an extension of the school estate. This includes services used for vulnerable children.

The advice remains that face coverings should be worn by children aged 5 years and over on dedicated school transport (unless exemptions apply) in line with the position on public transport.

4 Operational Strategy

Schools must ensure that the number of senior phase learners timetabled in school to undertake practical work at any one time does not exceed 5-8% of the secondary school roll. This number does not include the provision for keyworker and vulnerable children. Schools should consider the arrangements that they have in place to keep these two groups separate wherever possible.

Ensure that strict 2m social distancing can be maintained and consider your capacities to support mitigation of risks.

In secondary room occupancy should be based on 2m distancing.

5 Infection Risk (buildings)

Identify rooms required for pupils attending school giving consideration to heating, ventilation, the movement of pupils around the school and reducing the footprint of pupils in school to support cleaning routines.

The existing heating and ventilation sections within the Coronavirus: Reducing risks in schools guidance is still considered to be robust and appropriate. Pg 12 sections 41-49 including the statement:

“There is a need for an appropriate supply of fresh air to assist with minimising the risk of virus infection. There is also a need to maintain indoor temperatures for reasons including user comfort, health and wellbeing, and learning and teaching.”

Mitigations which can be carried out at this time in terms of ventilation include:

- accelerated repair and maintenance of windows and vents;
- procurement and installation of fixed and mobile CO2 monitoring equipment; and
- re-allocation of existing spaces to align available ventilation with occupant numbers.

6 Travel to work

No changes

7 Arrival

These should be identified at school level and be dependent on the numbers of staff and pupils attending – changes will be required at school level to highlight the procedures for additional pupils returning.

8 Internal Traffic

Depending on the additional rooms being used for the phased return of pupils there may require to be some changes to routes to and from toilets or entry and exit points to reduce

unnecessary movement around the school for pupils and or staff working in the building. This should also highlight the need to reduce the mix of pupils returning as part of the phased return and those attending in a hub

9 Toilets

No change

10 Playgrounds

No change

11 Teaching Areas

No change

12 Food Hygiene

If those young people who attend school go offsite for lunch, they should follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. Risk assessments should consider procedures for when children and young people leave and return to school premises, including hand hygiene.

13 First Aid

No change

14 Emergency Procedures

No change

Additional Section

15 School trips

Guidance on school trips is available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-school-visits-and-trips/>

This currently advises that no school trips are recommended. Based on the advice from the Advisory Sub-group from its 9 February meeting, short local excursions which promote outdoor learning (such as a short visit to a local park or green

space) will be permitted for those learners in school, as long as these are appropriately risk assessed.

Key messages

Schools and ELC settings should place a high priority on reinforcing the current mitigations designed to reduce the risk for children, young people and staff.

Asymptomatic testing is an additional measure and should not replace other mitigations. Additionally, asymptomatic staff, student teachers and learners who are negative on LFD testing must not regard themselves or behave as if they are free from infection.