

## Introduction

1. The **aim** of this guidance is to support schools and local authorities in the delivery of education in light of the current COVID-19 situation in Scotland. This guidance is non-statutory. It provides the principles for managing schools at this time. More detailed guidance on the application of specific mitigations is available in [core Scottish Government COVID guidance](#). The previous versions of the Reducing Risks Guidance are also archived on the Scottish Government website.
2. This guidance **applies** to all local authorities and schools (primary/secondary/special/school hostels/residential) under their management and all external organisations involved in delivering services in schools (e.g. contracted facilities management services). It should also be used by grant-aided schools and independent schools to support their recovery efforts.
3. This guidance **does not apply** to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) – see instead separate [Guidance for early learning, school aged childcare and childminder settings](#).
4. Nothing in this guidance affects the legal obligations of local authorities with regard to health and safety, public health and their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

## Key context (including revised Strategic Framework)

5. The Scottish Government published its [Strategic Framework update](#) on 22 February 2022. This sets out a change to the Scottish Government’s overarching strategic intent:

*To manage COVID-19 effectively, primarily through adaptations and health measures that strengthen our resilience and recovery, as we rebuild for a better future.*

6. Of relevance to schools, the Strategic Framework sets out that a small number of routine protective measures will remain, these are set out in this guidance. The need for and sufficiency of these protective measures will continue to be kept under constant review, and if data and evidence suggest that the approach to any specific mitigations should be updated then advice and revised guidance will be provided to that effect.
7. The evidence base for this guidance comprises expert advice from the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues, the Chief Medical Officer’s Office and Public Health Scotland. It has benefited from stakeholder input via the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) including local government, the professional associations and others.
8. Consistent with previous advice, the Sub-group acted on the principles that: i) mitigations in schools should be retained for no longer than is necessary based on the state of the pandemic and evidence about risk, and ii) that there should be a presumption against placing a greater restriction on children and young people than on the rest of society. It has taken careful account of the evolving risk environment in schools and wider communities, and seeks to ensure that only those mitigations that are necessary and proportionate to ensure the safety of school communities are retained.

## **Health and wellbeing**

9. Local authorities and schools, in partnership with health professionals, will continue to offer support to the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff. Consideration of support for children and young people with additional support needs should be undertaken in line with responsibilities under Additional Support for Learning legislation. Balancing progress in learning with children and young people's social and emotional needs should continue to be a priority.

## **Implementing this guidance**

10. This guidance sets out which of the current measures local authorities and schools should retain. All other measures can be removed from schools, as they are no longer judged necessary or proportionate to ensure the safety of school communities. The guidance highlights some key mitigations with a particular impact on school operations and educational experiences that are no longer required.

## Local implementation of the guidance

11. This guidance is not a recommendation for schools to return to previous practice that pre-dates the pandemic. Instead, it is intended to support outcomes for children and young people, in a proportionate and responsible manner. This should be led by local authorities in a way that capitalises on the good practice developed over the pandemic period, and which takes full account of practical considerations in a way that does not create operational difficulties or unnecessary additional workload for staff.
12. The Advisory sub-group has also recommended that we devolve more autonomy and flexibility of decision-making to local authorities, schools and other settings which welcome school pupils in implementing the guidance – recognising also the importance of local dialogue, including with LNCTs and other recognised trade unions, in reaching local decisions. Schools should operate in line with their own circumstances and risk assessments as they do in all areas of school life. If concerns emerge about local decisions and their impact on school safety, where all local LNCT and joint fora routes have been exhausted, those concerns could be raised at the COSLA Workforce Issues Group (WIG) for further discussion.
13. If undertaking a particular activity is not explicitly precluded through this guidance – i.e. if it is not listed as a routine measure – then schools and local authorities should treat it as permissible provided they take account of relevant risks. Similarly, while this guidance reduces the mitigations that schools are required to have in place, local authorities and schools are not recommended to return to pre-pandemic practices and are encouraged to retain good practice developed during the pandemic where appropriate.

## Measures to reduce risks in schools

### Vaccination

14. All local authorities should encourage staff who have not been fully vaccinated to seek vaccination as soon as possible, following the recommended gap between doses. Information on securing an appointment and on eligibility for age groups can be found at [NHS Inform](#).

### Risk assessment

15. It is a legal requirement that local authorities ensure that school risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed and updated (including at points when the guidance is updated). In implementing this guidance, it is imperative that schools and local authorities continue to take a balanced approach, and take every appropriate step to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in schools.
16. The risk assessment will help school leaders and employers decide whether they have done everything they need to. Employers have a legal duty to consult their employees on health and safety in good time. School risk assessments should be shared with and be easily accessible to staff and trade unions, including catering and facilities management teams and contractors where appropriate. It is imperative that all members of the school community understand what measures are being put in place and why.

### Routine protective measures

17. Schools should retain a number of routine protective measures to ensure that risks arising from coronavirus can be appropriately mitigated. These routine measures reflect advice from the Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues and align with those that will be retained in many parts of wider society.
18. All children, young people, staff and visitors to schools should continue to implement and strictly observe these measures.

### Stay at home guidance

19. The guidance on symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, has changed in Scotland. If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or are too unwell to carry out normal activities, stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you no longer feel unwell.
20. Children and young people aged 18 and under with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat or a slight cough, who are otherwise well, do not need to stay at home and can continue to attend education settings.
21. Children and young people should only stay at home if they are unwell and have a high temperature. They can go back to school and resume normal activities when they no longer

have a fever and they feel well enough to attend. For more information see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | NHS inform](#)

22. Communication with parents, care givers, staff and children remains important. Although previously issued 'warn and inform' letters do not need to be sent following every case given the cessation of universal asymptomatic testing, it remains good practice to keep people updated where it is expected that concerns may arise.
23. Washing hands thoroughly, at the right time, using appropriate facilities and products helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Schools should continue to support staff and children and young people to follow advice on **good hand hygiene**, and to ensure regular **surface cleaning in schools and on school transport**. **Effective respiratory and cough hygiene** also helps to minimise the risk of the transmission of COVID-19. This is set out in [Guidance for safer workplaces and public settings](#).
24. There should be an ongoing focus on **ventilation**, and previous guidance continues to apply, see Annex A. As set out previously, in order to support healthy learning environments, local authorities should continue to ensure that all local authority schools and ELC settings have access to CO2 monitoring, whether via mobile or fixed devices. This is in order to support the goal of all school buildings, including all learning and teaching spaces, being assessed regularly for ventilation issues with a view to remedial action being taken where required. It should be noted that large volume or low occupancy spaces, for example games halls, may require alternative assessments, as CO2 may not be a useful indicator of good ventilation in certain circumstances. See also: [HSE ventilation guidance](#)
25. Local authorities should ensure that an appropriate ratio of monitors to spaces is made available to each school, taking account of local circumstances and workforce requirements. Sufficient monitors should be made available for use to enable ongoing decision-making by staff about balancing ventilation (including by opening of doors and windows) with temperature during the winter months, taking account of changes in weather conditions.
26. Best practice that has been shared as part of the ventilation/CO2 data collection indicates that many areas have already moved or are moving to 1:1 ratios for monitoring spaces, either using fixed or mobile devices and that reporting from schools is now typically on an exception basis. The reported advantages of this approach include supporting decision-making on an ongoing basis in all classrooms through different weather conditions and occupancy levels, reduction in the amount of facilities resource required to reposition monitors, and more readily available information about the extent of any residual problematic spaces (to support decision-making on remedial action). Ventilation will remain a key routine protective measure for Covid-19 and there are wider advantages to ensuring good ventilation across the learning estate. We therefore recommend that all LAs move to a 1:1 ratio of monitors to learning, teaching and play spaces over the remainder of the academic year, supported by funding that has been provided by Scottish Government.
27. Local authorities should consider how the systems, operating practices and reporting capabilities they develop could be most effective in promoting healthy learning environments in

the future. This could include responding to local, national or global events where being able to gather information quickly may be beneficial.

### Face coverings (Workplace guidance)

28. The legal requirement to wear a face covering in most indoor places and on public transport has been replaced with general safety guidance for people who are managing a workplace or organisation. Schools should apply the approach within that workplace guidance to the use of face coverings by staff and secondary pupils in indoor communal areas in schools. In practice this means that the wearing of face coverings is not mandatory, but it remains encouraged in indoor communal areas in line with the workplace guidance. Any individual who wishes to wear a face covering in a school setting should continue to be supported to do so. As previously, careful attention should be given to the requirements of individuals with additional support needs when implementing this measure.
29. Children and young people with **additional support needs**. Every child and young person will have different levels of required support. Some children and young people may be more clinically vulnerable to COVID-19. Risk assessments play a key part in considering the individual needs of a child or young person. Risk assessments, which may be integrated into a Child's Plan or Healthcare Plan, should already exist for children and young people with complex additional support needs. These risk assessments should be reviewed and updated as appropriate, reflecting current circumstances. Where they are not in place or they have not been updated they must be undertaken or reviewed swiftly. Where there is a need to work in close proximity with adults and children and young people the safety measures to protect adults and children and young people alike should be followed. Staff should wear a face covering or PPE where a risk assessment has deemed it appropriate and regularly wash their hands before and after contact. In line with standard practice, risk assessments should take into account the procedure being performed; any symptoms displayed by the child; and the setting of the procedure. Guidance on [Supporting children and young people with healthcare needs in schools](#) is published by the Scottish Government.
30. **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** includes single-use disposable gloves, disposable plastic aprons and face masks. PPE should be readily available, and staff should be trained on its use. The use of PPE by staff should continue to be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual child or young person, such as personal care where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids. No additional PPE measures are required for general use. Guidance is available through the NHS [Winter Respiratory Infection IPC addendum](#)
31. **It remains important** for those providing and arranging **dedicated school transport** services to follow general guidance in relation to the use of face coverings, cleaning, hygiene and ventilation. Further information is available on the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer workplaces and public settings guidance](#). In general, the previous school transport mitigations no longer apply though it remains important that the needs of passengers who are at a higher risk, for example children with additional support needs, are factored into any risk assessment of school transport needs.

32. In line with the [Testing Transition Plan](#), the advice for school staff and secondary pupils in mainstream and special schools to undertake twice-weekly **asymptomatic LFD testing no longer applies**. Local health protection teams will still be able to deploy testing as one of a suite of measures for outbreak management purposes if it is necessary in their expert judgement.
33. **Schools are considered to be low risk settings for outbreak management** due to the relatively lower vulnerability of children to harm arising from COVID infection, and the high vaccination coverage of the working age adult population. NHS Public Health / Health Protection Teams may make the decision to engage with schools in the handling of individual cases, clusters or outbreaks but it is expected that the majority of cases and clusters will be managed by individuals and schools themselves through usual sickness and absence processes for staff and children. Decisions on prioritisation will be taken at a local level by Health Protection Teams. Schools and Education leads in councils should maintain proactive working relationships developed with NHS Public Health teams over the pandemic in order to focus on preventative measures as set out above.

#### Planning assumptions

34. In maintaining routine protective measures, schools should plan on the basis that:
- While **face coverings** are not required in classrooms, including for learners in the senior phase sitting exams, learners and staff should continue to be supported to wear them if they choose to do so.
  - **Physical distancing**, children, young people and staff should follow the wider societal guidance on physical distancing in schools or on dedicated school transport. As in wider society it will remain important to be cautious and exercise personal responsibility, recognising that, where possible, it is safer to keep a distance from other people.
  - There are no restrictions on indoor and outdoor **drama activity, music, PE or dance**. Routine measures should continue to apply in relevant settings where these activities are taking place (e.g. good ventilation).
  - All types of **domestic and international school trips** are permitted provided suitable risk assessments are conducted mirroring the routine protective measures in this document. This means that the majority of the measures that have been recommended up until this point are removed including the requirement in this guidance for pre-visit testing. Schools and site venues should continue to have contingency plans and risk assessments for pupils and staff becoming symptomatic with repatriation arrangements where appropriate. This also applies to international trips where appropriate isolation/repatriation arrangements should also be in place considering individual circumstances. International school trips should also comply with [international travel guidance](#) and with the Covid requirements in the host country.
  - Additional detailed guidance for providers of outdoor residential centre visits is available from the "[Going Out There](#)" website.
  - There are no restrictions on **assemblies**, although routine measures will continue to apply (e.g. good ventilation, regular cleaning, etc).
  - **Contact groups** are not required,
  - **One way systems** are not required.
  - **Staggered lunch and break times** are not required.

- **Staggered pick-up and drop-off times** are not required.
- There are no restrictions on **supply staff, other professionals or visitors** in general entering schools. All visitors will, however, be expected to comply with the school's routine measures and arrangements for managing and minimising risk.
- There are no restrictions on **parents, carers or wider family members** entering school buildings, although they will be expected to comply with the school's routine measures. There are therefore no restrictions on "in person" parent/carer evenings, parent/carer related events and meetings in school buildings, e.g. subject choice events, career events, fundraising events, family learning activities, volunteering in school, Parent Council, Parent Teacher Association meetings and other similar events or meetings. Parents, carers and family members are able to attend indoor and outdoor sporting and cultural events.

### **Distance Aware scheme**

35. The Distance Aware scheme, promoted by the Scottish Government, enables people to wear a symbol to indicate they would like more space and care around them for any reason. Anyone who wants to wear a badge or lanyard with the Distance Aware symbol can get one in a range of places including all community and mobile libraries, most ASDA stores, or online through participating charities. Schools and ELC settings can use the toolkit to consider how best to promote more distance and care for staff and pupils who would like this. There is more information at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): distance aware scheme - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/coronavirus-covid-19-distance-aware-scheme/) ([www.gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/)).

### **People who have been on the Highest Risk List**

36. The Highest Risk List ended on 31 May 2022. The success of the vaccination programme and the availability of new medicines to treat COVID-19 mean the majority of people on the list are at no greater risk from COVID-19 than the rest of the population in Scotland.
37. The Chief Medical Officer has for some time advised people on the Highest Risk List to follow the same advice as the rest of the population unless advised otherwise by their GP or clinician. This applies equally to household members of people on the list and includes going into schools and early learning and childcare settings. He has also advised people whose immune system is suppressed to take extra care and follow the advice of their GP or clinician as they would have done before the pandemic.

### Staff who have been on the Highest Risk List

38. Although the requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessment was removed on 1 April 2022, it is recommended that workplaces continue to consider COVID-19 transmission risks as part of their assurance procedures.
39. Some staff, including those who have been on the Highest Risk List, may continue to feel more cautious or anxious about their safety in the workplace. We recommend that managers have sensitive, supportive conversations with staff that consider their health, safety, physical and psychological wellbeing, as well as personal views/concerns about risks. Wellbeing support services should also be promoted to staff.

More details, including on [workplace risk assessments](#), can be found in the latest [safer workplaces guidance](#)

### **Pregnant staff**

40. Pregnant staff who come into contact with someone who is unwell should follow the same advice as the rest of the population. More advice is available at NHS Inform: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): General advice | NHS inform](#)

### **Readiness and assurance**

41. To achieve collective assurance that the education system has in place the arrangements needed in the event of future outbreaks, schools and local authorities should familiarise themselves with the scenarios, expectations and actions set out at **Annex B**. They should work together to ensure that these actions are complete and that a state of readiness is maintained for as long as is required to deal with the pandemic.

### **Impact assessments**

42. The Scottish Government is committed to promoting and protecting equality in the implementation of all Government policy and in upholding the principles of the UNCRC and GIRFEC in relation to any government actions or guidance that impacts on the lives of children and young people. Please visit the [Scottish Government publications landing page](#) for information on the [Child's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment](#) (CRWIA), Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), and Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) associated with this guidance.

### **Early learning and childcare**

43. There is separate [guidance for Early Learning and Childcare settings](#), which (while closely aligned to many of the mitigations in this guidance for schools) reflects the support required for, and the lower transmission risks associated with, very young children.

### **Residential boarding/hostel accommodation in educational facilities**

44. School care residential accommodation services are provided to allow pupils to attend a public, independent or grant-aided schools. For clarity, this includes: residential, special and secure accommodation and independent boarding school facilities and residence halls provided by local authority secondary schools.

### Risk assessments

45. Establishments should undertake and update regularly their own specific risk assessment of their residential facilities. The assessment should consider the overall number of pupils, staffing levels, and the capacity of each residential hall or house. Risk assessments should include contingency provision for symptomatic pupils or staff.



46. Schools should inform the Care Inspectorate of any revisions to term dates, or if young people are required to remain at school over holiday periods, due to risk assessment outcomes.

#### School regulation

47. The proprietors of all independent schools in Scotland must ensure that the school they are responsible for does not become objectionable on any of the grounds listed in Section 99(1A) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which includes the obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people enrolled in the school.
48. Similarly, all proprietors of independent boarding schools and managers of School Care Accommodation Services must comply with the relevant legislation around the registration of their service; such as the Health and Social Care Standards and the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.

#### Wellbeing

49. Residential schools have a responsibility to ensure the overall wellbeing of children and young people and compliance with practices which reduce the risk of the spread of infectious disease.

#### Prevention - routine protective measures

50. Boarding facilities should be particularly vigilant to apply the routine protective measures set out above given the risk of cross contamination into living accommodation, Bathrooms in particular should be fully supplied with products for handwashing and drying, and subject to enhanced cleaning.

#### Pupils travelling to school internationally

51. All pupils should fully comply with the international travel regulations and associated guidance which apply to them. Additional restrictions are temporary and kept under frequent review. Schools are advised to be alert that changes may be made to these at short notice.

#### Case management for pupils/staff requiring to isolate

52. Schools should set out clear contingency plans and risk assessments for pupils and staff becoming symptomatic/ testing positive. Schools should have an appropriate plan in place for pupils who are required to isolate, including how they will be supervised and supported. Schools should refer to [COVID-19: information and guidance for workplaces and community settings](#) for appropriate infection prevention and control measures.
53. Most children will benefit from self-isolating in their boarding house so that their usual support can continue. Others will benefit more from self-isolating in their family home if travel can be arranged safely.

### Outbreak management

54. In the event of an outbreak schools or establishments should activate their well-established contingency plans. Health Protection Teams may make the decision to engage with schools in the handling of individual cases, clusters or outbreaks but it is expected that the majority of cases and clusters will be managed by individuals and schools themselves through usual sickness and absence processes for staff and children. Decisions on prioritisation will be taken at a local level by Health Protection Teams. If required, further advice is available from [IndependentSchoolsMailbox@gov.scot](mailto:IndependentSchoolsMailbox@gov.scot)

## **Ventilation and heating**

1. This annex is informed by the latest scientific and public health advice and research from the Advisory Sub-group on education and children's issues, Health Facilities Scotland, ARHAI Scotland and the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group (EMG) which published updated guidance on 23 October 2020. Cognisance has also been taken of UK and European building services industry guidance (CIBSE and REHVA). This guidance has been updated to take account of the latest expert advice and guidance from HSE (Ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic). HSE has also reviewed and provided input to this updated guidance.
2. This section of the guidance is intended primarily for relevant local authority teams – it is not expected that headteachers or teachers should have the expertise to apply it independently.
3. The key requirement for local authorities is to work with schools to identify and implement local approaches that balance the need for fresh air in key parts of the school estate with the maintenance of adequate temperatures. The latest scientific advice identifies that ventilation is an important factor in mitigating against the risk of far-field (>2m) aerosol transmission.
4. There is therefore 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.
5. This guidance seeks to identify practical measures which may be incorporated to balance these issues. The precise balance to be struck, and the most effective ways of doing so, will depend heavily on local factors including building design, location and prevailing weather conditions.
6. Schools should ensure that risk assessments are updated regularly, in consultation with local authorities, staff, trade unions and (where applicable) PFI/NPD providers, to consider issues around ventilation and heating/warmth that are relevant to their specific environments. Drawing on local authority advice, they should consider areas of the school where air flow (including pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces) and/or temperature may be problematic, and the strategies that may be used to address these issues and mitigate risks appropriately.
7. Schools should as a minimum ensure that adequate levels of ventilation and appropriate temperatures are maintained, with reference to the School Premises Regulations. While minimum requirements vary depending on the specific part of the school estate, for classrooms the regulations stipulate 2 air changes per hour and a temperature of 17°C. Reference should also be made to the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 requirements to maintain a reasonable temperature in the workplace.

### **Natural ventilation and temperature**

8. The primary effective method of increasing natural ventilation remains the opening of external doors, vents and windows. Wherever it is practical, safe and secure to do so, and appropriate

internal temperatures can be maintained in line with statutory obligations, this approach should be adopted. Keeping doors open (again, with appropriate regard to safety and security) may also help to reduce contact with door handles.

9. However, internal fire doors should never be held open (unless assessed and provided with appropriate hold open and self-closing mechanisms which respond to the actuation of the fire alarm system). The Fire Safety Risk Assessment should always be reviewed before any internal doors are held open.
10. Potential approaches to increase natural ventilation while balancing temperature, the suitability of which will depend on a range of local factors including weather conditions, may include:
  - partially opening doors and windows to provide ventilation while reducing draughts
  - opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
  - purging spaces by opening windows, vents and external doors (e.g. between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused, or at other suitable intervals if a space is occupied for long periods at a time), this may be particularly appropriate during the winter period to balance ventilation and thermal comfort
  - flexible uniform/staff dress policies to help ensure that children, young people and staff can stay warm if/when windows or doors require to be opened
  - maintaining appropriate heating strategies
11. Local authority CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring programmes can support decision-making around the best strategies to adopt in specific spaces, for example by assessing the extent to which window opening is required to maintain levels of CO<sub>2</sub> that are consistent with good ventilation.

### **Mechanical ventilation**

12. Where it is not possible to keep doors and windows open while maintaining appropriate internal conditions in line with statutory obligations, and centralised or local mechanical ventilation is present, systems should wherever possible be adjusted to full fresh air. Air recirculation should be avoided or minimised as this does not introduce fresh air but moves air and therefore potentially virus around the space. If this is not possible while maintaining appropriate internal conditions, systems should be operated to achieve statutory temperature and air change rate requirements as a minimum. Additional points to assist with the practical delivery of this approach include:
  - where ventilation units have filters present enhanced precautions should be taken when changing filters, additional advice on filters can be located in the REHVA Covid guidance
  - ventilation systems should be checked or adjusted to ensure they do not automatically adjust ventilation levels due to differing occupancy levels
  - consider starting mechanical ventilation ahead of the school day and allow it to continue after classes have finished

## Fans

13. Fan heaters, fan assisted heating systems or air conditioning within a single space may assist in maintaining appropriate temperatures, provided there is an adequate supply of fresh air into the space. Fans may also be useful to increase air flow on calm days, provided the space is already well ventilated. This approach should only be used where the balance of adequate ventilation and appropriate temperature cannot be achieved otherwise. Filter maintenance should also be carefully undertaken as noted above. Care should be taken to avoid unregulated use of ad hoc devices which may cause increased risk in terms of electrical load, inappropriate installation, cable trip hazard and potential fire or electrocution risk.

## CO2 monitors

14. As set out earlier in this guidance, local authorities should ensure that all schools and day care of children services have access to CO2 monitoring, whether via mobile or fixed devices. This is to support the goal of all school and ELC buildings, including all suitable learning, teaching and childcare spaces, being assessed regularly for ventilation issues with a view to remedial action being taken where required.
15. Local authorities should also ensure that appropriate local reporting arrangements allow areas of persistent concern to continue to be identified and remedial action taken for any spaces that have been identified as showing higher levels of CO2. The monthly reporting of CO2 assessments should continue, as agreed with local authorities, until June 2022.
16. Where CO2 monitoring is not suitable for specific spaces, assessments may be undertaken by other appropriate means, depending on the ventilation systems and other arrangements already in place in school and ELC buildings. For example, large volume, low occupancy halls may be better suited to computer air flow modelling as a means of assessment.
17. It is important that local authority advice is sought on the use of monitors to ensure their proper specification, installation, location, calibration and effective use. When providing this advice, local authorities can have regard to the manufacturer's instructions and HSE advice.
18. It should be noted that CO2 monitors cannot monitor levels of virus, but by monitoring levels of CO2, these can be used as a proxy measure.
19. CO2 monitors detect the amount of CO2 in a space, which will increase if adequate ventilation is not provided, thereby prompting user intervention such as opening a window or vent. The most recent scientific advice and research is that regularly used, multi-occupancy areas with CO2 levels consistently at or above 1500ppm should be prioritised for improvement.
20. This scientific advice and research also indicates that indoor spaces where there is likely to be an enhanced aerosol generation rate (e.g. singing/drama, indoor PE when permitted) should aim to ensure ventilation is sufficient to maintain CO2 concentrations at lower levels (a figure of 800ppm is recommended).

21. Relevant local authority teams should provide clear advice on the appropriate use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors, including procedures to be followed by staff in the event of inappropriate levels being indicated (see table below, which sets out general guidelines as to how levels of CO<sub>2</sub> can be used as indicators of potential actions required).
22. These general guidelines may require local interpretation into classroom-specific guidance to align with the types of monitoring device in use.

<p><b>CO<sub>2</sub> level below 800 PPM</b></p> <p>No remedial action required as this indicates a space is likely to be well ventilated Background ventilation should always be maintained</p>
<p><b>CO<sub>2</sub> level 800 to 1500 PPM</b></p> <p>Increase ventilation, e.g. opening windows and doors (potentially maximising opening width by derestricting subject to issues such as fire and security) or increasing the rate/duration of mechanical ventilation systems. Purge before and after each lesson by opening windows/doors fully or adjusting timings of ventilation systems. Limit occupancy numbers where possible Move high level activities such as dance, music or physical activities to well ventilated spaces</p>
<p><b>CO<sub>2</sub> level above 1500 PPM</b></p> <p>Action required, which could include purge ventilation or reducing room occupancy.</p> <p><b>If CO<sub>2</sub> level is consistently in this zone:</b></p> <p>Consider introducing additional natural or mechanical ventilation Consider reducing room occupancy or repurposing room Consider temporary use of air cleaning devices in exceptional circumstances where no other mitigation is achievable while continuing to work to achieve a more sustainable solution to increase ventilation.</p>

### **Air cleaners / HEPA filters**

23. Air cleaning devices / HEPA filters may play a role in reducing airborne transmission of aerosols where it is not possible to maintain adequate ventilation. However, the available scientific evidence to date continues to support a primary focus on improving natural or mechanical ventilation, with CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring playing a supporting role in identifying areas of concern.
24. Expert advice from groups including SAGE and HSE states that air filtration devices do not provide any ventilation, and should never be used as a substitute for efforts to improve ventilation – other actions should be undertaken to improve ventilation before, exceptionally, considering use of air cleaning devices. It is therefore important to understand that air cleaning devices must not be used as a substitute for natural or mechanical ventilation (including the opening of windows and doors) during cold weather – doing so may increase risks to staff and pupils. Further work is ongoing in relation to HEPA filtration and UV treatment, and the Scottish Government will consider this scientific advice as it becomes available.

25. The guidance from the Health and Safety Executive on air cleaning devices states: 'These units are not a substitute for ventilation. You should prioritise any areas identified as poorly ventilated for improvement in other ways before you think about using an air cleaning device'.
26. Air cleaning technology is an area of active ongoing research, building on international research and experience, and the Scottish Government is continuing to keep this work under close review and consider its relevance for the school environment
27. Local authorities should consider the HSE guidance on air cleaning devices if they are, exceptionally, considering making use of these as short-term mitigation measures in spaces where adequate ventilation cannot be achieved (for example, where CO<sub>2</sub> monitor readings are consistently at or over 1500ppm and cannot be reduced through other mitigation measures).
28. The specification, installation, operation and maintenance of air cleaners/purifiers/filters is a complex topic. There are a wide variety of different machines which may appear similar without the application of specialist knowledge. Operation can be problematic due to noise, and there are potential risks associated with maintenance regimes. Local authorities should consider the use of such devices only in the exceptional circumstances outlined above, and ensure that specialist advice is engaged at all stages.

## **Implementation**

29. Local authorities and schools should, in consultation with staff and trade unions, ensure there are clear plans for effective implementation of local strategies. Key points to consider may include:
  - clarity on responsibility for implementing approaches, with due regard for workload
  - provision of instruction or signage, etc. to support implementation (e.g. with clear instructions for window/door/vent opening and mechanical system operation)
  - pragmatic, proportionate procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns around ventilation or heating, local authorities may wish to ensure that contact details are provided for relevant local authority teams or health and safety officers
30. Local authorities should also ensure that they put in place clear communications for staff, pupils and parents about the measures that are being taken to ensure adequate ventilation. This can help raise awareness of the importance of these measures, as well as providing reassurance.
31. This annex will be kept under careful review and updated in light of emerging science and practice.

**Key scenarios - expectations and actions to ensure readiness**

Scenarios

Schools and local authorities should ensure readiness for the following key scenarios, in view of the uncertainty around the path of the virus in the future:

**1) Scenario 1 (Reintroduction of mitigations – schools remain open):** Ensuring readiness for an outbreak where mitigations require to be reinstated at either the national or local level, introducing these accordingly and within an agreed timeframe in the school environment, supported by evidence and data.

**2) Scenario 2 (Partial attendance – school buildings remain open):** Partial attendance/remote learning where staff absence disrupts full-time in-school learning or local health protection teams advise this as being necessary to control transmission.

**3) Scenario 3 (Full remote learning for all pupils – school buildings closed):** No physical attendance at school for pupils except for key worker and vulnerable children, e.g. where local health protection teams advise this as being necessary to control transmission.

The table below sets out shared expectations in respect of readiness to deal these three key scenarios, and the actions that should be taken to ensure readiness and minimise education disruption as a result of Covid.

Issue	Expectations	Actions to ensure readiness	Complete
Risk assessments	All relevant risk assessments are kept up to date for relevant scenarios.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow guidance on preparation and maintenance of risk assessments as set out in this guidance, including in respect of joint working between local authorities, staff and trade unions.</li> </ul>	
Communications with staff	All staff are aware of the actions required to reintroduce or remove mitigations, the timescales required, and how they can best support pupils to ensure educational continuity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specify responsibility within the school for communications with staff in these circumstances.</li> <li>Provide time for teachers and other school staff to read associated comms and become familiar themselves with any changes.</li> </ul>	
Communications with parents/ carers and pupils	<p>All pupils and families are aware of the actions required to reintroduce or remove mitigations, the timescales required, and how they will be supported to ensure educational continuity.</p> <p>Suitable arrangements are in place to support parental involvement and engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specify responsibility within the school for communications with staff in these circumstances.</li> </ul>	



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	and learner participation under all 3 scenarios.		
Mitigations within schools and local desk instructions	All key staff and pupils have access to and understand the guidance on which mitigations should be in place at any given time. Advice is in place to address any questions they may have.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure key people within school have strong understanding of mitigations for schools and can inform communications to wider staff and pupils on this subject.</li> </ul>	
Remote learning lesson plans	Plans for remote learning have been developed and can be deployed in line with Education Scotland guidance. Previously agreed <a href="#">Education Scotland/CERG guidance</a> makes clear that class teachers retain responsibility for planning and organising children’s and young people’s learning, with learning supported by parents and carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure awareness of Education Scotland guidance on remote learning expectations.</li> <li>• Ensure awareness of <a href="#">Supporting Learners’ Code of Practice</a> which focuses on ASN.</li> <li>• Maintain (and, where appropriate, revise) previously-developed plans for remote learning lessons that can be deployed for relevant year groups and scenarios.</li> <li>• ES and local authorities to ensure schools, learners and parents are aware of <a href="#">the NELO offer</a> including live, recorded and supported resources for both the BGE and Senior Phase.</li> </ul>	
Remote learning materials	Children and young people have been provided with the non-IT materials needed to ensure effective remote learning (e.g. writing equipment, notebooks, etc.)  Parents/carers have suitable advice and support on how to support their children and young people with remote learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure awareness of Education Scotland guidance on remote learning expectations.</li> <li>• Identify which non-digital resources should be provided to pupils to support remote learning and how these will be distributed – these will usually be similar to those provided under normal classroom settings (e.g. art materials, textbooks, etc.)</li> </ul>	
IT and connectivity	IT needs of staff and pupils for remote learning for small numbers of pupils self-isolating are met in advance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure an understanding of IT and connectivity requirements amongst pupils and staff.</li> <li>• Signposting to parents/carers to ensure they are aware of any additional support they may be entitled to.</li> <li>• Schools and local authorities to liaise on provision of additional devices and connectivity where required.</li> <li>• Ensure staff awareness of relevant support, including <a href="#">tax relief</a> for additional costs for electricity, water and phone calls.</li> </ul>	
Professional learning for Remote Learning	Staff have been provided with guidance and training to allow them to support remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support awareness and uptake of available local and national professional learning opportunities including via</li> </ul>	

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	learning effectively, particularly in respect of use of IT.	Education Scotland's <a href="#">National Improvement Hub</a> which include resources on the use of digital technology to support learning and teaching.	
Wellbeing support	Clear wellbeing support arrangements are in place to deal with range of scenarios and their potential impacts on staff and pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure staff awareness of local and <a href="#">national</a> wellbeing support, and encourage uptake.</li> <li>• Ensure pupil awareness of local and <a href="#">national</a> wellbeing support, and encourage uptake.</li> </ul>	
Identification of key worker and vulnerable children	Schools and local authorities have previously identified key worker and vulnerable children and can update this rapidly in the event it is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities to agree with schools an approach to identifying key worker and vulnerable children in line with national guidance, and to maintain a regularly updated understanding of this in support of contingency planning.</li> </ul>	
Staffing	Development and implementation of contingency plans is supported by the availability of staff via supply lists or additional capacity across system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAs and schools to factor in potential contingency requirements when making use of additional central funding for staffing.</li> </ul>	
School transport	Requirements for mitigations on school transport in different scenarios are fully understood and can be implemented to required timescales by operators. School transport arrangements support partial attendance where required. Agreements in place with school transport operators on approach to be taken to support partial attendance where required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities to undertake joint planning with school transport operators to ensure readiness for these issues.</li> </ul>	