

**Guidance for Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in Schools, Colleges and Early Years Settings:**

**Checklist for additional measures implemented when a ‘Threshold’ has been met for COVID-19 cases in a setting**

**Name of setting:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Measure****(See below for further detail on each measure)** | **Date started** | **Date ended****(as relevant)** | **Comments** |
| **1.** | **Cohort the affected group(s)** |  |  |  |
| **2.** | **Send ‘Warn and inform’ letter to WHOLE setting** |  |  |  |
| **3.**  | **Send ‘Warn and inform letter to AFFECTED GROUP(S)** |  |  |  |
| **4.**  | **Introduce mask wearing** |  |  |  |
| **5.** | **Ensure maximum ventilation** |  |  |  |
| **6.** | **Implement CO2 monitoring** |  |  |  |
| **7.**  | **Ensure infection control measures on school transport** |  |  |  |
| **8.** | **Promote robust hand hygiene and cleaning measures** |  |  |  |
| **9.** | **Reduce/limit on site visits** |  |  |  |
| **10.** | **Encourage staff and pupil vaccination** |  |  |  |
| **11.** | **Increase frequency of LFD testing for staff and relevant pupils** |  |  |  |

1. **Cohort affected group(s)** (i.e., class or year) in setting. This means trying as much as possible to keep the affected group(s) away from the rest of the setting to prevent further spread to unaffected groups. For some secondary schools this may be more challenging but explore scope for doing it at key times e.g., stagger mealtimes and breaktimes; avoid large-group assemblies; re-introduce one-way systems etc.
2. **‘Warn and inform’ letter to WHOLE setting**. The primary aim of this letters is to make parents/carers aware of the outbreak and to encourage extra vigilance (or a lower threshold) for testing when their child has symptoms of COVID-19. For secondary school-aged children, it is important to emphasise the importance of regular LFD testing during the outbreak (i.e., seek to increase compliance).
3. **‘Warn and inform’ letter to AFFECTED GROUP(S).** The primary aim of this letter is to request a PCR test on children in the affected group(s). It is likely that there are asymptomatic cases in this wider group, and if these can be identified and removed from the setting, spread will be limited. It can also prevent harm in terms of spread from children to older relatives who may be more vulnerable. This letter also advises being vigilant (or having a lower threshold) for testing when their child has symptoms of COVID-19, even if the initial PCR test was negative. For secondary school-aged children, it is important to emphasise regular LFD testing during the outbreak, even when the initial PCR test is negative.
4. **Introduce mask wearing.** For secondary schools, we recommend a policy of compulsory mask wearing in communal areas (e.g., when moving around in corridors) and considering their use in classrooms. It may be appropriate (e.g., if spread is contained and/or the setting operates in discrete groups) to limit the use to the affected group(s) or in middle schools just for years 7 & 8. A decision around mask wearing will also need to consider the impact they have on schooling/education.
5. **Ensure maximum ventilation.** Classrooms, dining areas and other indoor communal areas must be well ventilated (i.e., have at least one open window – even opening windows at start or end of class is helpful). Consider scope for outdoor lessons and encouragement of warmer clothing to maximise ventilation. See additional information on ventilation.[[1]](#footnote-1)
6. **Implement CO2 monitoring**. Take CO2 measurements for rooms – particularly those used by affected groups/classes or take steps to undertake CO2 monitoring in the school. Consistently high readings (>1500ppm CO2) suggest poor ventilation and should be reviewed with the lead consultant and could require additional interventions to improve ventilation. Rooms with high readings need additional attention to improve ventilation, and where this is not possible other mitigations could be considered, in conjunction with the duty consultant and Public Health England. If the setting does not have a CO2 monitoring machine, a request can be made to the regional partnership team.
7. **School transport**. Appropriate infection control measures should be in place and should include a discussion around mask wearing, seating arrangements and ventilation.
8. **Promote robust hand hygiene and cleaning measures –** throughout the setting.
9. **Reduce/limit on site visits** - e.g., Open Days/Evenings, parent/carer visits, sports events.
10. **Encourage staff and pupil vaccination –** as appropriate.
11. **Increase LFD testing.** In consultation with the local Public Health team, discuss potential and capacity for increasing LFD testing for staff and relevant pupils.

**Definition of an outbreak**

The definition of an outbreak (taken from the government’s [contingency framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings?utm_source=18%20August%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) is meeting one of the following **thresholds**:

* **5** children, pupils, students, or staff, **who are likely to have mixed closely**, who test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; **or**
* **10%** of children, pupils, students, or staff **who are likely to have mixed closely** who test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period;

For special schools, residential settings, and settings that operate with **20 or fewer children, pupils, students, and staff at any one time**: **2** children, pupils, students, and staff, **who are likely to have mixed closely**, who test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period.

If a young person or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19, this could indicate increased severity of illness, or a new variant of concern, and advice should be sought urgently from Public Health.

1. Examples for material: [050821-ventilation-guidance-for-business.pdf (hertfordshirelep.com)](https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/gxqbomp0/050821-ventilation-guidance-for-business.pdf); [ventilation-infographic-bbfa-6-8-21.png (1262×2245) (hertfordshirelep.com)](https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/2ieflndn/ventilation-infographic-bbfa-6-8-21.png); [Ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (hse.gov.uk)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)