



Guidance for services that work with educational settings – COVID-19

June 2020

A full range of services and agencies continue to work with all the different educational settings across Cornwall. It is recognised that our joint endeavours are vital for the wellbeing of children and young people in our county. This guidance sets out information to support a shared understanding of the most appropriate ways for services to be delivered to educational settings at the current time.

As lockdown measures are slowly eased, how services and agencies work with educational settings needs to be considered carefully and risk assessed.

The underpinning principles for activity can be found in the DfE's planning guidance for education and early years providers released on 2nd June 2020.

The overriding principle is that staff from services and agencies should not visit unless it is absolutely essential. Schools have been advised to “**limit visits during school hours**” (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools>)

Preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) involves dealing with both direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). The range of approaches and actions generally promoted need to be employed by staff from services and agencies to reduce risk. These include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell, staff who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, must not attend an educational setting
- cleaning hands more often than usual - washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly - or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.

Cornwall Council staff should offer support through phone, email or some other digital means as the preferred option. This will help educational settings comply with the DfE guidance that advises that they: **Limit external visitors to the setting and ensure they only come into the building when strictly necessary, for example if providing an essential service or essential support for a child’s health and wellbeing.**

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings>)

In the very limited circumstances where an essential visit may be required the following points must be considered, and discussed with senior staff as appropriate:

1. Double check – is this visit essential? How else could the service be provided? Could the visit take place at a time when children and young people and most staff are not on site? A shared view about a visit being essential needs to be reached with an appropriate member of staff at the education setting. Who is appropriate will depend upon the reason for your visit e.g. a building fault, teaching a pupil.
2. If planning an essential visit, consider the measures to implement to reduce the risk of transmission. Use: [Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#). Make contact with the educational setting to plan the details of your visit, including confirmation of the requirements of that setting. Use the Cornwall Council intranet staff guidance on Coronavirus to support you in preparing for your area of work: <http://cornwallcouncilintranet.cc.cornwallonline.net/good-to-know/news/carousel-items/information-about-coronavirus-covid-19/new-sections/health-safety-and-wellbeing-support/>
3. All planned activities should be risk assessed in the light of Covid-19 and due consideration given to how usual practice may need to be adapted. Work with the educational setting to discuss what physical distancing and hygiene measures have been put in place and the requirements of visitors. Consider the effect these arrangements will have on usual on-site activities and pre-visit preparations. Think through all aspects of usual activity e.g. how much work space you need, but also consider less usual circumstances, like: what action will you take if there is a fire evacuation? The HSE toolkit supports consideration of risk. The COVID-19 risks could be considered alongside the classroom and office checklists for example. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>
4. The number of different sites visited on a single day should be considered carefully. Ideally only one site should be visited per day to reduce the risk of transmission, whether this is possible will be informed by the urgency of the input needed by children and young people.

5. Hands must be sanitised at entry to, and, exit from each establishment. When a member of staff returns home, they should change and put their clothing in the wash.
6. Staff from services and agencies must always complete education settings' attendance records in full in case track and trace becomes relevant.
7. Physical distancing should be applied with children, young people and staff as far as is possible. If you need to interact in close proximity with an individual child or young person this will probably best be done in an area that is separate from the group that they are usually a member of, sometimes referred to as their 'bubble'. This will enable the setting to clean the area you use before and after a visit. Increasing the ventilation of a room by opening a window or using outside facilities can also reduce the risk of transmission.
8. If there is contact with more than one child or young person, consecutively, in the same visit the member of staff from the service or agency should ensure that touched surfaces e.g. table, chair and door handle are wiped with disinfectant between each child or young person seen.
9. Any toys or resources to be used should be planned to enable them to be cleaned easily after use. Staff are responsible for ensuring that the cleaning takes place.
10. Staff should ensure that they have adequate tissues, hand sanitiser and cleaning wipes with them for the duration of each visit. Educational settings will require staff to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser on entry and following contact. Alcohol based sanitisers can cause dry cracked skin, hand cream can help to keep skin supple and intact.
11. Reduce the need for face to face contact with parents or other adults, using technology to communicate wherever possible, even when there has needed to be in person interaction with an individual child or young person.

This document has been compiled using information available at the time of writing. It will be updated as, and if, required in the future.