



EDUCATION RESOURCES

## Safe System of Work (SSOW)

<b>Resource: Education</b>	<b>Reference Nos:</b>	Covid-19 SSOW 6 ER
	<b>Issue Date:</b>	12/02/21
<b>Service: All</b>	<b>Page Nos:</b>	10
	<b>Author:</b>	G Lambie/A Riddell
	<b>Reviewer:</b>	A Connor
<b>Task: Ensuring a safe and supportive environment for learning and teaching during the coronavirus pandemic</b>	<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Every 3 months

### Induction and briefing arrangements

All employees should be made aware of this Safe System of Work (SSOW).

### Scope

This SSOW is intended to advise employees of the measures and actions required to minimise the risk of Covid 19 transmission in all educational establishments.

- Heads and other managers must monitor and enforce all of the measures contained within this SSOW, the Education Resources “Covid-19 Exposure Reducing the Risk in Schools” general risk assessment and any additional safety or public health advice.
- Employees must co-operate with managers in the application of workplace safety standards and must follow all the measures set out in this SSOW, associated risk assessments and safety alerts/bulletins.

It must be recognised that there will need to be flexibility in the use of this advice and some variation across areas depending on transmission rates within local communities, emerging scientific advice, and which Tier Levels have been adopted.

A zero tolerance of infection symptoms will be in place and staff must follow strict compliance with national and local public health instructions including FACTS and Test and Protect processes.

### Risk Assessment

This SSOW supplements the information contained in the various Health and Safety Handbooks for Education Resources in the form of risk assessments and safe systems of work. Also NHS Public Health information and guidance including that in relation to Test and Protect.

It should be used in conjunction with SLC Risk Assessment “Covid-19 Exposure Minimisation” (Reference “Covid1”) and the associated information provided in guidance document GD2 “Health and Safety Risk Assessment Guide Covid-19” available on the intranet. Also read and complete the Education Resources Risk Assessment “Covid-19 Exposure – Reducing the Risk in Schools” (v4 12/02/21)”. This document supersedes previous SSOW versions.

Employees involved in risk assessment should also complete the Health & Safety - General Risk Assessment Learn Online module.

## **What do we know about the spread of COVID-19?**

There are two routes by which COVID-19 can be spread:

- **Directly** from close contact with an infected person (within two metres) where respiratory secretions can enter the eyes, mouth, nose or airways. This risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person who has symptoms.
- **Indirectly** by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching own mouth, nose, or eyes.

## **How long can the virus survive on environmental surfaces?**

This depends on several factors, including:

- the type of surface
- exposure to sunlight
- environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity and exposure of the surface to decontamination products e.g. detergents and disinfectants.

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

It's known that similar viruses, are transferred to and by people's hands and therefore frequent hand hygiene and regular decontamination of frequently touched environmental and equipment surfaces will help to reduce the risk of infection transmission.

## **What control measures can be applied within education and childcare settings during national restrictions?**

### Supporting vulnerable staff

Arrangements should be put in place to reflect individual circumstances in line with any specific clinical advice and discussions with managers. Further advice on this issue is available from the Council's Personnel Team and at:

- Scottish Governments website - <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>
- South Lanarkshire Council website - My Works COVID-19 Employee Information [https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200254/employee\\_information/1871/covid-19\\_employee\\_information](https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200254/employee_information/1871/covid-19_employee_information)
- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

The concerns within BAME communities must be recognised and individual requests for additional protections should be supported where possible. Care should be taken to ensure that BAME staff, pupils and families are involved in decisions about additional protections.

These may include, where practicable, working from home, extended use of face coverings, re-arranging workspace or minimising physical contact.

Staff should use the South Lanarkshire Council Covid-19 Self-Assessment form to inform discussions with their line manager on these matters.

National guidance on supports for those deemed vulnerable is subject to change and fluctuations in transmission rates and Tier levels. Staff deemed vulnerable should stay informed on these issues and review local arrangements accordingly with their line manager.

### Working from home

Where working from home has been agreed locally, head teachers and other managers should take account of the employee's individual health status and:

- Arrange necessary support, equipment, advice and guidance.
- Keep in regular contact with employees working at home
- Ensure employees review the Council's "Remote Working Health and Safety Checklist" and managers carry out any required actions to ensure compliance - refer to SLC Health and Safety GD 3 Creating a Remote Workstation - [http://intranet.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/20620/topics\\_of\\_interest/300/covid-19](http://intranet.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/20620/topics_of_interest/300/covid-19)

### Self-isolation

Anyone showing symptoms of infection must not come to work but must follow national guidance on self-isolation and take a test.

### At Home Asymptomatic Testing

This is voluntary, however all staff are encouraged to participate in this scheme in order to support infection control measures where people may be asymptomatic and in attendance at work. A consent form must be signed, the process involves twice weekly home testing and the recording of the results on a national portal. If the test is positive the line manager should be notified and the Test and Protect process will begin. Full guidance on this process has been made available to all establishments and a separate risk assessment will be in place for the safe and effective operation of testing programmes.

### Physical Distancing

All staff must maintain two metre physical distancing between adults and learners where possible and where directed. This should be strongly enforced.

In an ASN provision, discussion on physical distancing measures should take place with staff involved to ensure an appropriate balance of risk between infection control and pupils needs. Wherever possible, keep children and young people within the same groups for the duration of the school day, with the same teacher and support assistants. Keep groups apart where possible.

### **What if someone falls ill at work?**

If an employee develops a high temperature, a new persistent cough, a loss of, or a change in, normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia) they should:

- Ensure that their manager or supervisor is informed.
- Return home. If this is not possible, they should move to an isolation area where the employee can wait until they are able to leave the workplace.
- Avoid touching anything.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin.
- Follow Test and Protect guidance. Arrange for a test, follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation has been completed.

### **What about travelling to and from work?**

- Good hygiene measures should be followed to minimise transmission across high touch points.
- Physical distancing and other current government guidance (e.g. face coverings) should be followed when using public transport.
- Employees should follow the latest advice from Transport Scotland on Car Sharing and other means of transport. Currently, wherever possible car sharing should be avoided out with household groups. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/advice-on-how-to-travel-safely/#section-63888>

## **What kind of practical arrangements can be put in place within educational establishments?**

### Arriving and leaving work

- Hand washing facilities or hand sanitiser must be provided at workplace entrance points.
- Employees must wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitising gel (either anti-viral or if alcohol based then a minimum 60% alcohol content), employees should ensure they dry their hands thoroughly, and should always clean their hands when entering/leaving the building, before and after eating, changing classrooms and after using the toilet.
- Employees must avoid touching their face especially the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Signage posted at reception areas reminding employees of the importance of good hand hygiene and observing physical distancing measures.
- Limits on the use of touch-based devices such as keypads as far as practicable.
- Staggered start, finish and break times.
- Additional entrance points to further reduce congestion taking account of security and fire arrangements
- Additional parking or bike-rack spaces to help people walk, run or cycle to work.

### Movement around the building including corridors

- One-way or keep left systems to ensure a good flow of people around the workplace and in stairs and corridors consider using floor markings
- Movement between classrooms should be minimised wherever possible. Where this cannot be avoided, consider providing cleaning supplies to enable wiping down of their own surfaces on entry and leaving.
- Limit non-essential movement around the building and restrict some areas in consultation with staff.
- Reduce maximum occupancy levels in rooms, lifts and other spaces using signage and markings.
- Determine and adhere to safe levels of occupancy in heavy traffic work areas taking account of physical distancing controls.
- Ensure staff with limited mobility can access lifts and occupancy is controlled.
- Stairs to be used in preference to lifts for those able to do so.

### Workplaces and workstations

- An enhanced cleaning regime will be in place (see below).
- Staff should keep workspaces free of clutter to assist enhanced cleaning.
- Reviews of office and classroom layouts to maintain physical distancing.
- Signage and floor markings to remind employees to regularly wash their hands, use resources provided and maintain physical distancing.
- Avoid sharing desks and other resources. Any shared equipment should be cleaned between use. Anti-viral spray and paper towels provided for regular personal use at computer keyboards, photocopiers, telephones and other equipment.
- Introduce a clear desk policy and remove unnecessary items from classrooms and work areas to ensure all areas are more easily cleaned.
- Ensure where possible that movement of individuals between work stations is minimised and where work stations are shared there is cleaning between use.
- Keep main reception windows closed.
- Visitors to workplaces to be kept to a minimum and access controlled.
- Employees and visitors must not enter the building if they have symptoms of COVID-19.

### Ventilation

The design of our modernised education estate allows for effective ventilation across the building, however during this pandemic we must seek to increase ventilation levels by actively opening windows and doors where practical and safe to do so. At the same time, heating systems have been increased in both temperature and running time to assist with maintaining room temperatures.

- Arriving in your classroom make sure your hands are clean, leave the door open (will also reduce contact with door handles), and begin the day by ensuring there are no obstructions to maximising ventilation by opening blinds/curtains and removing any items blocking vents.
- As soon as pupils occupy the classroom open windows to their fullest as allowed by the restrictor. Top windows should be open where possible.
- Should pupil occupancy levels exceed 25 in the secondary sector then windows should be opened to the maximum available, subject to any restrictors, for as long as possible.
- If the room is cold and feels well ventilated some windows can be closed. However, those windows which have the least impact, relative to causing draughts, should remain open to at least the minimum amount.
- At lunchtime, breaks and in between classes windows should be opened fully for 5-10 mins.
- Lower temperatures and likely windy conditions in the winter months will increase the natural ventilation through openings. This means that partially opening windows and doors can still provide adequate ventilation at the same time as maintaining room temperatures.
- During inclement weather, staff should consider the flexibility in permissible clothing while indoors and also the benefits of re-designing seating plans to reflect individual pupil or staff temperature preferences.
- At the end of the day, remember to close all windows for security reasons.
- Internal fire doors should not be held open unless they have a hold open and self-closing mechanism which responds to a fire alarm activation.
- Not all classrooms have opening windows and the flow of air in mechanical systems are designed to take account of normal occupancy capacities and have been set to run longer, however as with other classrooms consider leaving doors open to further enhance air flow.
- If there are any specific issues with regards your classroom these should be reported in the normal way which will allow a member of the technical team to carry out an assessment of any action required.

#### Meeting Rooms and other common areas

- Use remote working tools (e.g. MS Teams) to limit in-person meetings.
- Make use of larger free or outdoor space.
- Hygiene and distancing signage / markings in areas where regular meetings take place.
- Numbers of participants attending meetings should be minimal.
- Hand sanitiser/ Anti-viral spray and paper towels available in meeting rooms.
- Review room layouts to maintain physical distancing.
- Ensure good ventilation by opening windows and doors.

#### Hygiene Facilities

- Hand washing facilities in the form of soap and running hot water must be provided.
- Hand sanitising gel (either anti-viral or if alcohol based then a minimum 60% alcohol content) must also be provided within offices, reception areas and throughout the building. Care should be taken in practical areas where naked flames can present an ignition risk. Soap and water is preferred in these areas.
- Soap and hand sanitiser gel will be replenished as necessary to ensure there is an adequate supply.
- Staff should use paper towels provided rather than hand dryers.
- When applying hand sanitiser gel allow the gel to dry fully before commencing work activities.
- Restrictions on the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time. Signage posted to provide specific guidance.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes established for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks, toilet seats, flush and waste receptacles will be in place.
- Bins will be emptied regularly to avoid overflowing.
- Signage posted to raise awareness of good hand hygiene; in particular handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely or into your arm if a tissue is not available.

- Where staff use shower and changing facilities, clear guidelines on use should be established to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items and physical distancing guidelines are met.

#### Staffroom and other welfare areas

- It is recommended that staff bring their own prepared meals, drinks and utensils from home.
- Staff should use their own crockery/cutlery in staff areas and ensure these are cleaned using detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use.
- Water dispensers can be used with care and those doing so should sanitise their hands before and after use. To reduce usage, staff should bring their own filled bottle each day which can be topped up during the day if required.
- Kettles, microwaves, toasters and other kitchen equipment and furniture can still be used provided staff adopt regular cleaning. Otherwise they may be removed from use.
- Staggered break times to avoid congestion and maintain a 2 metre distance.
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitising gel (either anti-viral or if alcohol based then a minimum 60% alcohol content) should be available in staffrooms
- Review room layouts and occupancy levels to maintain physical distancing
- Signage posted to make employees aware of the rules in place regarding welfare arrangements.

#### Deliveries

- Cleaning procedures to be established for goods and merchandise entering the workplace.
- Delivery drivers should have clear guidance on using toilets and other facilities
- Enhanced hand hygiene regime for employees who handle goods and merchandise.
- Restrict non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to employees.

#### Visitors

- Members of the public or adult visitors to the school should be strictly limited to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school. Those providing essential services e.g. psychologists, social work should be able to visit schools with appropriate mitigations, adherence to local controls and in co-operation with the service provider. Alternative methods of communication to contact the council should be encouraged which would avoid the need for face-to-face contact such as e-mail, online services or telephone.
- In circumstances where members of the public do visit the premises the following additional measures should be adopted:

- Adhere to Education Resources Guidance for **Visiting Services and External Agencies Procedure Note - Revised October 2020**

#### **What arrangements are in place for pupils?**

Our approach to managing the risk to pupils, in partnership with Trade Union and Health and Safety colleagues, is detailed in the Minimising Covid-19 Exposure General Risk Assessment and falls across four key areas (supplemented by the asymptomatic testing for senior phase):

#### Personal Hygiene

For example:

- Clear guidance and age appropriate instruction on hand washing / sanitising
- Pupils must wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitising gel (either anti-viral or if alcohol based then a minimum 60% alcohol content), ensuring they dry their hands thoroughly, and should always do this when entering/leaving the building, changing classrooms, before/after eating and after using the toilet.
- Provision of personal resources to be kept in school.
- Clear instruction for pupils showing symptoms.

## Environmental Hygiene

For example:

- Enhanced cleaning regime using the most up to date methods.
- Adequate provision of anti-viral cleaning materials for employee/pupil use.
- Arrangements for quick response and full clean if positive case confirmed.

## Physical Distancing

For example:

- Measures to decrease the amount of physical interactions.
- 2 metre distancing for secondary aged pupils to be introduced Feb 2021.
- No assemblies or large gatherings, particularly in the senior phase at secondary schools. Consideration should be given to discourage social physical contact, using all available classroom space, using covid-secure seating arrangements and reviewing guidance for time spent in college environments.
- Consider arrangements for pick up/drop off to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.

## Face Covering

- Secondary pupils should wear face coverings in corridors and other communal areas. (Be aware that at Level 3 and above the requirement increases to all staff and pupils wearing a face covering in classrooms during lessons). Face coverings to be worn at all times by staff and young people in secondary schools (15th March)
- Ensure that pupils are encouraged not to touch their face including mouth, eyes and nose.
- All primary and secondary pupils should wear face coverings on dedicated school transport.

## At Home Asymptomatic Testing

This is voluntary, however all senior phase pupils are encouraged to participate in this scheme in order to support infection control measures where people may be asymptomatic and in attendance at school. A consent form must be signed, the process involves twice weekly home testing and the recording of the results on a national portal. If the test is positive the school should be notified and the Test and Protect process will begin. Full guidance on this process has been made available to all establishments and a separate risk assessment will be in place for the safe and effective operation of testing programmes.

## **Other Health and Safety Arrangements**

Heads and managers will provide staff with full information on local arrangements for:

- Reporting concerns and seeking advice
- General risk assessment
- Good quality dialogue with staff, parents and pupils on progress
- Test and Protect processes
- Actions required where a case is suspected or confirmed
- Fast access to Covid-19 testing for staff and pupils
- Any enhanced surveillance programmes adopted by the school

## Practical Subjects

Additional specific guidance on practical subjects is available from the National Improvement Hub. All staff involved in the delivery of these activities should review this guidance on a regular basis using the most up to date guidance to inform local risk assessment for each activity.

## Wellbeing

- All staff should be fully aware of the supports available to them including those via the Council's Employee Assistance Scheme. Consider in-school support mechanisms for staff to talk, share concerns,

apply wellbeing approaches. Education Scotland have provided complementary information on Mental health & wellbeing : supports for practitioners, parents, carers & young people.

▪

#### First Aid

- Consider how to provide first aid to a person who may become injured due to a work activity, including protection of both the injured person and the first aider(s) and appropriate PPE required.
- Sanitation and cleaning provisions are in place afterwards including handwashing.
- First aid cover and qualifications during COVID-19 outbreak refer to - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>
- Amend the First Aid Assessment where necessary and review at appropriate intervals.

#### Fire Evacuation

- Heads have been asked to review fire evacuation arrangements to take account of physical distancing. Any changes to the existing arrangements will be communicated to all staff and pupils.
- Review fire evacuation arrangements (EFAP) and (PEEPs) to ensure control measures are adequate.
- Ensure an adequate number of Fire Controllers are available.

#### Cleaning Regime

- Heads and managers will ensure enhanced cleaning arrangements will be in place including an increased focus on high intensity touchpoints such as door furniture (push plates, handles), wall furniture (light switches, sockets) and sanitary ware to ensure those spaces are sanitised more regularly using product which is active against bacteria and viruses, particularly in communal areas and at touchpoints including:
  - Welfare facilities including toilet flush buttons, taps etc.
  - Door handles and push plates.
  - Food preparation areas including electrical appliances.
  - Telephone equipment.
  - Desks.
  - Keyboards, photocopiers and other equipment.

Effective means of cleaning these areas/items will involve the use of Anti-viral spray and paper towels.

- Ensure more frequent cleaning of rooms/areas that must be used by different groups including staffrooms.
- Introduce a clear desk policy and remove unnecessary items from classrooms and work areas to ensure all areas are more easily cleaned.
- Remove soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean (such as those with intricate parts). Children and young people should be encouraged not to bring toys from home or to share personal belongings.
- Limit the use of shared resources, including those usually taken home. Keep bags off desks and worktops. Any shared materials and surfaces should be cleaned more frequently.
- Schools can consider additional mitigation from surface contamination of jotters, textbooks and library books by quarantining these for 72 hours or via careful hand washing/sanitisation before and after use.
- Anti-viral spray and paper towels will be provided for regular use of equipment such as computer keyboards, photocopiers and telephones.
- Consider additional cleaning arrangements for specialist equipment e.g. in practical subjects or ASN provision.



### Suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace

- School leaders should understand the process for managing a confirmed case(s) of Covid-19 infection and how to engage with their local Health Protection Team (HPT) via SLC Education Resources. Adhere to 'Heads of Establishment Support Guide for Managing Positive Cases of Covid-19 in Schools and Educational Settings'.

### Face coverings

Note that a face covering is not the same as a medical face mask (PPE).

- Face Coverings can be worn by anyone wishing to do so in any part of the school.
- **Face coverings to be worn at all times by staff and young people in secondary school (15th March).**
- Face coverings should be worn by adults wherever they cannot keep 2m distance from other adults and/or children and young people.
- Early Learning and Childcare staff do not need to wear face coverings when interacting with nursery children.
- Face coverings should also be worn in the following circumstances (subject to exemption on medical grounds):
  - ✓ At all times when adults in early years settings, adults in primary schools, and adults and young people in secondary schools, are moving around the school in corridors, office and admin areas, canteens (except when dining) and other confined communal areas, (including staff rooms and toilets).
  - ✓ By parents and other visitors to all school sites (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents at drop-off and pick-up.
  - ✓ In line with the current arrangements for public transport, where adults and children and young people aged five and over are travelling on dedicated school transport.
- School Support Assistants and those supporting children with Additional Support Needs, who may routinely have to work within two metres of primary, secondary or ASN school pupils, should wear face coverings as a general rule. However, the use of opaque face coverings should be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child, recognising that face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children – appropriate use of transparent face coverings may help in these circumstances.
- Staff, children and young people should receive clear guidance on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings.
- Consider regular messaging to staff and learners about face coverings, any equity concerns and having a contingency supply. Consider regular messaging to staff, parents and learners about face coverings, including guidance or practical demonstrations to support efficacy of wearing. Consider any equity concerns and have a contingency supply.
- **During Phase 3 level and above, all staff and pupils should wear a face covering in classrooms during lessons.**
- Pupils must be reminded to comply with wider societal rules in the wearing of face covering and of group sizes when entering shops.

If a face covering is worn it is important the following measures are followed:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- Avoid touching the face, including mouth eyes and nose or face covering as it could become easily contaminated.
- The face covering should be changed and washed daily.

- If the material is washable, wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions at a minimum water temperature of 60C. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in the normal waste stream.
- Continue to practice physical distancing.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- Staff will have access to, and are aware of, procedures for ordering replacement PPE in a regular and timely manner.
- The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need when supporting children and young people in their care- PPE will be provided in the following specific circumstances:
  - ✓ Work with children and young people whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs
- Where a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus and needs direct personal care or there is risk of splashing from a cough, spit or vomit. (The child, young person or staff member feeling unwell should also wear their face covering or a mask if possible).
  - ✓ Any other task that would routinely involve PPE e.g. providing first aid.
  - ✓ First aids kits and the area where they are stored should ensure supplies to deal with covid-19 symptoms – masks, gloves, aprons and visors.
  - ✓ Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP) – in a small number of complex medical cases staff may be involved in procedures with an increased risk of transmission through aerosols e.g. tracheostomy care

### **Test and Protect**

- The effective application of Test and Protect in the school environment will be an important means of preventing any spread of the virus and will be led by the local Health Protection Team. Schools should ensure that they understand the Test and Protect process and how to engage with their local Health Protection Team (HPT) via SLC Education Resources.

### **Enhanced and targeted protection in Levels 3 and 4 and Lockdown**

Refer to the Covid-19 Exposure – Reducing the Risks in Schools risk assessment which details the control measures to be followed depending on the current Tier rating being applied in Lanarkshire.

### **Communication**

It is important that senior leaders have systems in place to receive, review, retain and share all relevant information issued locally and nationally including information updates, newsletters and guidance notes.

### **Further support and advice**

Further support and advice on managing this risk is available locally from Education Support Services Co-ordinators, Trade Union representatives and from the Council's Health and Safety Team.