

Respiratory infections (including COVID-19)

Support Pack for Early Years and Childcare Providers

(Updated July 2022)

This support pack contains updated key documents to support you in your management of COVID-19 and includes:

- latest guidance and actions for you to consider and take
- the role of the local authority and partners
- general health protection measures
- information about how we will work with you to manage an outbreak of Respiratory infections (including Covid-19)
- risk assessment and policy templates

If you have any concerns, or questions which are not answered within this document, please email the Early Years and Childcare Service (CambsEYC): earlyyears.service@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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Acronyms

HPT - Health Protection Team – East of England

UKHSA - UK Health Security Agency

LA - Local Authority

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

DfE - Department for Education

The NHS COVID-19 symptoms in adults and symptoms in children have been updated.

Adults and children who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, should follow the UKHSA guidance. Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

The Settings Responsibilities

Settings should:

- Support and implement local processes to reduce the risk of respiratory infections, including COVID-19 transmission
- Contact the Early Years and Childcare Service (CambsEYC) for support if needed or if thresholds are met, including full or part closure

To note - There is no longer a requirement to inform Ofsted or RIDDOR of confirmed cases of COVID-19.

What to do if there is a POSITIVE test result

Settings must notify the Early Years and Childcare Service (CambsEYC) by emailing: earlyyears.service@cambridgeshire.gov.uk if any of the following apply:

- A higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or child absences due to COVID-19 infection
- Evidence of severe disease due to COVID-19, for example if a pupil, student, child, or staff member is admitted to hospital due to COVID-19
- A cluster of cases where there are concerns about the health needs of vulnerable staff or students within the affected group
- Setting leaders are worried about the impact of Covid on their setting
- Closure or partial closure is likely

When emailing CambsEYC, please summarise the nature of your email in the subject header. The team will triage emails accordingly and prioritise support. A team member will contact you to obtain further information and agree on the next steps.

Education and childcare settings may consider seeking specialist advice from the relevant UKHSA HPT if they are concerned and have seen:

- A higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection or diarrhoea and vomiting
- Evidence of severe disease due to an infection, for example if a pupil, student, child, or staff member is admitted to hospital
- More than one infection circulating in the same group of students and staff for example chicken pox and scarlet fever

Email: EastofEnglandHPT@phe.gov.uk

Telephone: 03003 038 537 (Option one).

Classification of an outbreak

An outbreak or incident may be defined in epidemiological terms as:

- An incident in which two or more people experiencing a similar illness are linked in time or place
- A greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual background rate for the place and time where the outbreak has occurred. For example:
 - Two or more cases of diarrhoea or vomiting which are in the same classroom, shared communal areas or taking part in the same activities
 - Higher than usual number of people diagnosed with scabies
 - Higher than usual number of people with respiratory symptoms.

Administering First Aid, and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Some settings have chosen to designate particular members of staff to support children displaying symptoms of COVID-19. It is vital for any member of staff who uses PPE to read the following document - CCC & PCC First Aid Requirements - and to also watch the video which runs through the basics of use of this equipment.

Staff should not use PPE unless they have followed this advice on training. PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of two metres cannot be maintained.

PPE should also be worn for cleaning the area where the individual with possible/suspected COVID-19 has been. At minimum, this should include gloves and an apron. Staff should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed.

General Public Health Measures

- Vaccinate all those eligible- this should be everyone >16 years including pregnant and clinically vulnerable staff and children between 12-15 years with certain underlying health conditions or living in households with immunosuppressed individuals: thevaccinators.co.uk
- Ensure good hygiene for everyone Information about the Coronavirus (e-bug.eu)
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
- GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Cambridgeshire Risk Assessment Template Model risk assessment template can be found at: cambsearntogether.co.uk/cambridgeshire-early-years-and-childcare/cambseyc-provider-updates

Outbreak Management Planning

The DfE have updated the contingency framework. All education and childcare settings should have outbreak management plans outlining how they would operate if any of the measures described within the contingency framework were recommended in their area for any reason. The Contingency Framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 (including responding to variants of concern) in education and childcare settings.

The Contingency Framework applies to a wide range of settings including Early Years settings, Out of school settings and Holiday clubs and should be considered alongside the relevant COVID-19 Guidance for those settings.

If the setting is advised by the Government, the Local authority, Directors of Public Health (DsPH) or PHE Health Protection Teams (HPTs) that they should apply additional protective measures, or the number of cases reaches the following thresholds:

- A higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or child absences due to COVID-19 infection
- Evidence of severe disease due to COVID-19, for example if a pupil, student, child, or staff member is admitted to hospital due to COVID-19
- A cluster of cases where there are concerns about the health needs of vulnerable staff or students within the affected group
- Setting leaders are worried about the impact of Covid on their setting
- Closure or partial closure is likely

The setting will take additional action which may include:

- Developing good communication with linked schools/settings so you can share relevant information about cases.
- Review cleaning processes – thinking broadly and identifying all touch points. Provide hand sanitiser nearby, ensure cleaning solution is appropriate and spot check quality and timings of cleaning.
- Keep non-urgent face to face meetings, show arounds, visits, and events to outside only.
- Increase messages about vaccinations and inform families to be cautious when you have positive cases, or you are aware that rates are increasing in your area
- Remind staff to get all three doses of the covid vaccine.
- Update Infectious disease policy, Risk Assessments, Outbreak management plans and share with staff and parents.
- Encourage or decide that face coverings are to be worn at drop off, collection and when adults are in close contact with each other. This includes car sharing.
- Play and learn outside as much as possible, keep hand washing and cleaning shared toys and resources. Where this does not happen - ventilate.
- Face masks may be considered for adults in communal areas

Action Plan Template

Additional Protective Measure:	Action we will take to implement:	How we will implement this in a timely manner and who will be responsible:
Vaccinations	Promote: uptake of vaccinations for all eligible staff & parents (everyone >16ys)	
Increased ventilation	Consider: Any activities that could take place outside, increased time outside, additional ventilation in the setting	
Increased cleaning	Consider: increased cleaning of touchpoints, increased cleaning of resources, cleaning areas between uses	
Re-introduction of small groups of children to prevent mixing between groups	Consider: how to reapply current arrangements, how to ensure staffing is consistent across bubbles, management of children attending more than one setting,	
Face coverings	Consider: staff use of face coverings within the setting in communal areas and when parents drop off or pick up their children	
Shielding	Consider: staff who may have to recommence shielding and the potential impact this would have on places, supporting children or families who need to recommence shielding	
Transition or show arounds	Consider: carrying out transition meetings outside in the garden using face coverings, holding events online wherever possible, video tours of the setting, video calls to new children	
Performances	Consider: cancelling all performances/events until outbreak is managed	
Parental visits to the setting	Consider: limiting visits to the setting during the outbreak, use of video tours/calls	
Attendance limitations (these will only be implemented as a last resort)	Vulnerable children and children of critical workers should be allowed to continue attending Early Years settings. To support children who must remain at home we will create home learning packs/use social media/use our online learning platform	

Updating your infectious disease policy

Government guidance is now in place. You may wish to consider updating your Infectious diseases policy to make it clear the protective measures that you wish to continue implementing as part of the terms and conditions for parents to use your service. Within the policy you may want to consider including

- How you are continuing to implement protective measures within your setting such as good ventilation, enhanced cleaning protocols and additional hand washing
- Links to your infectious illness policy and the clarification that this covers COVID-19
- Under what circumstances you would implement your Outbreak Management Plan (e.g., rising case numbers in your setting affecting business continuity, advice from Public Health) and how this will affect your childcare provision
- Encouraging staff and parents to take up the vaccine offer as soon as possible. Details on how to book are available here: thevaccinators.co.uk
- What additional measures you may wish to take to protect children who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable from contracting COVID-19
- Arrangements for parents/carers to drop off and pick up their children, any change in start/finish times, whether you are allowing them into the setting and whether you could encourage them to continue to wear a mask during handover
- What you will do in the case of staff sickness or staff having to self-isolate, e.g., closure of a room/bubble, how this will be communicated to parents and how you will allocate places in the event you are not able to meet all the needs of families requiring childcare
- Whether staff will continue to wear face coverings in communal areas or when in close contact with families
- Any arrangements to support settling into the setting/transitions and the protective measures you wish to have in place during settling in visits (e.g., garden visits where possible, mask wearing whilst inside, frequent hand washing during the visit)
- Any requirements you have for children attending other settings, such as notifying you of other settings that they attend so that you can agree protective measures
- Any changes to how information is communicated to parents at this time, e.g., email rather than verbal handover at the end of the day
- Information on how any illness or periods of self-isolation affects their fees and how any credit/debit will be allocated/collected
- What to do if a child/family member is displaying symptoms and clarify that children displaying symptoms will not be allowed to attend the setting
- How parents can contact you to let you know that their child is displaying symptoms
- How and when you will notify parents of a positive case within the setting
- Whether or not you will accept children into your setting whilst a household member is isolating or has tested positive
- Circumstances that may require a child/family to self-isolate even though they are not displaying symptoms e.g., a person that has travelled to a destination on the government list requiring isolation on return

Ensure you have shared your policy/updated policy with all users of the setting so that they understand the protective measures you are implementing.

Ventilation Guidance

Why does ventilation matter?

Poor ventilation can increase the risk of airborne transmission. Improving ventilation in settings remains only one part of the ongoing multi-layered approach to minimising the risk of coronavirus transmission. Research suggests improving ventilation can also improve concentration, reduce absences, and reduce the transmission of other viruses. Below, natural ventilation refers to fresh air via open windows, doors, or air vents, whereas mechanical ventilation includes fans, ducts, or air conditioning systems.

How can CO2 monitors help?

They help identify poor ventilation, not coronavirus, by measuring CO2 levels. It is normal for the levels to vary, but by taking real time readings you can help establish typical CO2 levels for each occupied school room. CO2 monitors are not recommended for smaller areas (1500ppm = poorly ventilated indoor space). Other poor ventilation indicators include:

- Areas where people work with no obvious ventilation (e.g., no open windows, doors, or vents).
- Areas that feel stuffy or smell bad.
- Mechanical systems that only recirculate indoor air.
- Ventilation systems whose performance is not known and/or has not been assessed in recent years. Higher risk factors in poorly ventilated spaces should also be considered and include:
 - Smaller rooms, larger class sizes
 - Indoor activities involving physical exertion or singing
 - Longer periods of occupancy in the room

What to do if the CO2 level is consistently medium or high?

Natural ventilation – can windows/vents/doors be opened or unblocked whilst maintaining thermal comfort and not compromising fire safety?

Air rooms as much as possible between lessons and when children are at home.

Mechanical ventilation – can settings be adjusted to maximise fresh air intake and stop/minimise recirculation?

Does the filter need cleaning or replacing? Does the system need maintaining and/or upgrading? If you are not sure about this: what visual clues are there about how your ventilation works?

Are there any ventilation plans available or specifications for your systems (should be in the operations and maintenance manual)?

Other options – can different rooms be used, particularly for physical activity/ larger class sizes/ consistent high readings? Can you reduce the amount of time spent in the room or the number of people in there?

What to do if readings continue to be consistently medium or high?

If you have consistent medium readings, continue to try to improve the levels through the steps above. If you have consistently high readings this isn't usually immediately dangerous but seeking further specialist help is advised (e.g., chartered engineer). HEPA or UV air filters to reduce the amount of circulating coronavirus can be considered where other options have been exhausted, although the evidence for this is limited in classroom settings and specialist advice should again be sought on their pros and cons.

Bibliography and further reading:

[CIBSE COVID-19 ventilation guidance](#) (Version 5, July 2021)

[Outdoor Play Matters.pdf](#) (Galwaychildcare.com)

Useful Government Guidance (www.gov.uk)

Guidance specific to education and childcare that settings should now refer to includes:

- [Health protection in education and childcare settings](#)
- [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings](#)
- [Good estate management for schools](#)

New and updated UKHSA guidance for the general population, which will also be relevant to education and childcare settings, includes:

- [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#)
- [Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#)
- [Ventilation to reduce the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk](#)
- [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#)

Supporting children's home learning:

- cambspboro.50thingstodo.org
- hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk