

Schools checklist of COVID-19 mitigation measures to consider when there are multiple cases in a specific class or group

Review and consider implementing the following measures as appropriate. Not all measures are required at all times.

1. Exclusion of positive or symptomatic cases

Remind staff, students and parents of the importance of self-isolation of:

- those who receive a positive COVID-19 test result
- those displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (until they receive a negative PCR test result)
- close contacts awaiting a COVID-19 test result (see current NI Direct guidance).

2. Reduce close interactions and mixing

Temporarily reduce close interactions and mixing for a two week period. Consider putting in place the following if they are not already in place and are appropriate for your setting:

- Not holding large group gatherings such as assemblies.
- The use of one way systems.
- Consistent seating plans (recognising this may not be possible for younger learners).
- Using outdoor spaces where possible.
- Floor signage.
- Potentially pausing after-school / breakfast provision, or team sports where necessary.
- Minimise mixing of students, and movements around the school.
- Consider suspending use of communal areas where mingling occurs, for example, libraries, house rooms, sixth form centres, staff rooms.
- Advice to students and parents to reduce mingling out of school temporarily;
- Pause school trips, particularly any trips involving bus travel or overnight stays.

3. Encourage physical distancing

Implement physical distancing and seating plans in classrooms e.g. forward facing desks. Changes will depend on a risk assessment and should take into account the room capacity, the age of the learners e.g. very young children, and learning requirements of the children involved e.g. learners with one-to-one support.

4. **Promote and encourage regular asymptomatic testing**

- Regular asymptomatic testing can help with early identification and isolation of asymptomatic cases.
- Twice weekly LFD testing is available and strongly encouraged for all staff in primary, post-primary and special schools and all post-primary pupils. It is also being introduced for special school pupils.
- Consider strengthening communications to encourage pupils / students to undertake testing and reporting of their result.

5. **Improve ventilation**

In addition to using outdoor spaces when possible, consider:

- Keeping windows open
- Keeping both a window and a door open to promote air flow through the room
- Using carbon dioxide monitors.

6. **Face covering use**

- Face coverings should be used in line with current guidance for pupils/students, staff and visitors in indoor and/or communal spaces in post primary schools, including in classrooms, and for staff in primary and specialist settings
- Face coverings should be used in line with current guidance on school transport.
- Regularly review the use of face coverings.

7. **Regular environmental cleaning**

- Ensure regular detergent cleaning schedules and procedures are in place using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses;
- Ensure adequate contact time for cleaning products to be adhered to surface;
- Ensure regular (at least twice daily) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces (e.g. desks, handles, dining tables, shared technology surfaces etc.);
- Ensure that, where possible, movement of individuals between work stations is minimised and where work spaces are shared there is cleaning between use (e.g. avoid hot desks and instead each individual, children, young people and staff, has a designated desk);

- Ensure there are adequate waste disposal facilities;
- Wedge doors (other than fire doors) open, where appropriate, to increase fresh air and reduce touchpoints;
- Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and physical distancing is achieved as much as possible;
- Clean work vehicles between different passengers or shifts as appropriate.

8. **Promote and facilitate good hand and respiratory hygiene**

- Encourage frequent washing of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly
- Remind pupils, parents / guardians, and staff that sanitiser should only be used when handwashing is not immediately possible
- Practice handwashing / sanitising on entering and leaving the building including at break and lunch times and at pick up / drop off times
- Practice handwashing before and after eating and after using the toilet.
- Encourage children, young people and staff to avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose; and to use a tissue or elbow to 'catch' a cough or sneeze.
- Provide bins for disposal of tissues and paper towels and ensure that these are emptied regularly;
- Make available outdoor hand basins or hand sanitisers at entry/exit points
- Provide help for those who struggle to wash their hands independently.

9. **Enhance communications to pupils and parents (posters/emails etc.)**

- Make use of letters provided by PHA / EA including warn and inform letter;
- Display signage at entry points in schools to alert people entering the premises that there have been cases of COVID-19 recently identified in the school;
- Make use of PHA COVID-19 safety posters (<https://www.eani.org.uk/pha-covid-19-safety-posters>)

10. **Encourage vaccination**

- Encourage all staff who have not received both doses of the vaccine and a booster to seek vaccination as soon as possible;
- Encourage all eligible pupils to seek vaccination as soon as possible.