

On 18 August 2021 the Minister for Education issued revised COVID-19 guidance to all schools which is available at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-schools-and-educational-settings-northern-ireland>

For further advice and support on any aspect of this guidance principals should contact their Cross Organisational Link Officer, or COVID-19 area of the EA website.

KEY MESSAGES

- Social distancing remains in place as a key mitigation to virus transmission.
- Schools should continue to endeavour to implement as much social distancing as is practical where physical capacity and curriculum delivery permit.
- DE expects to see the resumption of practical activities across the curriculum for all pupils in 2021-22.
- It is recommended that where practical, teachers and classroom assistants maintain 2m social distance from children. However, it is acknowledged that particularly in primary and special schools, classroom staff may be identified as close contacts.
- Personal hand and respiratory hygiene measures remain a fundamental aspect of preventing transmission of the virus.
- Face coverings are recommended in some circumstances, (see phase specific guidance). If any pupil is unable or unwilling to wear a face covering, they should not be denied access to the full range of educational opportunities.
- Schools are no longer required to operate a system of formal protective bubbles, but can continue to exercise judgement on their use.
- Schools are encouraged to maintain measures within the school so that the number of close contacts is limited and their identification remains possible. This may include consistent pupil groups, fixed classroom floor plans with named forward facing seating, and social distancing, including in staff rooms and canteens.
- Asymptomatic LFD testing should be encouraged for all staff and pupils in year 8-14.
- In classrooms, staff may wear a face covering where they are not able to maintain a 2m social distance from other staff or pupils and any staff who wish to wear a face covering at other times are free to do so.
- Outside of the classroom setting, where a 2m distance cannot be maintained all adults should be encouraged to wear a face covering.
- The use of ventilation, whether natural or by mechanical means, should be maximised as far as practicable.
- Schools are able to host both outdoor and indoor gatherings, including assemblies but should consider their necessity. The maximum number in attendance should be based on the risk assessment of the venue/room.

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- In-school meetings between school staff should still take place by tele-conference or video-conference where possible.
 - When the weather is conducive, schools should seek to safely maximise their use of the outdoor environment.
 - As confirmed by DE, further COVID-19 funding has been agreed by the Executive for 2021-22. This funding will be earmarked for specific purposes and schools will be notified of individual allocations.
 - EA will continue to work with you, and in conjunction with DE, to review the impact that the situation is having on school budgets.
 - EOTAS Centres should follow school advice as appropriate to their phase.

The NI Executive and Department of Education will keep this position under review and it may be revised and updated in the coming weeks.

The EA have prepared phase specific information on the following pages.

You only need to review the pages specific to your phase or setting.

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| • Nursery Schools and Nursery Units | Pages 3 - 11 |
| • Special Schools | Pages 12 - 21 |
| • Primary Schools | Pages 22 - 31 |
| • Post-Primary Schools | Pages 32 - 41 |
| • Appendices | Pages 42 - 45 |

1. NURSERY AND NURSERY UNITS

DE is no longer providing separate guidance documents for pre-school education settings and the previous DE guidance for Pre-School Education Settings published on 5 March 2021 has been stood down.

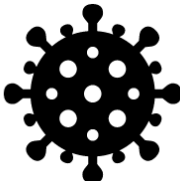
1.2 Common Questions for Nursery Schools and Nursery Units		
AREA	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Staff 	Can normal duties resume?	- All staff are expected to return to their normal duties unless they have a specific medical exemption. - All staff are expected to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. - Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all teaching and support staff.
	How do schools access additional staff if required?	- The approach for 2021-22 is consistent with the previous year, and the school's annual budget and financial plan should be prepared on the basis of a normal school year, with any costs related to COVID-19 being separately identified. - Please continue to ensure that expenditure is appropriately coded as the year progresses, as the Department of Education will be required to give an accurate account of how money has been spent. - As confirmed by DE, further COVID-19 funding has been agreed by the Executive for 2021-22. This funding will be earmarked for specific purposes and schools will be notified of individual allocations. - EA will continue to work with you, and in conjunction with DE, to review the impact that the situation is having on school budgets. - NISTR teachers may be engaged where required. If a school requires additional Classroom Assistants, please contact the EA Emergency Resourcing Team by emailing Emergency.Resourcing@eani.org.uk. All Covid related expenditure should be recorded.
	Are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff expected to be	On 12 April 2021 CEV staff were written to and informed by the Chief Medical Officer that they should continue to work from home where this is possible. Where it is not possible to work from home, staff can attend their workplace, provided

	in their preschool setting?	their employer has taken all reasonable measures to ensure social distancing in the place of work. • Principals/line managers should undertake a risk assessment with the individual to assess and control measures to reduce risk. • Based on the outcome of a risk assessment the Principal/line manager and Employing Authority reserve the right to request that clinically extremely vulnerable staff do not attend the work place. In this case the individual would continue to receive normal pay and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. Exceptional CEV Directives and Evidence • In exceptional circumstances an individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. In this exceptional case the individual would continue to receive normal pay and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. The Principal/line manager and Employing Authority may request evidence that a staff member has been advised to shield or self-isolate. • The Government is regularly monitoring its position on clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. • Click here for advice and further information on those considered Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. • The general restrictions which apply to everyone must be followed https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you. • DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
	Will I still be paid if I am unable to attend work and I am not Clinically Extremely Vulnerable?	• Most staff can return to the workplace as a result of a relaxation of restrictions. • In some cases staff may be directed to self-isolate as a precaution. Working from home should be considered in all cases where the employee is fit to do so. In these scenarios staff will continue to receive normal pay with some noted exceptions

		e.g. staff who have opted to travel with quarantine restrictions known to them/ the limits on normal pay for COVID-19 sickness absence beyond 10 days. - Guidance on Absence, Pay and Staffing is under review and will be published within a matter of days as planned. In the meantime, the current guidance remains extant. - In exceptional circumstances a CEV individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. If applicable, see CEV Directives and Evidence above. - DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
Pupils 	Can normal curricular activities resume?	- All pupils are expected to return to normal curricular activities unless they have a specific medical exemption. - All staff are expected to support pupils to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. - Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all pupils and staff. - Guidance in relation to curriculum planning for primary schools in 2021/22 is available at Curriculum Planning Primary Schools and for post primary schools at Curriculum Planning Post Primary Schools. This includes guidance in relation to PE in the curriculum. - Schools will note that both indoor and outdoor PE are permitted without COVID-19 related restrictions on the numbers of participants.
	Can Before-school/after-school activities, Extra-curricular activities and Inter-School Sport and Wraparound Care resume?	- Schools are able to host both outdoor and indoor gatherings on the same basis as the Executive's current guidance for non-domestic outdoor and indoor gatherings in other sectors. - Both indoor and outdoor extra-curricular activities can resume in educational settings. - Activities such as school clubs and indoor extra-curricular sports can also resume. - Day educational visits and trips for pupils can resume. - Wraparound care can also resume.

	Can singing and playing of instruments resume?	Guidance on singing and the playing of instruments is regularly updated by the EA Music Service in the <i>“Music Unlocked”</i> document. For the latest guidance please go to: https://musicservice.eani.org.uk/schools-teachers/music-unlocked-guidance-schools
	How should absences be recorded?	DE Circular 2021/16 refers - Attendance should be recorded using normal processes. - It is recognised that classes will still be disrupted in the event of a confirmed case. Where a child is self-isolating, but not ill the COVID-19 codes should be used. - If a pupil is self-isolating and ill then they should be marked as ill. - If a pupil refuses to take a PCR test they must self-isolate for the full period and be marked as Code H [other absence] and include a note to that effect in SIMS. - COVID 19 specific attendance code options include: - Code (“Covid-19 illness confirmed - Code) “Covid-19 illness suspected (only to be used until PCR test result is known) - Code {“Self-isolating due to vulnerable pupil or household member” (only to be used in exceptional circumstances and where a letter from a health professional has been provided) - Code} “Required to self-isolate but no evidence of learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known) - Code [“Required to self-isolate and is learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known) - Code] “Required to learn from home due to social distancing rules imposed by DE or school and informed by health professional advice. The above codes reflect current health guidance and will be kept under review.

	How will targeted services be delivered by Children and Young People's Services?	• All Children and Young Peoples' Services will, as far as possible, operate normal delivery models of support for children, continuing to conduct risk assessments and adhere to government guidance as appropriate to ensure the safety of children, schools and staff. Where possible, services directly supporting young people will do so face-to-face in accordance with presenting need and risk assessment. Where applicable, prior to delivering support, services will plan with the school/setting and/or parents of children and young people known to services to ensure risk is minimised. • Advice, guidance and support to schools/settings staff, and families will operate on a blend of remote and face-to-face meetings as appropriate. • Home visits and home teaching will be delivered in accordance with Executive directions on home gatherings at the point of delivery. Services will deliver in accordance with the needs of the young person and risk assessment as appropriate. • A suite resources relevant to each service can be found on EAs website.
Face Coverings 	Are pre-school children required to wear face coverings?	• In Nursery and Pre-School Settings children are recommended not to use face coverings because of the range of mitigation measures schools have in place, the reduced rate of transmission to and from children of this age.
	Are staff in pre-school settings required to wear face coverings? What about deaf and hearing impaired children?	• In classrooms, staff may wear a face covering where they are not able to maintain a 2m social distance from other staff or pupils and any staff who wish to wear a face covering at other times are free to do so. • Outside of the classroom setting, where a 2m distance cannot be maintained all adults should be encouraged to wear a face covering. • The EA's Sensory Service has provided information and advice on the impact of wearing face coverings in schools for deaf children and young people. This can be found in the special schools section of the DE guidance.

	Who is exempt from wearing Face Coverings?	- Schools should also be aware that some persons are exempt from wearing face coverings and this should be treated sensitively. - Examples of reasonable excuses can be found here
	Can a visor be worn instead of a face covering?	- Visors only protect the eyes and are only required where there is a risk of splashing. They are therefore only recommended for basic PPE when worn with a mask, plastic apron and gloves, as they do not offer the same protection as a mask or face covering which cover the nose and the mouth. - They offer little protection worn on their own and are not recommended for routine use in schools. Staff remain free to procure and wear them at their own expense.
Covid19 Response 	Covid19 Risk Assessments	- Preschool settings must review and update their risk assessments regularly to ensure compliance and reflect any adaptations introduced to their operations. The EA have reviewed and revised risk assessment templates. These can be accessed through C2K exchange Go to Exchange > Resources > Covid19 If you do not have access to C2K Exchange please email; Covid-19@eani.org.uk Operating Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.
	Bubbles/ Supporting Close Contact Identification	- From 16 August, schools are no longer required to operate a system of formal protective bubbles. - Schools can individually determine if they wish to continue to use some/all of the principles of bubbles. - Schools should consider how to support effective contact tracing by encouraging pupils to remain within a consistent group of pupils wherever possible. Those within such groups will not be expected to socially distance, however distancing within classes should be maximised wherever possible, based on physical capacity and the activities that pupils are engaged in.

	Ventilation	- The use of ventilation, whether natural or by mechanical means, should be maximised as far as practicable. - School activities are encouraged to take place outdoors wherever possible. Where activities take place indoors, schools should seek to have doors and windows open wherever possible.
	Asymptomatic Testing	- All staff are encouraged to self-administer an LFD test twice weekly and record the results on the testing portal https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result - Any staff member who has a positive LFD should not come into school, should organise a PCR test and they should self-isolate until the PCR result is obtained. - Pre-school children are not expected to be tested.
	Confirmed Cases and Close Contacts Definition of a Close Contact is provided as Appendix 3 of this document.	- The EA confirmed cases helpline and PHA support to preschool settings will be active from start of term. - PHA COVID19 School Team phone number is 028 9536 0484 and the online form can be downloaded from: https://hscforms.hscni.net/education-cell-online-form/ - The EA suspected or confirmed cases contact details are: 028 9041 8056 or confirmed.covid19@eani.org.uk Both helplines operate Mon-Fri 8am-4pm and 10am to 2pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. Close contacts who are children aged 4 and under: - Children under the age of 5 will not need to self-isolate and a PCR test is recommended. Parents of the pupils on the contact list should be informed that their child is a close contact of a confirmed case and they should arrange a PCR test. In this age group testing is voluntary and provided the child has no symptoms they do not need to self-isolate and can attend nursery even if

		they do not take a test. However, if they do develop symptoms, they should stay at home, self-isolate with their household and book a PCR test. Close contact who are adult staff members (18 and over): • Different self-isolation guidance applies depending on vaccination status. • If fully vaccinated (i.e. 14 days have elapsed after their 2nd dose of a UK-approved vaccine), they can return to school straightaway, but are advised to take a PCR test on day 2 since their last contact with the case (or as soon as they have been informed if it is already more than 2 days since their contact) and another on Day 8. • Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated staff should self-isolate for the full 10 day period since their last contact with the case and book a PCR test. If an unvaccinated or partially vaccinated person's PCR test is negative, they are still required to complete initial 10 days of self-isolation.
School Transport 	When is school transport operating?	• School Transport will operate as normal from 1st September for pre-school pupils with SEN who receive transport assistance. • Children showing any symptoms of COVID-19 should not travel to school. • Vehicles will operate at normal capacity.
Cleaning 	Is enhanced cleaning still required?	• The EA Cleaning Service have established Covid-19 Cleaning Response Teams which are strategically located throughout NI. Upon notification of a confirmed case the Cleaning Service Locality Manager will arrange an enhanced clean of the affected area, which will include the use of specialist sanitising equipment.
	How do I contact EA Cleaning Services?	• Please contact the following e-mail address with any queries relating to Covid: cleaning.covid19@eani.org.uk

School Meals 	When and how are school meals available?	- The school meals service will operate as normal for each setting from 1st September. - Classroom based lunch service is no longer required. - Settings should continue to operate local approaches that minimise interaction between pupils at social and dining times.
	How will Free School Meals be paid/provided?	From 1st September Free School Meals will return to normal provision. No direct payments will be made unless schools are instructed to revert to remote learning.
Online and Remote Learning 	Where can I get guidance on supporting remote / home learning? 	The Nursery and Pre-School “Supporting Learning” Portal provides guidance for staff. It is available at https://www.easds.org.uk/sds/portal2/ Staff who have previously registered do not need to do so again. Staff wishing to register for the first time should use the link below and the one-time Invite Code**: a4815p https://www.easds.org.uk/sds/portal2/createaccount/ **Please note that this is a one-time use code and is not your password. You will receive your password in an email following creation of your account.
	How can I evaluate our readiness for Home Learning?	- All schools are reminded of the need to remain ready to revert to home learning if a class or larger group are identified as close contacts. - In early December EA provided a checklist on readiness for home learning for all schools via the C2K noticeboard. It is attached as Appendix Three of this document for your information.

2. SPECIAL SCHOOLS – This guidance should be read in conjunction with the DE revised supplementary guidance for special schools

1.2 Common Questions for Special School Units		
AREA	QUESTION	ANSWER
Staff 	Can normal duties resume?	- All staff are expected to return to their normal duties unless they have a specific medical exemption. - All staff are expected to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. - Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all teaching and support staff.
	How do schools access additional staff if required?	- The approach for 2021-22 is consistent with the previous year, and the school's annual budget and financial plan should be prepared on the basis of a normal school year, with any costs related to COVID-19 being separately identified. - Please continue to ensure that expenditure is appropriately coded as the year progresses, as the Department of Education will be required to give an accurate account of how money has been spent. - As confirmed by DE, further COVID-19 funding has been agreed by the Executive for 2021-22. This funding will be earmarked for specific purposes and schools will be notified of individual allocations. - EA will continue to work with you, and in conjunction with DE, to review the impact that the situation is having on school budgets. - NISTR teachers may be engaged where required. If a school requires additional Classroom Assistants, please contact the EA Emergency Resourcing Team by emailing Emergency.Resourcing@eani.org.uk - All Covid related expenditure should be recorded.
	Are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff expected to be in their setting?	Since 12 April 2021 CEV staff were written to and informed by the Chief Medical Officer that they should continue to work from home where this is possible. Where it is not possible to work from home, staff can attend their workplace, provided their employer has taken all reasonable measures to ensure social distancing in the place of work.

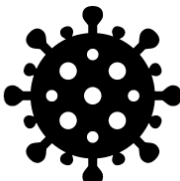
		• Principals/line managers should undertake a risk assessment with the individual to assess and control measures to reduce risk. • Based on the outcome of a risk assessment the Principal/line manager and Employing Authority reserve the right to request that clinically extremely vulnerable staff do not attend the work place. In this case the individual would continue to receive normal pay[1] and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. Exceptional CEV Directives and Evidence • In exceptional circumstances an individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. In this exceptional case the individual would continue to receive normal pay and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. The Principal/line manager and Employing Authority may request evidence that a staff member has been advised to shield or self-isolate. • The Government is regularly monitoring its position on clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. • Click here for advice and further information on those considered Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. • The general restrictions which apply to everyone must be followed https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you • DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
	Will I still be paid if I am unable to attend work and I am not Clinically Extremely Vulnerable?	• Most staff can return to the workplace as a result of a relaxation of restrictions. • In some cases staff may be directed to self-isolate as a precaution. Working from home should be considered in all cases where the employee is fit to do so. In these scenarios staff will continue to

		receive normal pay with some noted exceptions e.g. staff who have opted to travel with quarantine restrictions known to them/ the limits on normal pay for COVID-19 sickness absence beyond 10 days. • Guidance on Absence, Pay and Staffing is under review and will be published within a matter of days as planned. In the meantime, the current guidance remains extant. • In exceptional circumstances a CEV individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. If applicable, see CEV Directives and Evidence above. • DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
Pupils 	Can normal curricular activities resume?	• All pupils are expected to return to normal curricular activities unless they have a specific medical exemption. • All staff are expected to support pupils to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. • Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all pupils and staff. • Guidance in relation to curriculum planning for primary schools in 2021/22 is available at Curriculum Planning Primary Schools and for post primary schools at Curriculum Planning Post Primary Schools. This includes guidance in relation to PE in the curriculum. • Schools will note that both indoor and outdoor PE are permitted without COVID-19 related restrictions on the numbers of participants.
	Delivering 1:1 care	• When providing one-to-one care for SEN or vulnerable pupils, adult to adult social distancing should be maintained wherever possible, however this can be relaxed where staff consistently remain with a pupil or class, and an appropriate risk assessment carried out. • In cases where staff are working closely with children e.g. in carrying out Aerosol Generating

		Procedures the necessary PPE should be used in line with guidance.
	Can Before-school/after-school activities, Extra-curricular activities and Inter-School Sport and Wraparound Care resume?	- Schools are able to host both outdoor and indoor gatherings on the same basis as the Executive's current guidance for non-domestic outdoor and indoor gatherings in other sectors. Coronavirus (COVID-19) regulations and guidance: what they mean for you nidirect - Both indoor and outdoor extra-curricular activities can resume in educational settings. - Activities such as school clubs and indoor extra-curricular sports can also resume. - Bilateral inter-schools sports can resume, allowing schools to play competitive sports fixtures against another school. - Day educational visits and trips for pupils can resume. - Wraparound care can also resume.
	Can singing and playing of instruments resume?	Guidance on singing and the playing of instruments is regularly updated by the EA Music Service in the "Music Unlocked" document. For the latest guidance please go to: https://musicservice.eani.org.uk/schools-teachers/music-unlocked-guidance-schools
	How should absences be recorded?	DE Circular 2021/16 refers - Attendance should be recorded using normal processes. - It is recognised that classes will still be disrupted in the event of a confirmed case. Where a child is self-isolating, but not ill the COVID-19 codes should be used. - If a pupil is self-isolating and ill then they should be marked as ill. - If a pupil refuses to or is unable to take a PCR test they must self-isolate for the full period and be marked as Code H [other absence] and include a note to that effect in SIMS. - COVID 19 specific attendance code options include: - Code ("Covid-19 illness confirmed

		○ Code) “ Covid-19 illness suspected (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code { “ Self-isolating due to vulnerable pupil or household member” (only to be used in exceptional circumstances and where a letter from a health professional has been provided) ○ Code } “Required to self-isolate but no evidence of learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code [“Required to self-isolate and is learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code] “ Approved activity - Required to learn from home due to social distancing rules imposed by DE or school and informed by health professional advice The above codes reflect current health guidance and will be kept under review.
	How will targeted services be delivered by Children and Young People’s Services?	• All Children and Young Peoples’ Services will, as far as possible, operate normal delivery models of support for children, continuing to conduct risk assessments and adhere to government guidance as appropriate to ensure the safety of children, schools and staff. Where possible, services directly supporting young people will do so face-to- face in accordance with presenting need and risk assessment. Where applicable, prior to delivering support, services will plan with the school/setting and/or parents of children and young people known to services to ensure risk is minimised • Advice, guidance and support to schools/settings staff, and families will operate on a blend of remote and face-to-face meetings as appropriate. • Home visits and home teaching will be delivered in accordance with Executive directions on home gatherings at the point of delivery. Services will deliver in accordance with the needs of the young person and risk assessment as appropriate.

		A suite resources relevant to each service can be found on EAs website.
Face Coverings 	Are children in special schools required to wear face coverings?	- It is recognised that in the special school environment that many children will meet the definition of a reasonable excuse and so will be unable to wear a face covering. - Primary aged children are recommended not to use face coverings on school premises. - Where possible within the context of special school provision it is strongly recommended that post-primary pupils wear a face covering at all times when inside school buildings, including classrooms, corridors and confined communal spaces such as toilet areas (apply until 8 Oct, subject to review). - However, for subjects where social distancing is possible, such as drama in a large hall, face coverings are no longer required. - It is mandatory for all post-primary school age pupils to wear a face covering on all public and school transport unless they have a reasonable excuse not to and it is recognised that many special school children will meet this definition.
	Are staff in special schools required to wear face coverings? What about deaf and hearing impaired children?	- In classrooms, staff may wear a face covering where they are not able to maintain a 2m social distance from other staff or pupils and any staff who wish to wear a face covering at other times are free to do so. - Outside of the classroom setting, where a 2m distance cannot be maintained all adults should be encouraged to wear a face covering. - The EA's Sensory Service has provided information and advice on the impact of wearing face coverings in schools for deaf children and young people. This can be found in the special schools section of the DE guidance.
	Who is exempt from wearing Face Coverings?	- Schools should also be aware that some persons are exempt from wearing face coverings and this should be treated sensitively. - Examples of reasonable excuses can be found here

	Can a visor be worn as an alternative to a face covering?	- Visors only protect the eyes and are only required where there is a risk of splashing. They are therefore only recommended for basic PPE when worn with a mask, plastic apron and gloves, as they do not offer the same protection as a mask or face covering which cover the nose and the mouth. - They offer little protection worn on their own and are not recommended for routine use in schools. Staff remain free to procure and wear them at their own expense.
Covid19 Response 	Covid19 Risk Assessments	- Special schools must review and update their risk assessments regularly to ensure compliance and reflect any adaptations introduced to their operations. The EA have reviewed and revised risk assessment templates. These can be accessed through C2K exchange Go to Exchange > Resources > Covid19 If you do not have access to C2K Exchange please email; Covid-19@eani.org.uk Operating Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.
	Bubbles/ Supporting Close Contact Identification	- From 16 August, schools are no longer required to operate a system of formal protective bubbles. - Schools can individually determine if they wish to continue to use some/all of the principles of bubbles. - Schools should consider how to support effective contact tracing by encouraging pupils to remain within a consistent group of pupils wherever possible.
	Ventilation	- The use of ventilation, whether natural or by mechanical means, should be maximised as far as practicable. School activities are encouraged to take place outdoors wherever possible. - Where activities take place indoors, schools should seek to have doors and windows open wherever possible.

	Asymptomatic Testing	Weekly LAMP testing is available to all special school staff and pupils.
	Confirmed Cases and Close Contacts Definition of a Close Contact is provided as Appendix 3 of this document.	- The EA confirmed cases helpline and PHA support to preschool settings will be active from start of term. - PHA COVID19 School Team phone number is 028 9536 0484 and the online form can be downloaded from: https://hscforms.hscni.net/education-cell-online-form/ - The EA suspected or confirmed cases contact details are: 028 9041 8056 or confirmed.covid19@eani.org.uk. Both helplines operate Mon-Fri 8am-4pm and 10am to 2pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. Close contacts who are pupils in any year from P1 to Year 14 - Parents of all those on the contact list should be informed by the school that their child is a close contact of a confirmed case. They should be advised to self-isolate until they have taken a PCR test. - If the PCR test is positive they should self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if they have no symptoms, for 10 days from the test result - If the test is negative they can return to school, however, if they do go on to develop new symptoms, they should stay at home, self-isolate with their household and book another PCR test. Close contacts who are adult staff members (18 and over) - Different self-isolation guidance applies depending on vaccination status. - If fully vaccinated (i.e. 14 days have elapsed after their 2nd dose of a UK-approved vaccine), they can return to school straightaway, but are advised to take a PCR test on day 2 since their last contact with the case (or as soon as they have been

		informed if it is already more than 2 days since their contact) and another on Day 8. Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated staff should self-isolate for the full 10 day period since their last contact with the case and book a PCR test. If an unvaccinated or partially vaccinated person's PCR test is negative, they are still required to complete initial 10 days of self-isolation.
School Transport 	Is school transport operating?	- School Transport will operate as normal from 1st September for all pupils with SEN who receive transport assistance. - Children showing any symptoms of COVID-19 should not travel to school. - Vehicles will operate at normal capacity. - Schools must consult with Transport if they wish to alter school timings which would impact upon transport services.
Cleaning 	Is enhanced cleaning still required?	The EA Cleaning Service have established Covid-19 Cleaning Response Teams which are strategically located throughout NI. Upon notification of a confirmed case the Cleaning Service Locality Manager will arrange an enhanced clean of the affected area, which will include the use of specialist sanitising equipment.
	How do I contact EA Cleaning Services?	- Please contact the following e-mail address with any queries relating to Covid: cleaning.covid19@eani.org.uk
School Meals 	Are School Meals available?	- The school meals service will operate as normal for each setting from 1st September. - Classroom based lunch service is no longer required - Settings should continue to operate local approaches that minimise interaction between pupils at social and dining times.
	How will Free School Meals be paid/provided?	From 1st September Free School Meals will return to normal provision. No direct payments will be made unless schools are instructed to revert to remote learning.

Online and Remote Learning 	Where can I get guidance on supporting remote / home learning? 	The ‘Supporting Learning’ area in C2K provides access to wide range of guidance documents, professional learning resources and information about forthcoming Teacher Professional Learning opportunities. The site is updated regularly. It can be accessed through the ‘Supporting Learning -TPL’ button on the home page of My-School on C2K, readily identified by its rainbow logo. Guidance is available to assist settings in planning for remote learning within the following DE and ETI publications: DE Remote Learning Circular 2021/01 ETI Effective practice in remote learning , a one-page, quick glance document for schools.
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3. PRIMARY SCHOOLS

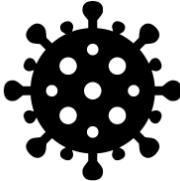
1.2 Common Questions for Primary School Units		
AREA	QUESTION	ANSWER
Staff 	Can normal duties resume?	- All staff are expected to return to their normal duties unless they have a specific medical exemption. - All staff are expected to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. - Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all teaching and support staff.
	How do schools access additional staff if required?	- The approach for 2021-22 is consistent with the previous year, and the school's annual budget and financial plan should be prepared on the basis of a normal school year, with any costs related to COVID-19 being separately identified. - Please continue to ensure that expenditure is appropriately coded as the year progresses, as the Department of Education will be required to give an accurate account of how money has been spent. - As confirmed by DE, further COVID-19 funding has been agreed by the Executive for 2021-22. This funding will be earmarked for specific purposes and schools will be notified of individual allocations. - EA will continue to work with you, and in conjunction with DE, to review the impact that the situation is having on school budgets. - NISTR teachers may be engaged where required. If a school requires additional Classroom Assistants, please contact the EA Emergency Resourcing Team by emailing Emergency.Resourcing@eani.org.uk. All Covid related expenditure should be recorded.
	Are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff expected to be in their primary school setting?	- Since 12 April 2021 CEV staff were written to and informed by the Chief Medical Officer that they should continue to work from home where this is possible. Where it is not possible to work from home, staff can attend their workplace, provided their employer has taken all reasonable measures to ensure social distancing in the place of work. - Principals/line managers should undertake a risk assessment with the individual to assess and control measures to reduce risk.

		- Based on the outcome of a risk assessment the Principal/line manager and Employing Authority reserve the right to request that clinically extremely vulnerable staff do not attend the work place. In this case the individual would continue to receive normal pay^[1] and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. Exceptional CEV Directives and Evidence - In exceptional circumstances an individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. In this exceptional case the individual would continue to receive normal pay and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. The Principal/line manager and Employing Authority may request evidence that a staff member has been advised to shield or self-isolate. - The Government is regularly monitoring its position on clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. Click here for advice and further information on those considered Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. - The general restrictions which apply to everyone must be followed https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you. - DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
	Will I still be paid if I am unable to attend work and I am not Clinically Extremely Vulnerable?	- Most staff can return to the work place as a result of a relaxation of restrictions. - In some cases staff may be directed to self-isolate as a precaution. Working from home should be considered in all cases where the employee is fit to do so. In these scenarios staff will continue to receive normal pay with some noted exceptions e.g. staff who have opted to travel with quarantine restrictions known to them/ the limits on normal

		pay for COVID-19 sickness absence beyond 10 days. • Guidance on Absence, Pay and Staffing is under review and will be published within a matter of days as planned. In the meantime, the current guidance remains extant. • In exceptional circumstances a CEV individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. If applicable, see CEV Directives and Evidence above. • DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
Pupils 	Can normal curricular activities resume?	• All pupils are expected to return to normal curricular activities unless they have a specific medical exemption. • All staff are expected to support pupils to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. • Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all pupils and staff. • Guidance in relation to curriculum planning for primary schools in 2021/22 is available at Curriculum Planning Primary Schools and for post primary schools at Curriculum Planning Post Primary Schools. This includes guidance in relation to PE in the curriculum. DE recommends that schools should provide pupils with at least 2 hours of curricular PE per week. • Schools will note that both indoor and outdoor PE are permitted without COVID-19 related restrictions on the numbers of participants.
	Can Before-school/after-school activities, Extra-curricular activities and Inter-School Sport and Wraparound Care resume?	• Schools are able to host both outdoor and indoor gatherings on the same basis as the Executive's current guidance for non-domestic outdoor and indoor gatherings in other sectors. Coronavirus (COVID-19) regulations and guidance: what they mean for you nidirect • Both indoor and outdoor extra-curricular activities can resume

		• Activities such as school clubs and indoor extra-curricular sports can also resume • Bilateral inter-schools sports can resume, allowing schools to play competitive sports fixtures against another school • Day educational visits and trips for pupils can resume. • Wraparound care can also resume
	Can singing and playing of instruments resume?	Guidance on singing and the playing of instruments is regularly updated by the EA Music Service in the <i>“Music Unlocked”</i> document. For the latest guidance please go to: https://musicservice.eani.org.uk/schools-teachers/music-unlocked-guidance-schools
	How should absences be recorded?	DE Circular 2021/16 refers Attendance should be recorded using normal processes. It is recognised that classes will still be disrupted in the event of a confirmed case. Where a child is self-isolating, but not ill the COVID-19 codes should be used. If a pupil is self-isolating and ill then they should be marked as ill. If a pupil refuses to take a PCR test they must self-isolate for the full period and be marked as Code H [other absence] and include a note to that effect in SIMS. COVID 19 specific attendance code options include: ○ Code (“Covid-19 illness confirmed ○ Code) “ Covid-19 illness suspected (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code { “ Self-isolating due to vulnerable pupil or household member” (only to be used in exceptional circumstances and where a letter from a health professional has been provided) ○ Code } “Required to self-isolate but no evidence of learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code [“Required to self-isolate and is learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known)

		○ Code] “ Required to learn from home due to social distancing rules imposed by DE or school and informed by health professional advice The above codes reflect current health guidance and will be kept under review.
	How will targeted services be delivered by Children and Young People’s Services?	• All Children and Young Peoples’ Services will, as far as possible, operate normal delivery models of support for children, continuing to conduct risk assessments and adhere to government guidance as appropriate to ensure the safety of children, schools and staff. Where possible, services directly supporting young people will do so face-to- face in accordance with presenting need and risk assessment. Where applicable, prior to delivering support, services will plan with the school/setting and/or parents of children and young people known to services to ensure risk is minimised. • Advice, guidance and support to schools/settings staff, and families will operate on a blend of remote and face-to-face meetings as appropriate. • Home visits and home teaching will be delivered in accordance with Executive directions on home gatherings at the point of delivery. Services will deliver in accordance with the needs of the young person and risk assessment as appropriate. • A suite resources relevant to each service can be found on EAs website.
Face Coverings 	Are children in primary schools required to wear face coverings?	• Primary school children are recommended not to use face coverings on school premises because of the range of mitigation measures schools have in place and the reduced rate of transmission to and from children of this age. • Primary age pupils are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering on all public and schools transport where they are able to do so.

	Are staff in primary schools required to wear face coverings?	- In classrooms, staff are encouraged to wear a face covering where they are not able to maintain a 2m social distance from other staff or pupils and any staff who wish to wear a face covering at other times are free to do so. - Outside of the classroom setting, where a 2m distance cannot be maintained from other persons either indoors or outdoors on a school site, all adults should be encouraged to wear a face covering. This includes communal staff areas and for all adults visiting the school site. - The EA's Sensory Service has provided information and advice on the impact of wearing face coverings in schools for deaf children and young people. This can be found in the special schools section of the DE guidance.
	Who is exempt from wearing Face Coverings?	- Schools should also be aware that some persons are exempt from wearing face coverings and this should be treated sensitively. - Examples of reasonable excuses can be found here
	Can visors be worn as an alternative to face coverings?	- Visors only protect the eyes and are only required where there is a risk of splashing. They are therefore only recommended for basic PPE when worn with a mask, plastic apron and gloves, as they do not offer the same protection as a mask or face covering which cover the nose and the mouth. - They offer little protection worn on their own and are not recommended for routine use in schools. Staff remain free to procure and wear them at their own expense.
Covid19 Response 	Covid19 Risk Assessments	Primary schools must review and update their risk assessments regularly to ensure compliance and reflect any adaptations introduced to their operations. The EA have reviewed and revised risk assessment templates. These can be accessed through C2K exchange Go to Exchange > Resources > Covid19

		• If you do not have access to C2K Exchange please email; Covid-19@eani.org.uk Operating Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.
	Bubbles/ Supporting Close Contact Identification	• From 16 August, schools are no longer required to operate a system of formal protective bubbles • Schools can individually determine if they wish to continue to use some/all of the principles of bubbles • Schools should consider how to support effective contact tracing by encouraging pupils to remain within a consistent group of pupils wherever possible.
	Ventilation	• The use of ventilation, whether natural or by mechanical means, should be maximised as far as practicable. School activities are encouraged to take place outdoors wherever possible. • Where activities take place indoors, schools should seek to have doors and windows open wherever possible
	Asymptomatic Testing	• All staff are encouraged to self-administer an LFD test twice weekly and record the results on the testing portal https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result • Any staff member who has a positive LFT should not come into school, should organise a PCR test and they should self-isolate until the PCR result is obtained. • Primary schools children are not expected to be tested using LFD tests.
	Confirmed Cases and Close Contacts Definition of a Close Contact is provided as Appendix 3 of this document.	• The EA confirmed cases helpline and PHA support to preschool settings will be active from start of term. • PHA COVID19 School Team phone number is 028 9536 0484 and the online form can be downloaded from: https://hscforms.hscni.net/education-cell-online-form/ • The EA suspected or confirmed cases contact details are:

		028 9041 8056 or confirmed.covid19@eani.org.uk. Both helplines operate Mon-Fri 8am-4pm and 10am to 2pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. Close contacts who are pupils Y1 to Year 7 - Parents of all those on the contact list should be informed by the school that their child is a close contact of a confirmed case. They should be advised to self-isolate until they have taken a PCR test. - If the PCR test is positive they should self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if they have no symptoms, for 10 days from the test result - If the test is negative they can return to school, however, if they do go on to develop new symptoms, they should stay at home, self-isolate with their household and book another PCR test. Close contacts who are adult staff members (18 and over) - Different self-isolation guidance applies depending on vaccination status. - If fully vaccinated (i.e. 14 days have elapsed after their 2nd dose of a UK-approved vaccine), they can return to school straightaway, but are advised to take a PCR test on day 2 since their last contact with the case (or as soon as they have been informed if it is already more than 2 days since their contact) and another on Day 8. - Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated staff should self-isolate for the full 10 day period since their last contact with the case and book a PCR test. If an unvaccinated or partially vaccinated person's PCR test is negative, they are still required to complete initial 10 days of self-isolation.
School Transport	Is school transport operating?	School Transport will operate as normal from 1st September for all pupils who are entitled to transport assistance and vehicles will operate at normal capacity.

		• Translink will be returning to provision of the normal school network from 1st September onwards and pupils are advised to check the Translink website for both dedicated school and regular services as some journeys may have altered since the last school term. • Children showing any symptoms of COVID-19 should not travel to school. • Schools must consult with Transport if they wish to alter school timings which would impact upon transport services. • Hired services for activities such as swimming has recommenced and is subject to availability.
Cleaning 	Is enhanced cleaning still required?	• The EA Cleaning Service have established Covid-19 Cleaning Response Teams which are strategically located throughout NI. Upon notification of a confirmed case the Cleaning Service Locality Manager will arrange an enhanced clean of the affected area, which will include the use of specialist sanitising equipment.
School Meals 	Are School Meals available?	• The school meals service will operate as normal for each setting from 1st September. • Classroom based lunch service is no longer required • Settings should continue to operate local approaches that minimise interaction between pupils at social and dining times.
	How will Free School Meals be paid/provided?	• From 1st September Free School Meals will return to normal provision. No direct payments will be made unless schools are instructed to revert to remote learning.

Online and Remote Learning 	Where can I get guidance on supporting remote / home learning? 	The ‘Supporting Learning’ area in C2K provides access to wide range of guidance documents, professional learning resources and information about forthcoming Teacher Professional Learning opportunities. The site is updated regularly. It can be accessed through the ‘Supporting Learning -TPL’ button on the home page of My-School on C2K, readily identified by its rainbow logo. Guidance is available to assist settings in planning for remote learning within the following DE and ETI publications: DE Remote Learning Circular 2021/01 ETI Effective practice in remote learning , a one-page, quick glance document for schools.
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4. POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1.2 Common Questions for Post Primary Schools		
AREA	QUESTION	ANSWER
Staff 	Can normal duties resume?	- All staff are expected to return to their normal duties unless they have a specific medical exemption. - All staff are expected to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. - Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all teaching and support staff.
	How do schools access additional staff if required?	- The approach for 2021-22 is consistent with the previous year, and the school's annual budget and financial plan should be prepared on the basis of a normal school year, with any costs related to COVID-19 being separately identified. - Please continue to ensure that expenditure is appropriately coded as the year progresses, as the Department of Education will be required to give an accurate account of how money has been spent. - As confirmed by DE, further COVID-19 funding has been agreed by the Executive for 2021-22. This funding will be earmarked for specific purposes and schools will be notified of individual allocations. - EA will continue to work with you, and in conjunction with DE, to review the impact that the situation is having on school budgets. - NISTR teachers may be engaged where required. If a school requires additional Classroom Assistants, please contact the EA Emergency Resourcing Team by emailing Emergency.Resourcing@eani.org.uk. All Covid related expenditure should be recorded.
	Are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff expected to be in their preschool setting?	Since 12 April 2021 CEV staff were written to and informed by the Chief Medical Officer that they should continue to work from home where this is possible. Where it is not possible to work from home, staff can attend their workplace, provided their employer has taken all reasonable measures to ensure social distancing in the place of work. Principals/line managers should undertake a risk assessment with the individual to assess and control measures to reduce risk.

		- Based on the outcome of a risk assessment the Principal/line manager and Employing Authority reserve the right to request that clinically extremely vulnerable staff do not attend the work place. In this case the individual would continue to receive normal pay[1] and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. Exceptional CEV Directives and Evidence - In exceptional circumstances an individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. In this exceptional case the individual would continue to receive normal pay and there would be no impact on absence triggers or contractual sick pay. The Principal/line manager and Employing Authority may request evidence that a staff member has been advised to shield or self-isolate. - The Government is regularly monitoring its position on clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. Click here for advice and further information on those considered Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. - The general restrictions which apply to everyone must be followed https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you. - DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
	Will I still be paid if I am unable to attend work and I am not Clinically Extremely Vulnerable?	- Most staff can return to the workplace as a result of a relaxation of restrictions. - In some cases staff may be directed to self-isolate as a precaution. Working from home should be considered in all cases where the employee is fit to do so. In these scenarios staff will continue to receive normal pay with some noted exceptions e.g. staff who have opted to travel with quarantine restrictions known to them/ the limits on normal

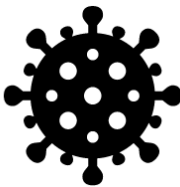
		pay for COVID-19 sickness absence beyond 10 days. • Guidance on Absence, Pay and Staffing is under review and will be published within a matter of days as planned. In the meantime, the current guidance remains extant. • In exceptional circumstances a CEV individual may be directed by their GP or other medical specialist to continue to self-isolate. If applicable, see CEV Directives and Evidence above. • DE funded setting staff should consult with their management committee about employment matters.
Pupils 	Can normal curricular activities resume?	• Post primary pupils should no longer be taught in a single base classroom. Practical activities should resume across the curriculum. This requires access to specialist equipment and accommodation to continue to develop essential skills across all Areas of Learning. • All pupils are expected to return to normal curricular activities unless they have a specific medical exemption. • DE recommends that schools should provide pupils with at least 2 hours of curricular PE per week. • DE strongly recommends that pupils attend school in their PE uniform on relevant days to minimise the need for changing. • Further guidance can be accessed at Circular 2021/19 - Curriculum Planning for Post Primary Schools 2021/22 Department of Education (education-ni.gov.uk) • All staff are expected to support pupils to follow public health and Department of Education Guidelines when in school. • Appropriate risk assessments should be in place and followed by all pupils and staff.
	Can Before-school/after-school activities, Extra-curricular activities and Inter-School Sport and	• Schools are able to host both outdoor and indoor gatherings on the same basis as the Executive's current guidance for non-domestic outdoor and indoor gatherings in other sectors. Coronavirus (COVID-19) regulations and guidance: what they mean for you nidirect

	Wraparound Care resume?	• Both indoor and outdoor extra-curricular activities can resume in educational settings • Activities such as school clubs and indoor extra-curricular sports can also resume. • Bilateral inter-schools sports can resume, allowing schools to play competitive sports fixtures against another school. • Day educational visits and trips for pupils can resume. • Wraparound care can also resume.
	Can singing and playing of instruments resume?	Guidance on singing and the playing of instruments is regularly updated by the EA Music Service in the <i>“Music Unlocked”</i> document. For the latest guidance please go to: https://musicservice.eani.org.uk/schools-teachers/music-unlocked-guidance-schools
	How should absences be recorded?	DE Circular 2021/16 refers • Attendance should be recorded using normal processes. • It is recognised that classes will still be disrupted in the event of a confirmed case. Where a child is self-isolating, but not ill the COVID-19 codes should be used. • If a pupil is self-isolating and ill then they should be marked as ill. • If a pupil refuses to take a PCR test they must self-isolate for the full period and be marked as Code H [other absence] and include a note to that effect in SIMS. • COVID 19 specific attendance code options include: ○ Code (“Covid-19 illness confirmed ○ Code) “ Covid-19 illness suspected (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code { “ Self-isolating due to vulnerable pupil or household member” (only to be used in exceptional circumstances and where a letter from a health professional has been provided)

		○ Code } “Required to self-isolate but no evidence of learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code [“Required to self-isolate and is learning from home” (only to be used until PCR test result is known) ○ Code] “ Required to learn from home due to social distancing rules imposed by DE or school and informed by health professional advice The above codes reflect current health guidance and will be kept under review.
	How will targeted services be delivered by Children and Young People’s Services?	• All Children and Young Peoples’ Services will, as far as possible, operate normal delivery models of support for children, continuing to conduct risk assessments and adhere to government guidance as appropriate to ensure the safety of children, schools and staff. Where possible, services directly supporting young people will do so face-to-face in accordance with presenting need and risk assessment. Where applicable, prior to delivering support, services will plan with the school/setting and/or parents of children and young people known to services to ensure risk is minimised. • Advice, guidance and support to schools/settings staff, and families will operate on a blend of remote and face-to-face meetings as appropriate. • Home visits and home teaching will be delivered in accordance with Executive directions on home gatherings at the point of delivery. Services will deliver in accordance with the needs of the young person and risk assessment as appropriate. • A suite resources relevant to each service can be found on EAs website.
Face Coverings	Are children in post primary schools required to wear face coverings?	• It is strongly recommended that post-primary pupils wear a face covering at all times when inside school buildings, including classrooms, corridors and confined communal spaces such as toilet areas. The Executive agreed on 12 August the



		requirement for post-primary pupils to wear a face covering in classrooms would, subject to review, apply until 8 October. However, for subjects where social distancing is possible, such as drama in a large hall, face coverings are no longer required. - It is mandatory for all post-primary school age pupils to wear a face covering on all public and school transport unless they have a reasonable excuse(external link opens in a new window / tab) not to. Schools should also be aware that some persons (including children) are exempt from wearing face coverings and this should be treated sensitively. - The EA's Sensory Service has provided information and advice on the impact of wearing face coverings in schools for deaf children and young people. This can be found in the special schools section of this document.
	Are staff in post primary schools required to wear face coverings?	- In classrooms, staff are encouraged to wear a face covering where they are not able to maintain a 2m social distance from other staff or pupils and any staff who wish to wear a face covering at other times are free to do so. - Outside of the classroom setting, where a 2m distance cannot be maintained from other persons either indoors or outdoors on a school site, all adults should be encouraged to wear a face covering. This includes communal staff areas and for all adults visiting the school site.
	Who is exempt from wearing Face Coverings?	- Schools should also be aware that some persons are exempt from wearing face coverings and this should be treated sensitively. - Examples of reasonable excuses can be found here
	Can Visors be worn as an alternative to face coverings?	Visors only protect the eyes and are only required where there is a risk of splashing. They are therefore only recommended for basic PPE when worn with a mask, plastic apron and gloves, as they do not offer the same protection as a mask or face covering which cover the nose and the mouth.

		• They offer little protection worn on their own and are not recommended for routine use in schools. Staff remain free to procure and wear them at their own expense.
Covid19 Response 	Covid19 Risk Assessments	• Post primary schools must review and update their risk assessments regularly to ensure compliance and reflect any adaptations introduced to their operations. The EA have reviewed and revised risk assessment templates. These can be accessed through C2K exchange Go to Exchange > Resources > Covid19 • If you do not have access to C2K Exchange please email; Covid-19@eani.org.uk Operating Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.
	Bubbles/ Supporting Close Contact Identification	• From 16 August, schools are no longer required to operate a system of formal protective bubbles. • Schools can individually determine if they wish to continue to use some/all of the principles of bubbles. • Schools should consider how to support effective contact tracing by encouraging pupils to remain within a consistent group of pupils wherever possible.
	Ventilation	• The use of ventilation, whether natural or by mechanical means, should be maximised as far as practicable. School activities are encouraged to take place outdoors wherever possible. • Where activities take place indoors, schools should seek to have doors and windows open wherever possible.
	Asymptomatic Testing	• All staff are encouraged to self-administer an LFD test twice weekly and record the results on the testing portal https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result • Any staff member who has a positive LFT should not come into school, should organise a PCR test and they should self-isolate until the PCR result is obtained. • LFD testing in schools is available to all mainstream school staff and pupils in years 8-14

	Confirmed Cases and Close Contacts Definition of a Close Contact is provided as Appendix 3 of this document.	• Pre-school children are not expected to be tested • The EA confirmed cases helpline and PHA support to preschool settings will be active from start of term. • PHA COVID19 School Team phone number is 028 9536 0484 and the online form can be downloaded from: https://hscforms.hscni.net/education-cell-online-form/ • The EA suspected or confirmed cases contact details are: • 028 9041 8056 or confirmed.covid19@eani.org.uk Both helplines operate Mon-Fri 8am-4pm and 10am to 2pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. Close contacts who are pupils from Y8 to Year 14 • Parents of all those on the contact list should be informed by the school that their child is a close contact of a confirmed case. They should be advised to self-isolate until they have taken a PCR test. • If the PCR test is positive they should self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if they have no symptoms, for 10 days from the test result • If the test is negative they can return to school, however, if they do go on to develop new symptoms, they should stay at home, self-isolate with their household and book another PCR test. Close contacts who are adult staff members (18 and over) Different self-isolation guidance applies depending on vaccination status. • If fully vaccinated (i.e. 14 days have elapsed after their 2nd dose of a UK-approved vaccine), they can return to school straightaway, but are advised to take a PCR test on day 2 since their last contact with the case (or as soon as they have been informed if it is already more than 2 days since their contact) and another on Day 8. • Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated staff should self-isolate for the full 10 day period since their last contact with the case and book a PCR test. If an
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		unvaccinated or partially vaccinated person's PCR test is negative, they are still required to complete initial 10 days of self-isolation.
School Transport 	Is school transport operating?	• School Transport will operate as normal from 1st September for all pupils who are entitled to transport assistance and vehicles will operate at normal capacity. • Translink will be returning to provision of the normal school network from 1st September onwards and pupils are advised to check the Translink website for both dedicated school and regular services as some journeys may have altered since the last school term. • Children showing any symptoms of COVID-19 should not travel to school. • Schools must consult with Transport if they wish to alter school timings which would impact upon transport services. • Hired services for activities such as swimming has recommenced and is subject to availability.
Cleaning 	Is enhanced cleaning still required?	• The EA Cleaning Service have established Covid-19 Cleaning Response Teams which are strategically located throughout NI. Upon notification of a confirmed case the Cleaning Service Locality Manager will arrange an enhanced clean of the affected area, which will include the use of specialist sanitising equipment.
	How do I contact EA Cleaning Services?	• Please contact the following e-mail address with any queries relating to Covid: cleaning.covid19@eani.org.uk
School Meals 	Are School Meals available?	• The school meals service will operate as normal for each setting from 1st September. • Classroom based lunch service is no longer required. • Settings should continue to operate local approaches that minimise interaction between pupils at social and dining times.

	How will Free School Meals be paid/provided?	From 1st September Free School Meals will return to normal provision. No direct payments will be made unless schools are instructed to revert to remote learning.
Online and Remote Learning 	Where can I get guidance on supporting remote / home learning? 	The ‘Supporting Learning’ area in C2K provides access to wide range of guidance documents, professional learning resources and information about forthcoming Teacher Professional Learning opportunities. The site is updated regularly. It can be accessed through the ‘Supporting Learning -TPL’ button on the home page of My-School on C2K, readily identified by its rainbow logo. Guidance is available to assist settings in planning for remote learning within the following DE and ETI publications: DE Remote Learning Circular 2021/01 ETI Effective practice in remote learning , a one-page, quick glance document for schools.

APPENDIX ONE

Department of Education Definition of a Vulnerable Child (Jan 21)

The definition of Vulnerable Children as set out in the cross-departmental Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan 2020 is: (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-cross-departmental-covid-19-vulnerable-children-and-young-peoples-plan>)

- A child who has an assigned social worker because he or she is a child in need, in need of protection (or on the child protection register) or is a looked after child.
- A child in need includes young carers, children with disabilities, and children living in families where there is domestic abuse, substance abuse, and / or mental health difficulties.
- A child who is receiving support from, or has been referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- A child who has a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), a child who is accessing EOTAS, or a child who normally accesses Education Nurture Units.
- A child who is 'on-the-edge' of receiving support from children's social services.
- A child who is in need, including in need of protection, but whose need is not known to statutory services.
- A child who is not known to statutory or voluntary and community support services but who is vulnerable because their family is under increased pressure due to Covid-19 related circumstances.
- A young person who was previously a looked after child, whether or not they are receiving support from statutory services.
- A child who has been placed for adoption.
- Asylum seeking and refugee children and children whose parents have no recourse to public funds.

Educational settings should ensure that they are aware of their vulnerable young person cohort and have contact details recorded for these young people in the event that restrictions are implemented, and the DE Vulnerable Young Persons Framework is reintroduced. This is particularly important for new cohorts of young people to the school.

APPENDIX Two

Exemptions from wearing a face covering

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-face-coverings#toc-5>

You don't have to wear a face covering in a public indoor place:

- if you are under the age of 13
- if you are a member of staff or employee of the shop, shopping centre or bank and are behind a partition, or if you are in an area not open to the public and can maintain a two metre social distance from your colleagues
- If you have a reasonable excuse not to

You do not have to wear a face covering on passenger transport or in a passenger transport station:

- if you are still at primary school
- if you are a member of staff and are behind a protective screen

An employee of a shop or shopping centre can tell you to wear a face covering, and can tell you to leave the shop or shopping centre if you refuse to wear one and do not have a reasonable excuse not to.

Some circumstances make it difficult for some people to wear face coverings. In these circumstances people may have a 'reasonable excuse' not to wear a face covering.

These reasonable excuses include:

- If you need to seek medical assistance or to provide care to someone who needs assistance, such as a vulnerable person or in an emergency
- if you have a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability that means you cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering would cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with, or providing assistance to, someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- if you need to remove it to avoid harm or injury or the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others
- if you need to eat, drink, or take medication
- if you are asked to remove your face covering by a police officer or someone who may need to check your identity, for example, when buying alcohol, when you are at the bank, or in an airport or when boarding an aircraft

There is no need to get a letter from a doctor or the government to show that you do not need to wear a face covering. If you have a condition (for example, a disease such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis) which means you cannot wear a face covering you only need to say, if asked, that you cannot wear a face covering because you are exempt.

It is important that we all respect one another and remember that the reasons for not wearing a face covering may not always be visible.

If you do not wear a face covering and you are not exempt or do not have a reasonable excuse for not wearing one, you are committing an offence and could be fined.

Appendix Three

Definitions of Close Contacts in school settings as at August 2021

In the context of a case in a school, a close contact is anyone who has been close to a confirmed case of COVID-19 from 2 full days before the person was symptomatic* to 10 days after the onset of symptoms (i.e. the infectious period) and fulfils any of the following:

- lives in the same household & has been within one metre and had face-to-face contact (including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation)
- skin-to-skin contact
- been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
- has travelled in a small vehicle with the case
- travelled in a large vehicle / plane near the case

An interaction through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen with the person who has COVID-19 is not usually considered to be a contact, as long as there has been no other contact such as those in the list above.

*If the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 did not have symptoms, then the infectious period is counted from 2 days before their test was taken to 10 days after their test was taken.

Appendix Four

READINESS OF CONTINUITY OF LEARNING AT HOME



Readiness for Continuity of Learning At Home

A basic checklist intended to help schools prepare for learning at home.

Access	<i>Please make sure that everyone can access learning.</i> a) Do all staff have internet access and a laptop or other device? b) Do all the learners have internet access and a laptop or other device? c) Do we know who has no internet/laptop/device? Can we address this? d) Do we know who has poor internet connection? e) In this case, how are we providing alternative learning materials, feedback and opportunities to speak with staff and peers? How often?
Routines	<i>Please do not try to replicate a school timetable.</i> a) Have we made online lesson protocols clear to keep everyone safe? b) Do we expect every learner to log in every day? c) What is our minimum expectation for teacher contact with each class? d) What is our minimum expectation of teacher-led lessons per day/week?
Wellbeing and engagement	<i>Please make sure the learners have regular two-way contact with their teachers and with peers.</i> a) Do we have a simple checklist for the learners of what the school expects of them? b) Do we have a daily point of contact for the learners with a pastoral focus, eg a morning greeting from Class Teacher/Form Teacher? c) Do we have a group online conversation for learners about how they are managing, eg with as a Form Class with their teacher? d) Do Classroom Assistants assigned to learners have a daily/weekly contact routine? e) If learners are not engaging, what are our approaches to help them? f) If a teacher is ill, what contingency do we have in place?
Teaching, Learning and feedback	<i>Please make sure there is a good balance of:</i> a) teacher-led, independent and collaborative learning; b) online and off-line learning; c) ways in which to collect the learners' work, eg typed and submitted; photographed pieces of writing or art; recorded piece; d) ways in which to provide feedback to the learners, eg individual, whole class, verbal, written, video, marks, grades and/or annotations.
Monitoring and evaluation	<i>Please make sure to keep regular checks that all of the agreed approaches, routines and structures are working well for the learners, their parents/carers and staff.</i>
Communication with parents/carers	<i>Please make sure there is regular two-way contact with parents/carers.</i> a) Do we have a clear and straightforward checklist for parents/carers, eg 'What you can expect from our school'? b) Do we have clear and accessible guidance for parents on how to help their children access and engage in their learning and stay safe online? c) Are our parents/carers clear on how to make contact with the right staff member if their children have any difficulties related to their wellbeing or to their learning?