ASCL Association of School and College Leaders

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

AUTUMN TERM PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGES

On 2 July, the Department for Education (DfE) published guidance to support FE colleges and skills providers from the start of the autumn term 2020: What FE colleges and providers will need to do from the start.

This planning checklist is intended to supplement the above government documents, by providing suggested actions and checks which organisations can consider in their own context. We recognise that a flexible and tailored approach will be needed.

This guidance is for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal or professional advice. It represents ASCL's interpretation, but you rely on it at your own risk. For specific advice relevant to your particular circumstances, please contact your legal advisers.

Note the guidance includes a section headed System of Controls, which is the set of actions colleges **must** take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection' although the guidance focuses mainly on prevention.

Note: this guidance is set out so that sections can be reproduced for specialists in colleges for H&S, estates, HR and teaching and learning.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is the government's expectation that all learners in all groups will return to their courses in college from the beginning of the autumn term (appreciating that the date colleges return varies). This includes adult learners. The guidance (which is endorsed by Public Health England (PHE)) sets out a set of actions college leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission.

STEPS TO TAKE

- Complete a **health and safety risk assessment**; and revise where necessary individual and specific risk assessments.
- Consider the impact on staff and pupils who have **protected characteristics**, including race and disability, in developing your approach to reopening.
- Carry out risk assessments particularly for **vulnerable groups** (children and adults), to understand the specific risks faced from exposure to Covid-19, and actions which employers can take to keep all school users safe.

This includes staff returning to work in school/college, and existing staff who are potentially more at risk due to their race, age, disability or pregnancy. Networks such as those for black, Asian and minority ethnic **(BAME) or disabled staff** will be an important source of support to schools and colleges:

- BAMED Schools and COVID-19: guidance for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff and their employers in school settings (useful for colleges)
- Royal College of Psychiatrists Report: Impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff in mental healthcare settings | assessment and management of risk

Guidance produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will help schools and colleges identify **who is at risk of harm** and how this guidance should be closely followed. It includes templates and examples that organisations can adopt, along with specific guidance on some vulnerable groups.

- HSE managing risk and risk assessment at work guidance
- COVID-19 guidance for NHS workforce leaders - risk assessments for staff

HSE's guidance on **vulnerable workers** should also be used where appropriate:

- HSE vulnerable workers guidance

Review emergency plans and revise where necessary to reflect changes made to other policies and protocols.
ASCL: Reopening of schools and colleges - questions from members
Guidance advises colleges to review arrangements for your hot and cold water systems, gas safety, fire safety, kitchen equipment, security including access control and intruder alarm systems and ventilation. It also includes guidance on **re-opening after a lengthy closure**. We recognise that colleges would usually undertake these checks where sites have been shut down for the summer but checks and maintenance services may be in demand and take longer due to Covid-19. Other points to consider: • Site inspections and property management checks • Movement and storage of furniture and equipment • Arrangements for deliveries, contractor and necessary visitors

IMPLEMENT SOCIAL DISTANCING AND HYGIENE GUIDANCE

STEPS TO TAKE

Develop **seating plans for classrooms**, increasing distance between pupils and ensuring all desks are forward-facing.
Plan ways to promote **handwashing with soap and water** for at least 20 seconds across the working day, particularly: • after coming into college • after sneezing or coughing • before and after handling or eating food • after going to the toilet
Ensure there are enough **hand washing or hand sanitiser stations** available.
Provide tissues, bins, posters.
Ensure sufficient stock of frequently used items/resources to **minimise sharing amongst pupils**.
Identify any specific PPE needs and ensure sufficient supply using local supply chains.
Contact suppliers and service providers to inform them of social distancing and hygiene measures.
Advise staff to **utilise natural ventilation** via external doors and windows where possible and safe to so.

PLAN ARRANGEMENTS TO REDUCE MIXING BETWEEN GROUPS

The government guidance advises that the approaches suggested of **separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all or nothing' options** and will bring benefits even if partially used. Colleges may decide to allocate learners to course groups for the majority of the time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, other activities and transport, where possible.

STEPS TO TAKE

Plan group sizes.
Revise timetables to accommodate groups and minimise movement between classrooms and learning areas.
Where possible **stagger start, break, lunch and finish times**. When using staggered timings i.e. start to the day, break and lunchtimes, end of the day – consider implications for staffing, space capacity and contract provision; along with families with more than one sibling or dropping off at more than one college, if possible.
Review the format of large gatherings, many colleges are using online platforms to do staff meetings and other events, such as induction, open events and celebrations.

Revise extra-curricular offers to minimise mixing between groups. If necessary, cancel activities if they can be picked up later in the academic year.

Note the guidance advises that colleges should consider resuming all activities, where possible, from the start of the autumn term but that if it is not possible to maintain the same groups during the college day then colleges should use small, consistent groups, if possible.

Plan ways to **minimise contact around college estate between groups**, for example, separate entrance/exits, one-way systems, clear signage, staff on duty to direct those on site, visible ground/floor markings such as arrows, safety cones/tape/signs. We recognise this may be difficult for many colleges.

Divide outdoor spaces to minimise mixing between groups, also consider the use of playing fields during good weather, temporary structures, such as well-ventilated marques/canopies could extend the area available, particularly during lunchtimes which could be a particular pinch point for some colleges.

Plan arrangements for drop off/collection, particularly vulnerable learners and communicate these to parents/ carers, as appropriate.

Likewise, colleges should ask learners, staff, visitors to minimise waiting times and not to stop and chat, communicating that it is important to keep routes to and from college as clear as possible.

Plan measures for lunchtimes, including:

- Managing lunch queues
- Reconfiguring dining spaces
- Communicating new arrangements to catering suppliers
- Options for using outside space

CLEANING FOR COLLEGE CLEANERS OR SEPARATE CLEANING PROVIDERS

STEPS TO TAKE

Read PHE's COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

Define a new **cleaning schedule**.

Implement a **cleaning log** to track cleaning frequency for bathrooms, classrooms and communal areas.

Plan for the **daily removal and safe disposal of rubbish**.

Recruit additional cleaning staff if needed.

Schedule **frequent cleaning of resources**.

Schedule the **isolation or cleaning of resources**.

Purchase additional standard cleaning equipment if needed.

WORKFORCE

The guidance states that with the relaxation of shielding measures from 1 August, the Government expects that most learners still will attend college, including adult learners. The wider government advice advises that those who can work from home do so. They state that this will not be applicable to most staff, but where a role may be conducive to working from home, giving the examples of admin roles, college leaders should "consider what is feasible and appropriate".

STEPS TO TAKE

Make a staffing plan, redeploying staff to reflect changes to the college's operation.

Note that the guidance advises that staff can operate across different classes and groups.

Provide communications and **mandatory training to all staff on cleaning protocols, hygiene practices and social distancing**.

Communicate other requirements, such as, monitoring of symptoms, what to do if a colleague or learner is unwell, dedicated first aiders and safeguarding leads, revisions to emergency plans, plans to supervise arrivals and departures, break and lunchtimes (including late arrivals), and plan a system for providing feedback and relief for staff to facilitate breaks and absence.

Consider **wellbeing and welfare of all staff**, putting in place measures to check on staff wellbeing. Consider plans for new staff joining, supporting new supply staff, impact on mental health, options available to provide support and reporting systems.

Include appropriate ongoing **adjustments to application of sickness absence policies** to reflect Covid-19 related absences and issues.

Consider your approach to handling cases of staff subject to any ongoing/pre-existing **processes under sickness absence, capability and disciplinary policies**.

Further sources of guidance:

- ACAS Guidance

- HSE Guidance: Statutory requirements on an employer around home workers

Track your staff groups differentiating between absence related to Covid-19 and other absences i.e. those who are unwell, shielding and in self-isolation. Continue with regular reporting of staff absence figures.

Consider the support required by **staff who are returning to work from maternity, paternity, adoption leave or long-term sickness absence**.

Ensure you have in place a robust and comprehensive audit trail of all support provided in cases of staff absence.

Review revisions to work plans and risk assessments.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The government guidance does not set out key expectations for colleges to consider if revising their curriculum for the 2020/21 academic year but it does set out expectations that colleges will be funded for teaching and learning according to the funding guidance for 2020/21 :

- Teach all subjects from the start of the autumn term and include blended learning, to cope with learner numbers.

- Aim to return to the College's normal timetable as soon as possible.

- Plan on the basis of the educational needs of learners.

- Further develop remote and blended learning so that it is integrated into college's curriculum planning but the guidance draws attention to the funding rules for 2020-21 and the link to teaching hours.

STEPS TO TAKE

Identify the most important **missed content** and plan to cover this where possible..
Identify **students who are disadvantaged and those most at risk of disengagement**.

ATTENDANCE

STEPS TO TAKE

Write to learners, parents of U18s, employers, as appropriate, explaining:

- what precautions and processes will be in place

- attendance expectations

- the reasons why returning to college is important.

Revise **attendance policies** if necessary to create the right conditions to re-engage learners in their learning and reintegrate them back into college life. Further information will be made available on this page.

Develop plans for **re-engaging pupils at risk of disengagement**, including vulnerable learners, those previously persistently absent and those who have not engaged with college during lockdown.

Provide additional **pastoral and support services, as appropriate**, exploring how services might be delivered remotely if required. Refresh 'where to get help' posters all around college for when learners return and place them in prominent places.

Be aware that the **KCSIE guidance** has been updated.

Your Designated Safeguarding Leaders (DSLs) may need some extra time, particularly at the start of the Autumn Term.

Develop a **contingency plan** for remote education provision which meets the expectations set out in the funding guidance.

Have systems in place to move to **providing remote learning where a group or small number of learners need to self-isolate**, or where there is a local lockdown, as soon as you are reasonably able to.

Use the EdTech Demonstrator Programme to contact a network of colleges who are already using **remote education technology resources** for help and support.

ASCL guidance:

- Approaches to check-in meetings for children and young people

- Possible approaches to teaching Year 10 and Year 12 from 15 June

- Leading learning during school and college closures

TRANSPORT

Note that the guidance makes **a distinction between dedicated college transport and public transport services** which are also used by the general public, providing guidance for each scenario. It also recognises that social distancing will significantly reduce available transport in the autumn term.

STEPS TO TAKE

Encourage **walk, cycle or drive to school or college** rather than take public transport.

Remind learners still using public transport that **face coverings** are mandatory for those over 11 years.

Work with the local authority, other local schools, colleges, and transport providers to consider adjusting **start and finish times and/or staggered starts**. As mentioned previously, consider the needs of parents and carers dropping off and picking up from more than one education setting. Please also note this is caveated within the guidance that "staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time".

Communicate the importance of **travelling safely** and being aware of dangers and the measures they could use to reduce risks to their personal safety.

Read the Transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020 guidance

Check your local authority has sufficient information from parents, carers, and students about their home to school travel plans. This could include data on how students intend to travel to school or college from the start of term.

Where dedicated home to school transport is used, the face covering law does not apply, but the guidance advises people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college from the start of the autumn term (this does not apply to those who are exempt)

Plan a process for children and young people to remove face coverings when they arrive at school. Enable them to wash their hands immediately on arrival and then wash their hands again after removing their face covering.

PLAN PROCEDURES TO MANAGE SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19

STEPS TO TAKE

Read process for dealing with symptomatic individuals.
Read procedure for dealing with a suspected outbreak.
Identify **a room that symptomatic learners and staff will wait in** until collected, ideally with: • a door you can close • a window for ventilation • a separate bathroom (either attached to the room or nearby) • use signage to designate the room and process for identifying if it is in use
Prior to returning to college, plan and deliver **staff training on the process for dealing with symptomatic learners** and ensure they are aware of the steps the college will take in the event of an outbreak.

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