



Northumberland
County Council

COVID19 Outbreak Contingency Plan

Bedlington West End Primary School

16th September 2021

Introduction

All education and childcare settings are required to have an outbreak management plan (sometimes called a contingency plan) which **outlines how they would operate if any of the measures described in this document were recommended for their setting or area**. This includes how they would ensure every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled.

The school leadership team (SLT) recognises the need to respond to outbreaks of COVID-19 quickly, effectively and proportionately, to ensure a safe school environment whilst minimising the effect of loss of face-to-face education by prioritising measures which ensure business continuity. In all circumstances, the potential benefit of measures to reduce transmission will be weighed against the potential impact on education and restrictions on attendance will only be considered as a last resort. The health and safety of staff, pupils and visitors remains our number one priority.

The COVID-19 risk assessment for the school records the key protective measures in place, including some measures which may need to be re-introduced as part of this plan.

What is an Outbreak?

Where the number of positive cases substantially increases, this could indicate transmission is happening in the school. At this point, advice is sought from the NCC Public Health Team in the following circumstances:

- 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or
- 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period

Identifying a group that is likely to have mixed closely will be different for each setting. A group will rarely mean a whole setting or year group. For schools, this could include:

- a form group or subject class
- a friendship group mixing at breaktimes
- a sports team
- a group in an after-school activity

Early years and wraparound care close mixing examples can be found in the [“Contingency framework: education and childcare settings”](#) document.

The school will also seek public health advice if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital with COVID-19. Hospitalisation could indicate increased severity of illness or a new variant of concern. Support in managing risk assessments and communicating with staff and parents may be offered.

Communication and Record Keeping

This plan is kept under periodic review by Jane Bushell and Karen Porter (Headteachers) and will be reviewed following an outbreak to identify any aspects which worked well or areas for improvement.

The following arrangements are in place/will be put in place in the event of a case(s) of COVID-19:

- Parents are asked to inform the school of any positive COVID-19 case as soon as possible, as per normal arrangements for reporting sickness absence; ie: by phoning the school office in the first instance as soon as a child is symptomatic and/or as soon as a child tests positive. If the symptoms or positive test result occur out of school office hours parents are requested to email school at admin@westend.northumberland.sch.uk immediately and then contact the school office by phone at the earliest opportunity.
- NHS Test & Trace will undertake contact tracing and provide advice to close contacts. From 16 August those under 18 will no longer be required to self-isolate at home but they will be advised to take a PCR test. *Note: staff are instructed not to share contact details of individuals with anyone other than Test and Trace/Public Health Team (staff should not share contact details of close contacts with other parents/carers).*
- Details of the positive case will be kept so that any linked cases can be identified - including dates of symptoms/date of positive test/date last in school/details of class or social group.
- NCC Public Health Team are notified of the positive case(s) via the on-line notification form. If at a later date the school becomes aware that an individual has been hospitalised, the Public Health Team will be notified via the enquiry form. (forms are available via the Covid management flowchart in the Resources section)
- Staff are informed when there has been a case of COVID-19 within the school and are instructed to be vigilant of anyone displaying symptoms.
- Inform and advise communications are sent to parents of groups of pupils who may be possible contacts of the positive case. This will request them to be vigilant for symptoms, keep pupils off school if they become symptomatic, go for a PCR test if they are identified as close contacts by Test and Trace.

Activating the Plan - Collaboration

The Local Authority, Director of Public Health for Northumberland, and Public Health England local health protection teams are responsible for managing localised outbreaks. They play an important role in providing support and advice to education and childcare settings. In all situations where this plan is implemented, the school will liaise and co-operate with the above to agree on the most appropriate protective measures which may need to be reintroduced to contain an outbreak, bearing in mind the priority of maintaining school attendance.

The plan will be activated in the following circumstances:

- to help manage a COVID-19 outbreak within the school
- if there is extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and other measures have failed to reduce transmission
- as part of a package of measures responding to a Variant of Concern (VoC)

The Headteacher or representative (Jane Bushell, Karen Porter) will contact the NCC Public Health Team if they consider there may be an outbreak within the school due to illness reported. The NCC Public Health Team will contact the Headteacher from the school if they become aware of a possible outbreak within the school/area from PHE data they receive.

Step A – a single case or cases below the threshold of an Outbreak of COVID-19 in setting

- Parents notify school of a positive case or the school is notified by the NCC Public Health Team.
- NHS Test & Trace will undertake contact tracing and advise close contacts to arrange a PCR test. The school is not expected to follow up the results of PCR tests.
- School should note details of the case so that any linked cases within school can be identified.
- Notify the Public Health Team of the positive case(s) via the on-line notification form.
- The actions in the **Communication and Record Keeping section** are implemented.
- Covid risk assessment/existing protective measures are reviewed to identify any areas for improvement [as a very minimum enhanced cleaning, ongoing hand and respiratory hygiene and good ventilation should already be in place].
- Staff/pupils are reminded of the importance of following the protective measures in place within the setting.

Step 2 - An outbreak of COVID-19 in setting

When the school becomes aware of a possible outbreak Jane Bushell or Karen Porter will contact the NCC Public Health Team via their enquiry line:

https://form.northumberland.gov.uk/form/auto/covid19_education_eng

The NCC Public Health Team will:

- work with the school to identify the cohort the cases belong to and undertake an assessment including number of cases, spread within the school and evidence of ongoing transmission.
- work with the school to determine appropriate public health action in the event of an outbreak
- Hold an Outbreak Control Team meeting if required (informed by the public health team's risk assessment)
- Variant of Concern (VOC) cases – may be managed differently. Additional actions / investigations may be undertaken if a new variant is detected and that this will be led by the Health Protection Team in Public Health England (PHE).

The school/setting will:

- Implement the Outbreak Management Plan.
- Follow protocol as in **Step A for a single case.**
- Review and reinforce the testing, hygiene and ventilation measures they already have in place.
- Consider whether any activities could take place outdoors, including exercise, assemblies, or classes
- Consider ways to improve ventilation indoors, where this would not significantly impact thermal comfort
- Arrange a one-off enhanced cleaning focussing on touch points and any shared equipment
- Follow the advice of the NCC Public Health Team/Outbreak Control Team to implement recommended additional protective measures.
- Follow the actions in the **Communication and Record Keeping section** .

Possible Protective Measures – Arrangements

The graduated response to additional protective measures is outlined below. These measures are not exhaustive and will be kept under review..



Low Community Transmission. No School Cases.

- There have been no cases of Covid within school for 10 school days.
- Cases of Covid locally are low and/ or stable.
- Hospitalisation/ Deaths due to Covid nationally are low.

No Covid measures are necessary beyond those in the school's Covid risk assessment and specifically:

- Ensuring good hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Ensuring good ventilation where practical.
- Ensuring regular cleaning of frequently used areas and touch points.
- Ensuring Children / Staff stay at home if they have Covid Symptoms (and book a PCR test).

Staff will continue to test themselves using Lateral flow tests until the end of September.



Rapidly Rising Community Transmission

- No current Covid cases have been recorded at school, but...
- Cases of Covid are rising rapidly in the community.
- Northumberland Public Health / Public Health England issue warnings of expected local/ national infection wave.

- Ventilation of classrooms increased and hand-washing/sanitising increased.
- Large indoor public performance audience numbers reduced.
- Staff-room capacity is reduced.
- Whole-school assemblies are replaced with Key Stage and phase assemblies.



A single child tests Positive

- A single child tests positive for Covid.
- There are fewer than 5 cases in the year or phase group.
- No other year groups are affected.

- The child self-isolates for 10 days.
- The parents of the child are contacted directly by NHS Track and Trace to establish likely contacts.
- Likely contacts will be contacted by NHS Track & Trace and advised to book a PCR Test. The school will contact parents to advise there is a case in their child's class, phase, club etc using NCC letter.
- **Contacts do not need to miss school or self-isolate whilst they wait for the result of the PCR test unless they have Covid symptoms.**
- **Covid protocols will be reviewed and checked to minimise the possibility of transmission.**



5 children or staff within a year group test positive within 10 days of each other.

- There have been 5 cases of Covid across a year or phase group within 10 days which could mean that Covid is spreading within that group of children.
- **As above for each positive case.**
- The school will discuss the outbreak with Northumberland Public Health and agree strengthening protective measures for 10 school days, including:
 - Re-introducing staff face coverings for smaller shared areas.
 - Adapting, limiting or postponing indoor sporting events, trips, open days and performances.
 - Reverting to video-link assemblies in classrooms.
 - Resuming twice-weekly Staff Lateral flow testing (if after Sept and available)
 - Additional cleaning of any areas where all cases were present.
 - Parents requested to wear face coverings on school site



Covid cases continue to increase rapidly within a 10 day period.

- Despite the measures indicated above, Covid cases within the school continue to rise within a 10 day period with multiple classes and staff affected, suggesting that Covid is spreading widely throughout the school.
- Incident Management Team meeting held between the school and Northumberland Public Health to agree further measures, for a further 10 school days, possibly including:
 - Re-introducing class bubbles.
 - Limiting all non-essential visitors to school.
 - Postponing all non-essential events.

Reintroduction of “bubbles”/Limits on mixing of pupils

The DfE advise that any recommendation for the reintroduction of ‘bubbles’ is not taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education.

Face coverings (staff and visitors)

The reintroduction of face coverings is one of the least disruptive protective measures and can be quickly and easily activated. Where this is recommended the school will:

- Agree with NCC Public Health Team if these will be worn in communal areas.

- Review and update the school COVID-19 risk assessment/separate face coverings risk assessment.
- Implement the control measures detailed in the risk assessment e.g. reminders on donning and doffing safely, ensure sufficient bins for disposal, ensure there is a supply of disposable face coverings
- letter/messages home to parents informing them of the change in practice.

Restricting Attendance

Due to the number of days of missed on-site education, restricting attendance of pupils at school will only be considered if absolutely necessary and on the advice from the DfE/Government/Public Health Team/Director of Public Health for Northumberland. Where restrictions are put in place across a geographical area, the government will issue detailed operational guidance.

- Where restricted attendance is in place, the school will reactivate its arrangements to enable high quality remote learning:
 - Daily remote learning will be provided in line with our remote learning policy
 - Pupils without access to a digital device or internet connection will be provided with a laptop and/or dongle for the period of remote learning
 - Parents may request paper packs for pupils who struggle to engage with online learning and who are not able to be effectively supported to do so, but this is a last resort
 - Pupils will be provided with appropriate stationery supplies if required
 - Pupils will receive a fortnightly call from their class teacher or a member of pastoral staff to check on their welfare and wellbeing
 - Vulnerable children, children open to children's services and children on EHCPs will receive a weekly welfare call from the Inclusion Mentor and/or SENCo
 - Pupils on Free School meals will be provided with a daily meal and/or weekly hamper dependent on the duration of absence
- Priority for on-site attendance is given to vulnerable children and children of critical workers.
- Early years settings – all vulnerable children and children of critical workers are still able to attend.
- Primary Schools - all vulnerable children, children of critical workers, children in reception, year 1 and year 2 are allowed to attend. If attendance is restricted further, vulnerable children and children of critical workers should still be allowed to attend.

Shielding

Shielding for those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 is currently paused. In the event of a major outbreak or variant of concern that poses a significant risk to individuals on the shielded patient list (SPL), ministers can agree to reintroduce shielding. Shielding would be considered in addition to other measures

to address the residual risk to people on the SPL, once the wider interventions are taken into account.

Shielding can only be reintroduced by national government. If this were to happen the school will:

- Reactivate remote learning/support for pupils of the shielding list [details how this will be done, including loan of equipment, pastoral support etc]
- Review individual risk assessments for relevant staff. Make arrangements to support working from home.
- Additional resources may be needed – agency staff, staff redeployment.

Other measures

It may be necessary to cancel, postpone or review arrangements for out of school visits, after school activities or large scale gatherings/events. This will include:

- residential educational visits - Any attendance restrictions should be reflected in the visits risk assessment and setting leaders should consider carefully if the educational visit is still appropriate and safe. Only children who are attending the setting should go on an educational visit. Education settings should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.
- open days
- transition or taster days
- parental attendance in settings
- performances in settings

Resources:

[COVID-19 management flowchart](#) including Inform and Advise communications

Government Guidance:

[Operational Guidance for Schools](#)

[“Contingency framework: education and childcare settings”](#)

Document History:

First version: 14th September 2021