

Subject: RE: update regarding FFP2 respirators

Importance: High

Dear Alison,

Thank you for raising this issue with me. As you'll be aware, I was taking the opportunity to take further advice on this matter and also received further advice and opinion on this at a national meeting last Friday.

As you will be aware from prior correspondence with [] the Council's Health and Safety Senior Manager and appointed competent person for health and safety matters, the current and recently updated Scottish Government guidance does not require this level of protection for colleagues in Schools. All the actions taken by the City of Edinburgh Council, to date, have been compliant with national guidance in respect of PPE and Public Health related guidance and that remains the case. Therefore, the Council is meeting all obligations from a duty of care perspective and will continue to do so in this regard. The national guidance issued by the Scottish Government confirms the following:

Face coverings

At its meeting on 9 February 2021, the Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues specifically considered whether advice on face coverings should be strengthened in order to require medical grade face masks to be worn in secondary schools. A definition of face coverings (which should not be confused with PPE) can be found in [Covid19: staying safe and protecting others](#). The Sub-group view was that such a requirement was not commensurate with the risk in school settings, and that cloth face coverings, when combined with the other, more important, mitigations of physical distancing and hand hygiene, were considered appropriate in schools.

Further, at its meeting on 1 March, the Advisory Sub-group considered whether the wearing of type IIR face coverings should be advised for secondary school staff. In light of the absence of evidence that school staff are more likely to become infected or become seriously ill, and recognition that schools are relatively low risk environments as long as mitigations are applied and community transmission suppressed, the sub-group advises that standard face coverings, rather than type IIR, remain appropriate for secondary staff.

As you will be aware, the Council had previously purchased face coverings for all Council employees and took the decision to supplement that further for School based employees with a decision to purchase 2ply Face Coverings, which are to an enhanced standard when compared to the original face coverings, as a further supportive measure for colleagues.

Finally, I should add that the question relating to FFP2 respirators was specifically raised at a national meeting both [] and I attended last Friday and a senior Public Health Scotland official confirmed these were not required for schools as per the national guidance. Therefore, the Council's position remains that we will adhere to the national guidance and it has taken steps to provide face coverings already for school based colleagues. Consequently, the Council will not be seeking to supply FFP2 respirators unless the national guidance changes.

Kind regards,

From: Alison Murphy (Edinburgh - Sec) <edinburghla@eis.org.uk>

Sent: 30 March 2021 15:55

Subject: RE: update regarding FFP2 respirators

Importance: High

Dear []

Further to my email, below... Schools break up on Thursday. There are a lot of staff who would feel more confident about a return to crowded classrooms after the holiday if they had the reassurance of knowing that their employer would offer them the option of wearing an FFP2 respirator. Also, it is the Edinburgh EIS LA Executive meeting tomorrow evening. As you can imagine, our declared dispute, over our members' perception of a failure of duty of care by CEC, is one of the key items for discussion. I will be asked about progress with the various points we have raised, particularly the matter of respirators, and I think there will be some anger if there has not been a response that I can share.

I do hope you can get back to me with something substantive soon.

Kind regards

Alison

From: Alison Murphy (Edinburgh - Sec)

Sent: 29 March 2021 11:20

Subject: update regarding FFP2 respirators

Importance: High

Dear []

I hope you are well.

Where are we regarding making FFP2 respirators available to all school-based staff who might choose to wear them? I appreciate you are very busy, but I am sure you will also appreciate that staff are extremely anxious, and keen to have an answer to this. Not only are all our primary colleagues already back to working with full classes, with all the associated concerns regarding ventilation etc, but straight after the Easter break we expect that all secondary pupils will be back. Given that there seems to be clear agreement that older students are, in terms of infectivity and with respect to the new variants, very similar to adults, I am sure you can understand that there is a huge amount of concern. I am sure you have already thought about how you would feel were you being asked to work in a room with 30 other people, which is what secondary colleagues will be doing in just a few weeks. Surely you would like to have the option of wearing a respirator that offers you a level of individual protection?

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards

Alison

Alison Murphy
Local Association Secretary
Edinburgh Local Association
EIS
46 Moray Place
Edinburgh
EH3 6BH

Mobile: 07948 280 906
<http://www.eis.org.uk/edinburgh/>
Twitter: @EdinburghEIS

Domestic abuse an issue? Go to <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Contact-us> for help.