

EIS Advice Note

Working Safely in Hub Schools and Support Centres.

Following a meeting of the UK Government's COBRA committee, an effective ban is in place in Scotland on gatherings in public places, excluding household groups or in a work-related capacity.

Travelling to **essential work** that cannot be done at home is one of the few exemptions to the current lockdown. Clearly being part of the support offered in hub schools to children of key workers is classified as "essential work". Indeed, teachers volunteering to part of such a response become themselves Category 1 key workers.

Not unexpectedly, giving the caring nature of the teaching profession, the numbers volunteering to be part of this provision currently outstrips demand.

The importance of this work should not be underestimated – it underpins the country's capacity to keep front line medical staff and other key workers at work – saving lives.

It is important, however, that in the various hub schools or support centres that the highest standards are applied in terms of essential health and safety protocols, otherwise the endeavour could become counter-productive, aiding the spread of the virus to the homes of those key workers we seek to protect.

The following guidance is designed to support the successful operation of hub support.

1. Keeping safe on site

- Only the children of key workers and vulnerable children, whose parents cannot make alternative arrangements, and staff on rota duty should come in to the school or educational establishment.
- No other children should be allowed on site.
- No other visitors or contractors to come on site, unless absolutely necessary or in emergencies.

2. Cleaning arrangements

- More thorough cleaning regimes should be introduced.
- Toilets and washrooms to be cleaned by cleaning staff, as regularly as is necessary to maintain high standards of cleanliness with cleaning products.
- This will involve additional cleaning beyond the normal regime, with checks during the working day.
- All other areas to be cleaned by cleaning staff with cleaning products before the start of every day, paying special attention to door handles, table/counter tops, computers, light switches telephones, bannisters, toys and other areas touched regularly by staff and children, with additional cleaning during the day.
- Consider removing some items from classroom if cleaning is challenging: i.e. construction materials/play-doh.
- Where there has been a Covid19 case, the cleaning regime should be in accordance with strict rules outline in [covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings](#).

3. Hand washing

- Stocks of soap to be checked, and replenished, before the start of every day.
- Warm water to be available throughout the day
- Hand sanitiser and tissues to be available in every classroom and at reception area with stocks checked every day.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap on arrival and regularly throughout the day.
- Supervised hand washing for all children, for at least 20 seconds, to take place as a minimum on arrival and before and after every break and lunchtime.
- There should be regular supervised use of hand sanitiser in every classroom throughout the day.

4. Avoid physical contact between children and between staff and children

- Avoid, so far as is possible, physical contact with children.
- As far as possible, avoid games and activities which lead to physical contact between children.
- Where children complete work, don't collect it in at the end of the day. Ask them to take it home instead.

- Spread children out as far as possible when in the classroom and when eating – ideally 2 metres apart (6 and a half feet).
- Children should walk single file when moving throughout the building and must not hold hands.
- Stagger break and lunch times where possible so that the playground and dining area doesn't become crowded at any time. Make sure that children are not holding hands, hugging or jumping on each other.

5 Broader safety measures

- All NHS and Scottish Government advice around COVID 19 should be adhered whenever possible
- Social distancing – pupil teacher ratios should be low to allow for social distancing: 1 to 5 would be a reasonable starting point; certainly no more than 1 to 10 in a normal classroom space
- Testing of staff would assist in controlling potential spreading of the virus
- Clear plans should be in place to support pupils who become stressed
- Protocols should be in place also around any potential disruptive behaviour
- Rostering of volunteer staff should be planned carefully to minimise multiple contacts between pupils and a range of different adults