

## 17. Contingency Plans for COVID-19 During Visits

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### 17.1. Introduction

All educational visits and off-site activities should be assessed and measures put in place to reduce risks, including actions visit leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus. Model risk assessments have been developed by SHE with COVID measures and are available in the Document Library on eVisit.

The same principles adopted in school will need to be followed during educational visits:

1. Individuals who are required to self isolate (who should not be in school anyway) should not attend the visit. This includes if:
  - they have COVID-19 symptoms;
  - a member of their household or support bubble has symptoms;
  - they have had a positive test or
  - they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.
2. Pupils should be grouped together in the same bubbles that are adopted within school for the duration of the visit and during transport.
3. Social distancing principles to be maintained at all times so mixed groups are kept apart and visit staff and any volunteers minimise contact and keep distance between each other and other people.
4. Face coverings are used in recommended circumstances (e.g. transport).
5. Ensure hand and respiratory hygiene throughout the visit and cleaning surfaces and equipment.

Despite these measures, it remains possible that infection may occur whilst away and therefore plans should be in place to respond.

The response to an infection will depend on the specific circumstances of the visit. For example, where you are, what the premises are like, how far from home you are, transport arrangements, size of the group etc. The following is some guidance that may be considered but visit leaders should assess each visit and ensure contingencies are in place.

This guidance only currently applies to domestic educational visits as it is not envisaged that overseas visits will resume at this time.

### **17.2. Liaising with providers and operators**

If using an activity provider, visitor attraction, planning on using a venue or staying in accommodation, visit leaders should check they have arrangements in place and discuss the impact of COVID-19 with them. A good starting point would be to check the website to confirm they are COVID-secure, have assessed the risks and measures are in place. You should also ask them to send you information for visit staff, parents and pupils about COVID rules they can be expected to follow during the visit.

It is also advisable to contact any transport operators to discuss their COVID rules and agree contingency plans as they may be required to get you home.

If you do have a COVID case during or when you have returned from an educational visit the school must inform the provider/operators without delay so that appropriate action can be taken.

### **17.3. What to do if an individual develops symptoms during the visit**

Should anyone become unwell during the visit with COVID symptoms they need to be removed from the group immediately and kept away from others. Isolate them as best they are able under the circumstances given the location or accommodation they find themselves in. For example:

- If inside, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door.
- If it is not possible to isolate them in another room, move them to an area which is more than 2 metres away from others.
- If out and about separate them from the rest of the group.
- Consider isolating them in a car if available, with the windows open, until assistance can arrive.
- If inside and the weather allows, take them out in the open air in a dry and comfortable place.

Anyone supervising an isolating pupil should keep a distance of at least 2 metres or where this cannot be maintained (because of age or complex needs) PPE must be worn.

Everyone in the group who has had contact with the unwell pupil/staff member should wash or sanitise their hands immediately.

School Visit Staff are not expected to arrange testing of a symptomatic pupil whilst away on an Educational Visit. If they show symptoms, isolate them and arrange their return home.

### **17.4. Transporting an unwell pupil/staff member**

If possible, arrangements should be made for the symptomatic person to be collected by a member of their family or household. This will depend on how practicable this is and whether they are able to facilitate collection in reasonable time (e.g. 1-2 hours).

When planning visits and informing parents/carers of the arrangements, they should be told what to expect and if they will be required to collect their child.

If it is not possible or is not necessary for the person to be collected because of the circumstances of the trip, alternative arrangements will be required.

If it is a local trip and it is age-appropriate and safe to do so, the pupil may be able to walk themselves home. The visit staff and pupil should be in contact and inform a parent/carer of the arrangements.

There may be circumstances where visit staff take responsibility for transporting them home. In which case contingency plans might include having a teacher accompanying the visit in a car rather than relying solely on a coach or minibus.

#### **17.5. Staff transporting an unwell pupil**

If a member of staff is transporting a pupil, consider the following:

- If it is at all possible, use a vehicle with a bulkhead or partition that separates the driver and passenger.
- The driver and passenger should maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other or sit as far apart as possible in the car.
- The driver should use PPE, and the passenger should wear a face covering if they are old enough and able to do so.
- Open windows during the journey to provide adequate ventilation.
- Use hand sanitiser.
- Clean the car including door handles and other areas touched.

#### **17.6. Transporting an unwell pupil/staff member on the coach or minibus**

If the symptomatic individual needs to return to school on the coach or minibus with the rest of the group, during the return journey the individual should be distanced as far as possible from the rest of the group, wear face coverings if they are old enough and able to do so and vents or windows kept open to provide ventilation.

Once back at school follow normal school procedures - move the pupils to a room where they can be isolated whilst awaiting collection.

#### **17.7. Next steps**

Once they have returned home, the symptomatic person must stay at home and get tested.

No further action is needed until the test result is known. The school will need to stay in close communication with the symptomatic person or their parent/carer to find out the test result as soon as possible.

If a positive test is returned, close contacts will need to be identified so that they can also be isolated and sent home.

If you have a confirmed case call the Department for Education (DfE) advice line on 0800 046 8687.

### **17.8. Identifying close contacts**

It is likely that on most educational visits, the majority if not all of the group will be considered close contacts, especially if they have travelled together.

Close contact means:

- face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre;
- been within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face 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);
- travelled in the same vehicle.

### **17.9. Managing close contacts**

On local visits or day trips it is likely that the whole group will already have returned and be back to normal routines before the test result is known. In which case, normal school procedures for identifying and isolating close contacts can be followed.

However, on residential visits notification of a positive test may come whilst the group is still away and decisions will need to be made on what happens next. For example, a person could attend the trip with no symptoms but show symptoms in the first few days. They can be sent home and get tested and the result could come whilst the rest of the group are still away on their residential. Action will be required.

If you can identify anyone within the group that was a close contact and others that are not then they will need to be separated from each other and the close contacts isolated.

The number of close contacts will determine whether to abandon the visit completely and everyone return home or whether individuals will need to be collected or transported home (following the advice above).

If the whole group is returning home, liaise with the transport provider as early as possible and, during the return journey, ensure all passengers are distanced as far as possible from others, wear face coverings if they are old enough and able to do so and vents or windows kept open to provide ventilation. Separate transport may need to be arranged.

### **17.10. Advice for ferry journeys with a positive case**

Most ferry operators will not permit passengers to travel if they have symptoms, which could leave you in a difficult position if you do need to return. As it is not expected that overseas visits will resume any time soon, the guidance above only applies to domestic educational visits so ferry journeys should not occur.

If your domestic educational visit involves a ferry journey (e.g. to the Isle of Wight) it is recommended that you contact your provider and the ferry operator before the visit to discuss what contingency plans can be put in place.