

**Guidance for Schools**  
**Individual Risk Assessment for**  
**Staff Categorised as at Higher**  
**Risk from COVID-19\***

\* This Guidance may change in line with government announcements and when further DfE guidance is published.

## Introduction

It is important that we support and protect all employees however there are individual employees who could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. These individuals are those who are classed as clinically vulnerable and those from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background.

This guidance helps with the risk assessment, support and ongoing management of these employees and should be read in conjunction with the current risk assessment for the school and the latest Government Guidance.

The completion of an individual assessment for all staff who have been shielding, or are clinically vulnerable or from a BAME background should be completed by both the line manager and the employee and is subject to regular review.

Shielding is a measure to protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable by minimising all interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others. From the 1st August 2020 this measure is being 'Paused'. From this date, the government is advising adopting strict social distancing rather than full shielding measures. Employees can go to work, if they cannot work from home, as long as the business is COVID-safe or the setting/job role allows strict social distancing to be maintained.

Should lockdown restrictions be required to be reinstated due to localised or national requirements then shielding measures may be reinstated and would revert back to the guidance before the 1st August 2020.

## Staying 'COVID Secure' commitment - The School will

- Recognise the risk posed by Coronavirus (COVID-19) to employees, their families and our students. Control measures to minimise the risk of infection and the transmission of the virus are determined by school risk assessments.
- Continue to ensure, as so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, and others whom we interact with.
- Require only the minimum number of staff to deliver on-site learning safely and effectively, for staff not required on site we will ensure they can work from home, if at all possible.
- Share relevant risk assessments and their findings with employees and union colleagues.
- Continue to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation.

## Other Vulnerable Groups

There are further identifiable groups of employees that the school would consider vulnerable in relation to the risks from COVID-19. Those who the Government have identified as **clinically vulnerable** ([see link](#)) and those who are from a **BAME background**.

Following the reduction in the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) and relaxation of shielding measures from 1 August, we expect that most staff will attend school.

The school will support and put in place measures to allow employees in these categories to socially distance themselves wherever possible. Where schools apply the full measures in the DfE guidance for full opening – Schools 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 the risks to all staff will be mitigated significantly, including those who are extremely clinically vulnerable and clinically vulnerable. We expect this will allow most staff to return to the workplace, although we advise those in the most at risk categories to take particular care while community transmission rates continue to fall.

## **An individual risk assessment must be undertaken for all vulnerable employees**

### **Individual Risk Assessment**

A specific individual assessment form for those employees meeting the criteria is included at the end of this document. This risk assessment should examine the existing control measures in your COVID-19 risk assessment for all employees and agree and document what additional control measures (if any) are required in order to keep the vulnerable employee safe in the workplace.

Headteachers/line managers should undertake a discussion with the vulnerable employee utilising their existing COVID-19 risk assessment and guidance relevant to their role and workplace. The discussion should focus on the control measures that have already been put in place and any additional controls that may be necessary to protect the vulnerable employee. The Individual Risk Assessment form should be used to record agreed actions or reasons why adjustments to the employee's role cannot be put into practice.

### **Steps that can be taken once employees who are at increased risk have been identified**

#### **Measures across the workforce**

Schools should continue to follow their existing COVID-19 risk assessment and the identified measures to protect the workforce and ensure the wellbeing of all workers who are at risk. They should continue to reinforce these measures and all the resources that the school has put in place to support employees health safety and wellbeing.

Measures could include:

- Engaging staff and involving them in decision-making, solutions and support.
- Giving staff opportunities to express concerns.
- Review the workplace following the Council and DfE guidance.
- Ensure staff and pupils follow the guidance on hand washing and hygiene

- Consideration of impacts of workload and working pattern on fatigue levels.
- Support taking regular breaks, providing opportunities for food and water to be available for staff.
- Follow all the available guidance and advice on working from home, self-isolation, shielding and vulnerable employees and testing.
- Ensure all staff are fully aware of and following the Council's PPE guidance where appropriate.
- Ensure all staff are fully aware of the health, safety and wellbeing support available.

### **Individual measures**

The options available to reduce the risk to BAME or clinically vulnerable employees will be dependent on the type of work they do and the setting that they work in. You should consider together:

- Redeployment to a setting or a role where the risks are lower- eg working from home to support remote learning rather than undertaking a frontline delivery role.
- Adjustments to their work arrangements - for example reducing or removing the need for them to use public transport for work.
- Further advice and support, for example through occupational health and departmental health and safety team.

If the headteacher and employee do not agree on the conclusions of these discussions, school resolution processes should be followed.

Headteachers need to consider individual circumstances on a case by case basis when making decisions and assessing workplace risks. Conversations should be documented, using the risk assessment tool and a copy given to the employee.

If adjustments to help the individual meet the substantive elements of their role are not feasible or the controls detailed in the **COVID-19 Risk Assessment** are not sufficient to adequately protect the individual being assessed, headteachers must seek further support from the health and safety team.

### **Headteachers should also consider the following when carrying out an individual risk assessment:**

Recognise that the employee may be very anxious and concerned about the current situation with COVID-19 and that advice and guidance is constantly changing. Where necessary, seek to support and signpost staff to available resources around mental health and wellbeing. (See section on additional wellbeing support below).

Recognise the need to not make any assumptions about the employee, such as their health conditions or ethnicity and encourage staff to identify and report any relevant issues.

Reassure the employee that you are taking their health and wellbeing very seriously and that you will work to support them during these challenging times.

Reinforce that whilst for some groups there is no current evidence that they have a greater risk of contracting coronavirus, there is emerging evidence that BAME groups do appear to be at greater risk of contracting the virus. It is however recognised that both BAME and clinically vulnerable employees may suffer more severe symptoms and complications if infected.

Encourage the employee and staff to share any concerns which they have in connection with their role, training, safe systems of work and if applicable, the suitability of any PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) provided.

Reassure employees for whom it is a necessity to work from home due to health reasons that they will not be disadvantaged in terms of their career development or progression, and will continue to be integrated into the team and have access to the same opportunities.

Remind the employee and staff of the need to maintain good personal hygiene (handwashing and physical / social distancing).

Pregnant worker risk assessments are still required to be undertaken. These should be carried out in conjunction with this individual assessment and reflect any control measures implemented via the **COVID-19 Risk Assessment**.

At all times, the individual assessment process will be subject to existing school policies and procedures and confidentiality will be observed, at all times, in respect of the subject and content of such assessments.

In making decisions about the workforce, schools should consider their legal and health and safety responsibilities and are encouraged to consult with trade unions and seek their own legal advice if required.

For further information see:

- DfE guidance
- ACAS: Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for employers and employees
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

### **Additional Wellbeing Support**

Schools should ensure employees are aware of all the additional wellbeing support that the school has put in place. Employees should be given the following information as part of the risk assessment process.

Occupational Health are available to support employees and can be contacted on 01629 536969.

The emotional health and wellbeing pages on the DCC website have collected together a list of websites, support lines, videos, and apps with some great tips to help individuals to look after their emotional health during the coronavirus outbreak. The links include self help and support for mental health websites that offer specific support and advice depending on the personal circumstances.

The links can be accessed [HERE](#)

The education support partnership website have trained counsellors who will listen without judgement and will help employees think through the problems they are facing to find a way forwards and feel better. This service is UK-wide: 08000 562 561. The helpline is free and available to all teachers, lecturers and staff in education (primary, secondary, further or higher education) in England, Wales and Scotland. They are there for employees 24/7, 365 days a year.

Additional support is available from trade unions and professional associations. ASCL, NAHT and NEU have issued joint advice to their members. UNISON have also produced a Q&A for members as have NASUWT.

### **Further Support and Guidance**

Further support is available from the health and safety and/or HR Team