



A GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING COVID-SECURE SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK AT THE RSC: EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The government have announced that participatory activity in schools and out of school settings can take place with robust risk controls in place to ensure social distancing rules can be maintained for practitioners, teachers, children and young people. Social distancing rules currently state that individuals, outside of their household bubbles, must maintain a distance of 2 metres from others, or where that is not possible, 1 metre with robust mitigation.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, we should consider whether that activity needs to continue, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between practitioners, teachers, children and young people.

This guidance document is for the education department, practitioners and schools involved in the RSC's Education work. It provides an introduction to general safety considerations in relation to managing a Covid-secure workplace and provides suggestions of risk mitigation measures and safe systems of work to implement in the workplace and during work activity, in line with government Covid-19 guidance and health and safety legislation.

It should be used in conjunction with the RSC's Covid-19 Reoccupation Management Framework and the RSC's Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

THE SCHOOL SETTING

Essential measures that schools must follow from September 2020 include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

- grouping children together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

These measures should be discussed with individual schools when preparing to deliver RSC Education work in that setting.

Current Government guidance (28 Aug 20) advises schools to assess their individual circumstances in relation to bubbles or groups. Secondary groups are likely to be year-group sized and for primary, class sized groups may be more feasible. Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and older children should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. When working with larger groups the other measures from the system of controls become even more important, to minimise transmission risks and to minimise the numbers of pupils and staff who may need to self-isolate. There is a general acceptance that Primary children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

RSC staff and practitioners should still observe social distancing between each other and between school groups and teachers.

- [Government Guidance for school opening and operations](#)
- [Government guidance for performing arts](#)

PRINCIPLES OF RISK CONTROL

The RSC has a duty to carry out an assessment of any foreseeable risk of harm by deciding what may cause the harm and identifying reasonable steps to take to prevent that harm occurring. This is a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations, 1999.

As per the RSC's Health and Safety Policy, Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that suitable and sufficient Covid-19 risk assessments are in place for their department. Producers and Production Managers are responsible for ensuring that production-specific Covid-19 risk assessments are in place. The RSC must consult with union representatives and staff on all Covid-19 risk assessments.

All risk assessments must be written down on either an RSC departmental risk assessment form or an RSC production risk assessment form, found in the Health and Safety Policy. Covid-19 risk assessments must also be shared on the RSC website / staff intranet so that they are accessible to all workers and visitors/schools/participants. Risk assessors may wish to keep their Covid-19 risk assessment on a separate document to their other risk assessments.

This guidance within this document aligns safe systems of work with this hierarchy of risk control: eliminate, reduce, isolate, control, communicate and PPE as a last resort. This hierarchy can be applied to the control of Covid-19 transmission as follows:

Eliminate virus as much as possible from workplace	<i>Think about how to prevent the Covid-19 virus from being present in the workplace. Working remotely, restricting people showing symptoms, following major incident plans to isolate unwell persons, and robust cleaning and disinfection of work areas all help.</i>
Reduce possible exposure to virus	<i>Restrict movement, the amount of time in the workplace and how many things people need to touch, maintain social distancing and reduce close contact by forming worker bubbles and ensuring no one is in close contact for longer than a minute or two without protection. Dilute the air with good ventilation.</i>
Isolate from possible exposure to virus	<i>Isolate people from each other with screens, barriers or visors. Allocate areas and zones for specific teams, bubbles or individuals. Stop the sharing of equipment and quarantine items that may be contaminated.</i>
Communicate	<i>Write operating procedures, safe systems of work and method statements and train staff on how to follow them. Use signage and verbal instruction.</i>
PPE	<i>PPE is not necessary as a suitable control of Covid-19 transmission outside of healthcare settings, except for the administration of first aid. However, if a risk assessment concludes that the risk of transmission is still high after all other controls are considered, CE-marked FFP2 or FFP3 filtered RPE should be used. Face coverings are not classified as PPE, however, anyone who wishes to wear their face covering in the workplace must be supported.</i>

In line with government guidance, mitigation against the risk of Covid-19 transmission does not include basic measures such as good hand and respiratory hygiene, the compliance with which should be universal and is assumed.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

It is of utmost importance that workers must not be (or feel) forced into carrying out work that is unsafe. Managers must regularly check in with their staff about their health and wellbeing and provide an opportunity for persons to raise concerns without fear of negative consequences. Where workers can work from home, even for some of their tasks, then they should.

Workers and visitors must not be unduly discriminated by any Covid-secure measure we put in place. For example, lift access must be maintained for those who are unable to use stairwells.

The RSC must encourage staff to use the NHS Test and Trace Service if they are presenting with Covid-19 symptoms. The service is accessed by calling NHS 119. To assist the NHS Test and Trace Service, the RSC must keep records of staff rotas and call sheets for 21 days and records of audience members must be kept for 21 days. All workers who are assigned to a team bubble must comply with test and trace processes if someone in their bubble is unwell or is in quarantine.

CLINICALLY VULNERABLE WORKERS

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home during the pandemic peak and only return to work when community infection rates are low. Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions), have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.

Clinically vulnerable workers who have been shielding, or workers who live with a clinical vulnerable person, must not carry out work that does not enable them to follow social distancing rules. If 2 metres cannot be maintained in the workplace, they can only work at 1 metre distance if there is sufficient mitigation to remove the risk of infection. Any person returning to work after shielding or living with someone who has been shielding should be referred for an Occupational Health appointment before starting work.

FACE COVERINGS

Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. Face coverings are not classed as PPE and workers and visitors should provide their own if they wish to wear one.

Workers who wear face coverings at work must ensure that they practice good personal hygiene and prevent contamination by safely storing and washing the face covering after use. Specific instructions to be issued include:

- Washing hands thoroughly or use hand sanitiser regularly and before putting a face covering on, after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoiding touching the face or face covering.
- Changing the face covering if it becomes damp or if touched.
- Changing and washing the face covering daily. If the material is washable, wash in line with Manufacturer's instructions. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully in usual waste containers.

Eliminate virus as much as possible from workplace

Think about how to prevent the Covid-19 virus from being present in the workplace. Working remotely, restricting people showing symptoms, following major incident plans to isolate unwell persons, and robust cleaning and disinfection of work areas all help.

- Consider what activities can take place from home or via digital channels
- Consider self-taping or online activity to reduce numbers on-site
- Provide scripts on screens, or ask participants to bring their own devices to view scripts on
- Use remote working tools to avoid in person meetings.
- Only absolutely necessary participants should physically attend meetings and activities should maintain social distancing.
- Provide hand sanitiser at entry and exit points and in individual rooms
- Providing cleaning stations
- Consider a regular private testing programme with an accredited provider, noting that this will not allow any relaxation of other control measures
- Avoid the use of props, where possible

Reduce possible exposure to virus

Restrict movement, the amount of time in the workplace and how many things people need to touch, maintain social distancing and reduce close contact by forming worker bubbles and ensuring no one is in close contact for longer than a minute or two without protection. Dilute the air with good ventilation.

- Use a practitioner local to the school or venue to avoid travel and accommodation (refer to DfE guidance regarding avoidance of class travel beyond walking distance)
- Consider reducing group sizes to ensure the space provided is safe enough to maintain 2m social distancing throughout the session.
- Scheduling time between groups for thorough cleaning of space and toilets
- Programming workshops so practitioners work with as few different groups as possible and in as few different spaces as possible
- Keep the time of any activity where 2M social distancing cannot be maintained as short as possible
- Work outdoors or hold meetings outdoors, whenever possible.
- Provide good ventilation and sufficient circulation in indoor spaces by opening windows and doors or using mechanical ventilation equipment
- Provide space for staff and attendees to be socially distanced from each other and from any other individuals, wherever possible during activity
- Adapting work to reduce physical contact and practice social distancing between the facilitator and the group, and between participants from different households.
- Avoid paperwork being transferred by enabling such processes as bookings, permission slips etc. through online channels.
- Provide additional parking or facilities such as bike-racks to help people walk, run, or cycle where possible
- Stagger arrival and departure times to reduce crowding into and out of the premises or venue
- Enable a booking system or other approaches to manage demand of spaces, so that no more than the desired number of people are in the building at any one time
- Manage occupancy levels and changeover by reducing groups and amending timetabling
- Remove non-essential common areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing waiting rooms where it is not possible to facilitate social distancing, asking people not to arrive ahead of their allocated time slot, and providing clear instruction not to congregate in other areas if waiting • Encouraging persons to bring as few personal items with them to the workplace as possible • Avoiding sharing pens and other objects • If it is not possible to avoid, reduce use of props and ensure any that are used are thoroughly cleaned or quarantined for 72 hours in between groups and that hands are washed before and after use • Where an individual is operating on a peripatetic basis, such as a teacher, freelance musician, freelance audio describer or captioner or choreographer, and operating across multiple groups or individuals they should maintaining distancing requirement with each group, avoiding situations where distancing requirement is broken, for example demonstrating partnering work in dancing, make efforts to reduce the number of groups interacted with and locations worked in, to reduce the number of contacts made • Avoid prolonged face to face working, adapting activity to facilitate back to back or side by side working • Avoid singing, shouting or chanting
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<p>Isolate from possible exposure to virus</p>	<p><i>Isolate people from each other with screens, barriers or visors. Allocate areas and zones for specific teams, bubbles or individuals. Stop the sharing of equipment and quarantine items that may be contaminated.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a one-way system through buildings. • Allow a sufficient break time between sessions held to prevent waiting in groups. • Encourage workers or participants to remain on-site during breaks and, when not possible, maintaining social distancing while offsite • Use screens to create a physical barrier between people, for example between casting team or accompanist and candidates • Allocate small groups of people to bubbles, maintaining social distancing between bubbles and ensuring that close contact within the bubbles is safely managed to remove risk • Consider if you can quarantine any props or equipment for 72 hours between uses.
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<p>Communicate</p>	<p><i>Write operating procedures, safe systems of work and method statements and train staff on how to follow them. Use signage and verbal instruction.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing floor markings and signage • Manage access to lockers to allow social distancing • Consider changes in policies to ensure limited time is taken in changing areas, especially during the changeover of group activity to maintain social distancing • Provide information about hand hygiene and where to access facilities safely • Share Risk Assessments and Education Operating Guidelines with Practitioners and schools
<p>PPE</p>	<p><i>PPE is not necessary as a suitable control of Covid-19 transmission outside of healthcare settings, except for the administration of first aid. However, if a risk assessment concludes that the risk of transmission is still high after all other controls are considered, CE-marked FFP2 or FFP3 filtered RPE should be used.</i></p> <p><i>Face coverings are not classified as PPE, however, anyone who wishes to wear their face covering in the workplace must be supported.</i></p>