



Opening Schools August 2020: Planning Checklist

In April, the Scottish Government established the Education Recovery Group (ERG) supported by 10 Workstreams, each designed to focus on key elements of planning for the re-opening of schools.

Based on the work of Workstreams 2/6/7, ERG created “Coronavirus (COVID-19) re-opening of schools guidance” which was issued on Thursday 28th May to support the safe opening of education establishments with strategies designed to support the best possible provision within each learning community. Other Workstreams have created, and will continue to develop, guidelines and advice which will be issued in due course.

You should note that:

This Planning Checklist is supplementary to the advice in “Coronavirus (COVID-19) re-opening schools guidance” It’s a short guide for our staff to ensure we’ve covered all the bases. It should also be used alongside the new Covid Risk Assessment we just completed. It may be amended as new guidance comes in from either the SG or A&B work streams; SNCT or Board of Studies decisions.

Theme	Actions
Strategic scenario planning	Work with staff to review and update your health and safety plan and associated Risk Assessments, to reflect public health requirements, emergency management and first aid provision. Consider plans on the basis, initially, on re-opening partially
Children & parents	
Pupil numbers	Identify likely numbers of pupils returning and agree required staffing resource, liaising with your employers with your plans
Communication plan	Plan content and timing of communications to parents and pupils, including attendance expectations and specific things which parents should do to prepare returning pupils, for example, arrangements for drop-off/collection and school buses
Attendance and registration	Resume taking attendance registers in order that you can provide daily updates of pupils and staff in school. Establish clearly which children should come on-site each day/week. Attendance calls are best assigned to the same group/team of staff (bearing in mind possible rotas) who may be allocated specific categories of pupils . Relationships and consistency are important.

	Check how absences should be recorded/coded.
Unexpected arrivals	Have a plan/process in place for managing students who arrive unexpectedly
Critical workers and vulnerable pupils	Plan how children of key workers and vulnerable children will be accommodated alongside returning year groups.
Support	Agree what returning support is available for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children and have in place provision for pupils with ASN and/or disabilities in conjunction with parents and support agencies
Safeguarding	Check for revised protocols from your employer and update safeguarding policy if necessary. Be prepared for increased disclosures which may lead to Child Protection issues. Provide signposting information to agencies for support and information on bereavement
Behaviour policy	Update behaviour policies to reflect new routines necessary to reduce risk in your setting, communicating this to staff, pupils and parents.
Catering	Ensure meals are available for all pupils attending school. Plan how these meals will be delivered if rotas are required. Also, consider arrangements for those pupils still out of school and eligible for free school meals
Wrap around care	Assess whether breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and after-school clubs can operate and under what terms
Individual support	Individual Support Plans are in place for each child who has additional needs or may be at increased risk
Staff (including) teaching	and non-teaching
	Provide staff who will be on-site with a briefing about how school will operate, examples include:
	Social distancing plans and measures Personal hygiene Monitoring of symptoms Actions if a colleague or pupil is unwell Dedicated first aiders and safeguarding leads Revisions to emergency plans Plan to supervise arrivals/departures, breaks and lunchtimes (include details for managing early or late arrivals and departures Plan a system for providing feedback and relief for staff to facilitate breaks and absence
Staffing levels	Consider options if necessary staffing levels cannot be maintained Plan agreed for who is working onsite and offsite, timetable allocations and duties Consider what re-timetabling must be done Provide staff with details of changes to duties
Vulnerable staff	Identify staff who cannot return to school at this point. Consider whether individual return to work assessments are required, including new or revised personal risk assessments. Consider individual requirements and government guidelines as to when and whether they can return to work.
	Carry out risk assessments particularly for vulnerable groups to understand the specific risks staff face from exposure to COVID-19 and actions employers can take to keep staff safe. This includes staff who are potentially more at risk due to age, race, disability or pregnancy.

	Agree any flexible working arrangements needed to support any changes to normal work patterns, eg staggered start/end times
Flexible working	Agree staff workload expectations
Workload	Decide what staff training may need to be done to implement any changes the school plans to make, eg risk management, curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding
Training	Put in place measures to check on staff wellbeing (including for leaders) Induction for new staff Impact on mental health- consider options available, eg staff welfare support, OH Reporting systems for monitoring and responding to staff absence Include appropriate ongoing adjustments to sickness absence policies to reflect COVID-19 related issues Consider the approach to cases of staff subject to any ongoing processes for sickness absence, capability or disciplinary policies
Wellbeing and welfare	
Protective measures, hygiene	Be aware of the guidance on implementing protective measures in your school and agree how this will be implemented in your school. This includes updating health & safety and risk assessment policies
Guidance	Decide the physical and organisational structures needed to limit risks and movement around the building, eg classroom layouts, entry/exit points, staggered starts/breaks/lunch queues, communal staff areas). Agree how safety measures and messages will be implemented and displayed around the school. Stocks in place or ordered – hand sanitisers or soap in classrooms, toilets, dining areas and communal areas. Clear posters and signage promoting good hygiene and social distancing
Risk Management	Liaise with employers to ensure an agreed, enhanced cleaning schedule is in place
Cleaning	Decide the approach to enhance hygiene (eg toilet use and handwashing) and decide on policy for usually shared items, (eg books, practical equipment)
Hygiene	Have a clearly explained plan for dealing with someone falling ill on site
Illness	Work with employer to make arrangements for the small number of cases when PPE supplies will be needed (eg if your staff provide intimate care for a pupil or if a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus)
PPE	Check existing spaces use for medical and first aid support are appropriate Check PPE stocks Check that medical and first aid certificates have not expired Check medical and support plans, including equipment and medication
Medical and first aid support	Ensure that in learning spaces physical distancing of at least 2m can occur, including room for staff to circulate Check windows and ventilation Provide social distancing and any revised H & S regulations in all practical areas Ensure all staff and pupils wear normal workshop PPE clothing in practical areas
Classrooms and workshops	Breaktimes could be staggered with a defined maximum number of pupils allowed out at the same time Consider keeping same groupings to reduce number of contacts Consider supervision implications for breaks and lunchtime

	Consider how to arrange a rota for catering staff
Breaktimes	Plan supervision and rota to encourage social distancing
Timetabling	
Pupil wellbeing	Plan likely mental health, pastoral or wider wellbeing support for children returning to school and discuss with your employer what wider support services are available. Work with your local authority/employer to secure services for additional support and early help where possible (eg around anxiety, mental health, behaviour, social care, changes to mobility)
Wellbeing	Consider if it appropriate to notify staff and parents sensitively to change/wash clothes daily
Clothing	
Learning	Agree what learning is appropriate, including the balance between in-class and remote education
Provision	Care needs to be taken to ensure content covered in school and remotely is coherent and appropriately sequenced It is important to think carefully about the workload of teachers and managing the balance between teaching on site and development of the remote curriculum It is important to consider how to provide opportunities for interaction and feedback for those pupils who won't be on site Schools should continue to communicate with parents about how they are delivering the curriculum, helping to manage expectations and sharing advice with parents about how they can support their children
	Agree an ongoing learning offer for eligible pupils who can't attend school as well as those that continue to be out of school
Remote learning	Agree an ongoing approach and learning offer for vulnerable children and children of key workers who are in school but not in the returning groups of pupils
Vulnerable/priority pupils	Measures to consider: Social distancing and strict rules around non-contact No contact sports No common surface touching activities Changing rooms could be taped in line with social distancing guidance Pupils could attend dressed in PE clothing on an allocated day
PE Curriculum	
Other considerations	Agree approach to any scheduled or ongoing building works with employer and/or contractor
Building works	Plan arrangements with your suppliers to ensure they follow appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures, including when in school (eg food and materials suppliers, grounds maintenance ,transport)
Supplies	Consider potential impacts on staff and pupils with protected characteristics, including race, gender, disability
Protected characteristics	Consider demands from departments for additional resources Additional capacity may be required to support admin team

	<p>Additional IT resources may be required</p> <p>Check whether unexpected additional resources are needed to avoid sharing/touching of resources</p>
Resources for learning and teaching	<p>Consider suitable adjustments to the application of sanctions etc to reflect on-site staffing capacity</p> <p>Consider adjusting policies/procedures to include COVID-19 related rules/expectations (eg social distancing) and relevant sanctions and mechanisms for communicating these clearly to all stakeholders</p> <p>Minimize the need for face-to-face meetings with parents</p>
Behaviour and conduct	
Organisation	<p>Liaise with employer to plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the pattern of the school day, groups attending, drop off areas. bus/transport arrangements staggered start times, breaks, lunch, end of day consider implications for families with more than one child or dropping off at more than one school. <p>Phasing of the school day, focusing on groups and their movement</p>
School day	<p>Consider methods of communication</p> <p>Consider necessary frequency</p> <p>Location – group meetings or IT options (eg Microsoft Teams allows meetings to be recorded and shared with those not able to attend)</p>
Staff briefings	<p>Review WTA for reporting dates, plans for parent meetings and information events</p> <p>Consider if online options are reasonable/practicable</p> <p>Agree regular updates including the format and timing of these</p>
Communication with parents and all relevant stakeholders	<p>Wise to consider whether there should be any external trips and ensure any decision making reflects official travel and movement guidance</p> <p>Consider ways of adapting community or fun events to lighten the mood and boost morale</p>
Events and school trips	<p>Consider the viability of such events</p> <p>Consider alternating groups</p> <p>Consider using recorded options which could be streamed for home learners</p> <p>Assess and plan for social distancing in the hall, agree capacity</p>
Assemblies	<p>Points to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive and reassuring presence socially distancing labels for internal and external social spaces distances between benches and seating
Duties	<p>Consider online open evenings and recruitment events</p>
Open evenings and recruitment events	
Transitions	<p>Issues to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> telephone meetings with Nursery, P1, P7 teacher online learning support meetings with primary colleagues/nursery colleges contact primaries with rationale for arranging S1 classes

	welcome via video message virtual tour of school request Q & A from pupils/parents confirm blended teaching arrangements to parents/pupils
Home to Nursery Nursery – P1 P7 – S1	Positive start to National courses Highlight importance and structure of blended learning
S3 -S4	Review course choice issues Positive start to new courses Highlight importance and strategies for effective blended learning
S4 – S5and S5 – S6	
Parents and carers	Plan/communicate procedures for parents who want to see members of staff (possibility of initial increase at start of term) Ensure measures are in place to protect reception staff, eg screen protection
Parents/carers	Notify families of the following: update on plans for distance learning how you will be communicating information where their child/ren will need to go on day1 and at what time plans for drop-off and pick-up school hours rota arrangements if applicable ask for updates to contact information ask for updates on medical information reinforce the importance of a child staying at home if they are unwell meal arrangements, eg packed lunches, lunch money, home lunch
Communicating plans and arrangements	Some families will be in financial difficulties – consider what support can be offered where it is affecting their ability to access education Remind parents of the eligibility and process for claiming free school meals, clothing allowance
Financial difficulties	
Operational activities	Liaise with employers to ensure stock of essential cleaning supplies Similarly contact employers if there is a shortage of cleaning staff
Cleaning resources	Plan for key transition areas, eg staff room, hallways, staircases. Measures could include labels, signage, tape, one-way systems
Social distancing communication	Using social distancing rules how many pupils/staff can each room accommodate? How many classes/ rooms does this affect?
Delivery capacity assessment	Consider options and requirements, such as: social distancing, barriers, signage and PPE
Dining hall	

Property and transport	<p>Refer to protocols for school premises which have been partially open as Hubs</p> <p>Plan movement/storage of excess furniture/equipment</p> <p>Liaise with employer re arrangements for water systems, gas safety, fire safety, kitchen equipment, security, including access control, alarm systems, ventilation</p> <p>Consider arrangements for deliveries</p>
Site	Ensure contractors are aware of health and safety requirements, sign in processes and additional measures
Contractors	<p>School transport arrangements are in place with social distancing measures planned and communicated</p> <p>Consider the transport challenges around rotas, arrival/departure times</p>
Transport	<p>Only essential visitors on site</p> <p>Ensure visitor processes are clear and communicated</p> <p>Ensure appropriate signing in to ensure contact tracing protocols are in place</p> <p>Ways to manage congestion/distancing – supervision, signage, floor markings</p> <p>Signage at front gate/entrance ,car park, barriers</p>
Visitors	Maintain attendance and visitor records to facilitate identification of dates/times for all individuals who have been on site
Contact tracing	<p>Track staff groups, i.e. those who are unwell, shielding or in self-isolation.</p> <p>Differentiate between absence related to COVID-19 and other absences</p> <p>Ensure robust audit trail of all support provided in case of staff absence</p> <p>Keep records of staff absence figures</p> <p>Be aware of possible need for revision to work plans and risk assessments</p> <p>Consider staff returning to work from maternity or long tern sickness absence and ensure employer’s policies are applied</p>
HR tracking	