

Education & Learning Service
Position Statement
6th December 2021
Covid Recovery
Schools, Residences and Other Educational
Settings

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Introduction

In a rapidly changing environment, schools are aware of many sources of information regarding school operations. The Education & Learning Service will continue to notify schools of these important changes, which will be distributed via the area offices. Head teachers should, therefore, follow the guidance issued by Education & Learning of The Highland Council in order to ensure a consistent and corporate approach. Where there are updates to national positions, Education & Learning Service will reflect on these and update head teachers as quickly as possible. Communications will be carefully managed centrally.

Key links to national guidance

[This position statement reflects the Scottish Government's latest guidance available here](#) which brings multiple sources of information together as a single point of reference.

The Scottish Government guidance is an extensive document which contains the detailed information that school senior managers will need. This position statement can only summarise the key points, reflecting our local circumstances.

This position statement will continue to be updated in the light of further guidance and where the national protection levels change.

1. Early Learning & Childcare Settings

Key links to national guidance

[ELCC specific guidance is available here.](#)

[Self Isolation and Contact Tracing](#)

[When and How Long to Self Isolate](#)

[Parent Club: returning to School and Childcare Settings](#)

[Support for specific groups](#)

[Those at higher-risk from COVID-19](#)

[Support for those who have underlying health conditions](#)

[Considerations related to pregnancy](#)

[Support for minority ethnic children and staff](#)

[Support for children with additional support needs](#)

[Infection prevention and control](#)

[Cleaning practices](#)

[Temperature and ventilation](#)

[Ventilation systems](#)

[Enhanced hygiene](#)

[Tooth brushing](#)

[Personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)

Key points

1. This applies to HC and partner settings.
2. Where services temporarily close due to COVID-19, the manager must notify the Care Inspectorate to advise them of their updated operational status, in line with CI guidance.
3. The physical distancing requirement for adults in ELC settings are at least 1 metre.
4. **Face coverings must be worn by adults wherever they cannot maintain the appropriate physical distance from other adults (e.g. in corridor and communal areas).** Coverings should also be worn by staff and visitors when not working directly with children, for example when in office and admin areas, canteens (except when dining), staff rooms and other confined communal areas, (including staff toilets) , except where a person is exempt from wearing a covering. In these circumstances, a face covering must be worn whenever staff move away from a seated position.
5. Most children can be placed in the care of staff with adults maintaining an appropriate distance. It is recognised that in some cases, a physical handover of very young children will be required and this should be reflected in risk assessments.

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6. Parents/carers may now accompany children onto childcare premises where it is considered beneficial for children's wellbeing, progress and behaviour. Settings may also invite parents/carers to attend appropriate outdoor events such as sports days or celebration events, providing all activity is consistent with relevant Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing, and hygiene. Details for making such arrangements are to be found in the ELCC specific guidance link above.
7. **Blended placements:** if there is an outbreak in one of the settings where a child has a blended placement, it should, where possible, be postponed until after the outbreak.

2. Childminding Services

Key links to national guidance

[Childminding Services](#)

[Parent Club: Returning to School and Childcare Settings](#)

3. School Aged Childcare

Key links to national guidance

[School Aged Childcare Services](#)

[Parent Club: returning to School and Childcare Settings](#)

4. Schools

Key links to national guidance

[Guidance on Reducing Risks in Schools](#)

[Detailed Mitigations \(Annex A\)](#)

Key points

[Risk Assessment](#)

1. Risk assessments must be regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with staff and unions including CCFM and contractors

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2. Parent councils must be kept up to date with measures in place and why
3. Advice is available from the health and safety unit

Children & Young People with Additional Support Needs

4. Every child and young person will have different levels of required support. Risk assessments play a key part in considering the individual needs of a child or young person. Risk assessments, which may be integrated into a Child's Plan, should already exist for children and young people with complex additional support needs. These risk assessments should be reviewed and updated as appropriate, reflecting current circumstances. Where they are not in place or they have not been updated they must be undertaken or reviewed swiftly. Where there is a need to work in close proximity with adults and children and young people the safety measures to protect adults and children and young people alike should be followed. Staff should wear a face covering or PPE (where appropriate eg when carrying out Aerosol Generating Procedures), and regularly wash their hands before and after contact. Guidance [insert link] on supporting children and young people with additional support needs is published by the Scottish Government.

Highest Risk Groups

5. It is advised that those who are at highest risk also carry out an individual risk assessment. This includes a COVID-Age tool, which employees can use to highlight personal risk and support discussions with employers about any additional adjustments or arrangements that may be needed to make the workplace and duties safe for them. Find advice about individual risk assessments and the COVID-Age tool on gov.scot at: Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on individual occupational risk assessment - gov.scot (www.gov.scot).

Hygiene

6. It will be the responsibility of every individual in the school to observe good hygiene practice to minimise the risk of infection. Schools should identify opportunities to reinforce for all children, young people and staff the importance of effective hygiene measures throughout the school day, as part of their work on responsible citizenship. Involving children and young people in discussions about how to manage mitigations will be critical to their success. Signage should be applied appropriately, including in toilets.

Cleaning

7. The current requirements for cleaning will remain in place for the time being. This includes:
 - a. Enhanced cleaning during the day
 - b. Cleaning of hard surfaces between groups
 - c. End of day cleaning
8. Schools should, therefore, continue to order and use Oxivir

Pupil and Staff Movement

9. Movement of children, young people and staff between classrooms should be minimised wherever possible.
10. Children and young people can attend multiple education settings, either in other educational establishments or the wider community, with an appropriate risk assessment conducted. If sporadic or linked cases have occurred in one school, temporary suspension or reduction of attendance at other facilities should be part of this risk assessment, led by the local Health Protection Team.
11. Supply staff and other visitors e.g. visiting teachers, psychologists, nurses, social workers, youth workers, outdoor learning specialists, HEI tutors and those providing therapeutic support, can move between schools where necessary.
12. Movements should continue to be limited to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school until otherwise advised. Where practicable, professional visitors (including HEI tutors) should look to reduce the number of schools visited and to limit their contact time with children and young people. They should also be encouraged to take regular lateral flow tests. Consideration should be given to the provision of this support by virtual means as appropriate.
13. Movement of CCR teachers should be minimised, wherever possible. Schools should be encouraged to follow SNCT and LNCT guidance on how flexibility of time over a 2 or 4 week period may help to reduce movement of staff across classes.

School Resources

14. School resources may be sent home. There is no need for 72 hour quarantine.
15. Bringing in of toys and sharing personal belongings should be discouraged, although it is appreciated that for younger children and for some children and young people with additional support needs this may be difficult to prevent.
16. The normal cleaning regimes should be in place for soft furnishings.

Ventilation & Heating

17. It is important to continue to ventilate by keeping windows open as much as possible
18. Fire doors must not be propped open, unless fitted with automatic closers
19. Fire exits may be opened but schools must remain secure
20. Schools are required to maintain internal temperatures, but it is unlikely that doors and windows will be able to be left open as often, or for as long, as the weather gets colder.
21. CO2 monitors are being deployed to support monitoring of ventilation.

Social Distancing

22. There is no requirement for strict physical distancing between children and young people in schools, although maintaining distancing between secondary school pupils is encouraged where possible.
23. There are a number of mitigations around social distancing suggested in the main guidance document.
24. Distancing between adults not from the same household should be maintained and there should also be distancing between adults and children whenever possible. To ensure closer alignment with wider society and planned changes in ELC, this will be a requirement for “physical distancing of at least 1m”. However, as schools already have 2m physical distancing arrangements for adults that work well and do not limit capacity, it is expected these will be retained in practice.
25. In special schools and units, and where there are children with complex additional support needs, the need to maintain distancing needs to be carefully considered. The balance of the staffing complement, numbers of children and young people and their needs, and therefore the staffing and resources required (PPE, cleaning of equipment), should be considered/assessed throughout the school day and adjusted where appropriate/necessary.
26. Where it is necessary to bring larger groups together, alternative mitigating actions should be put in place, such as meeting outside or limiting the time spent together. Large gatherings should be avoided indoors.
27. When undertaking fire test drills or procedures where the whole school is evacuated, schools and local authorities should prioritise fire safety, but may consider muster points and whether these need to be altered to ensure a greater degree of separation.
28. Risk assessments should pay particular attention to the position of support assistants or other staff who may have to work in close contact with multiple children and young people throughout the day.
29. Other than where schools are using ELC models and guidance in the early stage (P1-2), where adults cannot keep their distance and are interacting face-to-face with other adults and/or children and young people, face coverings (or, in certain specific circumstances, PPE - see section on PPE and other protective barrier measures, below) should be worn at all times. This applies to all staff including support staff and classroom assistants. Transparent face-coverings may be supplied by local authorities where appropriate and used where there is a risk of detriment to the child’s health and wellbeing.

Drop Off and Pick Up

30. The arrangements for parents/carers to drop off and collect children and young people require careful consideration, to ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and physical distancing between adults and children of different groupings is maintained. Schools should consult parents/carers on their plans and ensure that any arrangements put in place are communicated clearly to parents/carers.

31. Parents should not enter school buildings unless required in line with school visitors arrangements.

Face coverings and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

32. Other than where schools are using ELC models and guidance in the early stage (P1-2), where adults cannot keep their distance and are interacting face-to-face with other adults and/or children and young people, face coverings should be worn at all times. This applies to all staff including support staff and pupil support assistants.
33. Face coverings should be worn by adults wherever they cannot keep physical distance with other adults and/or children and young people.
 - a. Face coverings should also be worn in the following circumstances (except where an adult or child/young person is exempt from wearing a covering): They should be worn at all times when adults in primary schools are moving around the school in corridors, office and admin areas, canteens (except when dining) and other indoor communal areas, (including staff rooms and toilets);
 - b. at all times for all staff and learners in secondary schools (including special schools); and
 - c. in line with the updated arrangements for public transport, where adults and children and young people aged 12 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport.
34. The impact of wearing a face covering for very young learners and/or learners with additional support needs, including any level of hearing loss, should be carefully considered. Communication for many of these learners (including hearing impaired young people) relies in part on being able to see someone's face clearly. This is also important for children and young people who are acquiring English and who rely on visual cues to enable them to be included in learning. Individuals who may not be able to handle and wear face coverings as directed (e.g. young learners, or those with additional support needs or disabilities) should not wear them as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.
35. The current face covering guidance on the Scottish Government website recommends:
 - a. that face coverings are made of cloth or other textiles and should be two, and preferably three, layers thick and fit snugly while allowing you to breathe easily
 - b. that schools follow and endorse best practice on how to wash, store, wear and dispose of face coverings
 - c. workplaces endorse and support staff to follow the best practice in the use of face coverings
36. It is vital that clear instructions are provided to staff and children and young people on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings in all of the circumstances above, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission. The key points are as follows:

- a. Face coverings should not be shared with others.
- b. Before putting on or removing the face covering, hands should be cleaned by washing with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- c. Make sure the face covering is the right size to cover the nose, mouth and chin. Children should be taught how to wear the face covering properly, including not touching the front and not pulling it under the chin or into their mouth.
- d. When temporarily storing a face covering (e.g. during classes), it should be placed in a washable, sealed bag or container. Avoid placing it on surfaces, due to the possibility of contamination.
- e. Re-usable face coverings should be washed after each day of use in school at 60 degrees centigrade or in boiling water.
- f. Face coverings must be disposed of hygienically into a bin.
- g. Schools should maintain a supply for those who have forgotten or have soiled coverings.

37. For the majority of staff in schools, PPE is not required or necessary.

38. Following any risk assessment (individual or organisational), where the need for PPE has been identified using the HSE Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work guide, appropriate PPE should be readily available and provided and staff should be trained on its use. The use of PPE by staff within schools, for example support staff, support assistants, staff with vulnerabilities, should be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual child or young person, such as personal care, where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids or lift children and young people. Where the use of PPE is risk assessed as being required, staff should be trained in how to put on and take off PPE (as required by Health and Safety Regulations) and suitable waste facilities provided.

39. PPE is required for dealing with suspected cases of Covid or intimate care.

School Discipline Relating to Face Coverings

40. As is usual, if there are any concerns about a child or young person behaving or acting in a way which doesn't align with school policy or procedure, their behaviour or actions should be discussed with them to resolve those concerns as quickly as possible, with any further action taken in line with usual school policy or procedure. If all approaches to resolve the concern with a child or young person in relation to health and safety measures have been exhausted then exclusion could be considered as an appropriate measure, but only as a last resort. "Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions", provides national policy guidance on the use of early intervention and prevention to promote positive relationships and behaviour.

Staff Breaks

41. Appropriate arrangements and places should be available to enable all school and ELC staff to take their breaks safely. Schools should plan how shared staff spaces, including kitchens, are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. The number of people in staff rooms at any one time should be limited to ensure at least

1m distancing can be maintained and face coverings should also be worn. This includes at kettle stations and other gathering points.

Practical Activities (Primary & Secondary Schools)

Key links to national guidance

Practical Activities

42. All such activities may take place.

Pupil Attendance At School

43. Parents are required under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to provide education for their child.
44. National guidance is clear that measures of compulsion for attendance should only be used as a last resort once all other approaches to support attendance have been undertaken.
45. Additional codes have been developed within SEEMiS to support the recording and monitoring of attendance and absence, including specific codes relating to COVID-19.
46. **All pupils should be registered daily in Seemis**, using the latest issued guidance for recording with the appropriate codes. The registration of pupils continues to be important under the Education Act, and numbers are also uplifted by Scottish Government during the pandemic.
47. Schools should continue to follow the procedures for notifying children who are missing education.

Learning & Teaching Whilst Isolating

48. Pupils who are isolating as a result of Covid in their household, or instructed by Health Protection but are otherwise well, should be provided with learning opportunities by virtual means/resources at home.
49. Schools will use a variety of strategies but must be mindful of teacher workload.
50. Useful resources are available through the digital toolkit and Highland Virtual Academy.

SQA Prelims and Mock Examinations

51. Schools form their own opinions on the delivery of prelims or mock examinations in line with SQA guidance: [National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/national-courses-guidance-on-gathering-evidence-and-producing-estimates)
52. Schools must continue to avoid large gatherings and should, therefore, assess risks for the planning of any such exam arrangements.

5. School Residences

Key links to national guidance

[School Residences](#)

Key points

1. All risk assessments should be shared with the associated school.

6. Home Visits by Education Staff

Key points

1. Necessary home visits by staff (for example Deaf Education service and others) may recommence, subject with appropriate risk assessment. Advice is available from the Health & Safety Unit.

7. Testing for Covid-Lateral Flow

Key links to national guidance

[Testing \(asymptomatic, symptomatic and close contact testing\)](#)

Key points

Lateral Flow Testing

1. The use of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) home testing by secondary pupils and all school staff, is an additional measure to help manage associated risks.
2. Regular visitors to schools should also be offered lateral flow tests. Where possible, these should be collected from the same school each week to help with records management.
3. Travel escorts should pick up testing kits from their associated school.
4. At-home testing using lateral flow devices will identify asymptomatic individuals in school and childcare environments so that they and their close contacts can self-isolate, minimising the likelihood of passing on the virus. This will help further reduce risks in school and ELC settings, and enhance the confidence of school communities.
5. Any testing should be voluntary. Nobody should be required to undergo testing without consent, or be excluded from school if they do not wish to take a test. Staff and

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secondary pupils should be actively encouraged to participate and contribute to the wellbeing of their school communities. Staff in early years settings should be given a copy of the LFD testing fact sheet to encourage further uptake of testing. This is attached at the end of the position statement. It would be useful to display this fact sheet for all staff in schools and residences. Any staff or pupils who choose to decline to participate should follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation and PCR testing. It is critical that everyone gets a test if they show symptoms of COVID-19.

6. Highland Council, therefore, cannot insist that any individual undertakes a test or exclude them from the workplace or school on the basis of their decision. Testing is considered to be a private medical matter therefore details of whether a test is taken or the result of any test cannot be shared with staff.

8. Self Isolation (including contact tracing and testing)

Key links to national guidance

[Contact Tracing and Self Isolation](#)

Key points

1. Test and Protect will, through the contact tracing system, identify those contacts where there is a higher risk of transmission and ask them to self-isolate and take a PCR test.
2. They should:
 - i) go home.
 - ii) avoid public transport if possible.
 - iii) Wear a face covering, where possible
3. Other low risk contacts will be identified by schools when they are informed of positive cases, and sent information letters that advise them to take certain mitigating actions. These actions do not require self-isolation, but include important advice on LFD testing and other mitigating actions. There is no need to issue multiple letters to the same parents and staff if there are multiple cases in the same class during an outbreak. It is important, however, to update with any advice from the health protection team and to reinforce the messages set out in the original letter.
4. Low risk contacts are pupils and staff who have had “business as usual” contact in the same class or classes as a positive case.
5. This includes adults who may have been within 2m, etc. of children and young people in schools, unless they are identified as high risk contacts by Test and Protect or schools on the basis that they have had unusually close or prolonged contact with the positive case
6. Any adult or child who develops symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste) must self-isolate immediately in line with NHS Guidance. **NB:** People living in the same household, for example any siblings, must also isolate while awaiting the outcome of the test result.

7. Any adult or child who tests positive using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) must self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test within 48 hours to confirm the result. **NB:** People living in the same household, for example any siblings, must also isolate while awaiting the outcome of the test result.
8. **A contact tracing and self isolation arrangements diagram can be found at Appendix 1 of this document. Schools should print this out and have ready to hand.**
9. Schools should ask parents whether their child has tested positive for COVID-19 when parents are reporting absences, and parents should be prompted to mention any positive tests when leaving messages about absences (including via automated systems).
10. The wording on the online contact tracing form that all people testing positive are sent as soon as their test results are received also prompts parents/pupils/staff to report the result to the school. If called by a contact tracer, the person testing positive will again be prompted to inform the school.
11. In some circumstances, if a contact tracer requires to contact the school directly, they will also inform the school of the positive case. In this way, there are multiple routes and prompts to help ensure schools are alerted to positive cases as soon as possible after a member of staff or pupil tests positive.
12. Staff, including peripatetic and temporary staff, should be advised to tell their line manager or the head teacher as soon as they receive a positive test result.
13. Pupils under the age of 5, do not need to isolate if they have no symptoms, even if they are a close contact of a positive case. Pupils under the age of 5 are not required to undertake a PCR test, but families are encouraged to do so.

9. Responding to Covid Symptoms in School

Key links to national guidance

[Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Key points

1. The most common symptoms are:
 - a) New, continuous cough
 - b) Fever/high temperature
 - c) Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste
2. Do not attend school if symptomatic
3. Pupils and staff must inform if they feel unwell with Covid symptoms
4. Safe arrangements must be made for going home
 - a) Children under 16 must be picked up, preferably by a member of their household

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- b) Young people over 16 and staff should ideally be picked up by a household member or
 - i) Minimise contact with others
 - ii) Use a private car
 - iii) Use public transport
 - (1) Quickly, directly and wear a face covering
 - (2) Keep away from others
 - (3) Cough or sneeze into tissues or elbow
 - c) The household should follow national guidance for isolation and testing
5. If the individual is so unwell that they require an ambulance to hospital, dial 999 and let the call handler know you are concerned about Covid.
6. Whilst awaiting pick up children/young people should:
- a) Sit somewhere safe at least 2m from others
 - i) Ideally in a room isolated (taking into account supervision needs)
 - ii) Wear a face covering, if possible
 - b) PPE should be used by supervising staff

10. Accessing PCR Tests

Key links to national guidance

[NHS Inform Testing](#)

Key points

1. Guidance on booking testing through the UK Government test sites can be found on NHS inform and the Scottish Government website. Anyone unable to access these websites can call NHS24 free on 0800 028 2816 or NHS 111.
2. Book a test at NHS Inform for your nearest COVID-19 test site. There are drive-through, walk-through, mobile testing units across Scotland which are open from 8-am until 8pm, 7 days a week. Small scale test sites have also been set up in Highland, Grampian and Argyll & Bute to provide access to testing within local communities. A full list of sites can be found at Gov.Scot.
3. Order a home PCR test kit online, or by calling 119. A test will then be delivered to your home. To return you can either drop the test at your nearest priority post box, or if you are unable to go out, you can also call 119 to book a courier collection from your home.

11. Outbreak Management

Key links to national guidance

[Staying Vigilant and Responding to Covid Symptoms](#)

Key points

1. The health protection number is 01463 704886
2. The out of hours number is 01463 704876 and ask for duty health protection
3. The email address is hpt.highland@nhs.scot
4. Schools should be aware of the following terminology:
 - a) Cluster- 2 or more unlinked test confirmed cases within 14 days
 - b) Outbreak- 2 or more linked cases within a school
5. **Schools should not contact the health protection team for one case**
6. **Schools should continue to notify their area manager of one or more cases**
7. Schools should contact the health protection for more than one case
8. The health protection team will consider individual risks for staff and pupil

Omicron Variant

9. The Omicron Covid variant has extended into Highland. Health guidance is developing as knowledge of its impact improves.

Where an Omicron Covid variant is diagnosed, the following steps will be put in place:

10. Positive cases will isolate for ten days
11. Close contacts should PCR test but must also isolate for ten days irrespective of result, age or vaccination status
12. Households (Secondary contacts) should PCR test but may resume daily activity following negative tests of the whole household.
 - a) The close contact, however, must remain in isolation for ten days irrespective of result
13. Letters will be issued by the health protection team
14. There may be variation of approach taken on a case-by-case basis by the health protection team, as knowledge develops of the new variant

12. Visitors to Schools

Key links to national guidance

[School Visitors](#)

Key points

1. Visitors to schools should be agreed in advance and arrangements appropriately risk assessed.
2. Supply staff and other visitors e.g. visiting teachers, psychologists, nurses, toothbrushing staff, social workers, youth workers, outdoor learning specialists, HEI tutors, HLH and Feis music tutors and those providing therapeutic support, can move between schools where necessary. This should continue to be limited to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school until otherwise advised. Consideration should be given to the provision of this support by virtual means as appropriate.
3. **Childsmile and the national dental inspection programmes have resumed.**
4. It is vital that the visitors above are limited to the minimum necessary adults whose own organisation risk assessments link neatly to schools' risk management.
5. Visitors should be expected to comply with the school's arrangements for managing and minimising risk (including physical distancing and use of face coverings). Schools should ensure that all temporary staff are given access to information on the safety arrangements in place, including the school risk assessment. Arrangements for school visitors should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community.
6. All visitors to schools must wear the appropriate staff, contractor or visitor badge. All contractors must sign in and have the appropriate permissions to carry out work.
7. Parental volunteers may support staff for outside activities:
 - Activities in the school grounds.
 - Excursions - as described in the excursions section of the position statement and subject to risk mitigations, supervision and use of Evolve.
 - In both cases, this should be strictly limited to the minimum numbers necessary to support outdoor health and wellbeing activities.
8. Community groups and organisations may visit schools to support wellbeing activities, subject to appropriate risk assessment. This should be strictly limited to the minimum numbers necessary.
9. Media and school photographers may not enter school buildings. All media enquiries must be forwarded to corporate communications.

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10. There may be no other visitors to schools. Schools must liaise with the area office for any exceptions.

13. Dedicated School Transport

Key links to national guidance

[School Transport](#)

1. Young people aged 12 and over are required to wear face coverings. This means that children aged 5-11, who were previously asked to wear face coverings, no longer need to do so.
2. Physical distancing between passengers who travel on dedicated school transport is not required, but it remains important to be cautious and exercise personal responsibility. Pupils should be supported to understand that, where possible, it is safer to keep a distance from other people.
3. Dedicated zones on buses are not required.
4. Where a screen is in place, children can sit directly behind the driver. However, passengers are not to sit in the front alongside the driver. Where no screen is fitted, 1m distancing between passengers and the driver should be maintained.
5. It is acceptable for pupils from different schools to share dedicated school transport.
14. Adults travelling with children and young people with additional support needs should be very alert to them displaying symptoms. As a general rule, these adults should wear face coverings. However, this requires to be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child: face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children and young people.
15. Advice should be provided to parents/carers to support the effective cleaning of specialist equipment for children and young people with additional support needs who are using school transport.
16. In the event of a transport delay going home, schools should liaise with the transport unit and keep pupils in school until alternative arrangements have been made

14. Pregnant Employees

Key links to national guidance

[Pregnancy](#)

Key points

1. Pregnant women are being encouraged get vaccinated.
2. The advice to head teachers remains that they should carry out individual risk assessments for pregnant staff, to inform any reasonable adjustments to remove risk for pregnant women.
3. Schools and local authorities should follow the guidance set out by the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and in the most recent [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#) advice to keep the risk of exposure as low as is practically possible to pregnant women, particularly in the third trimester.
4. The revised guidance states:
 - All pregnant women who are vaccinated should undergo a risk assessment in the workplace and continue to work if it is safe to do so.
 - Pregnant women who are unvaccinated at any gestation should take a more precautionary approach in light of the increased risk.

School staff who are pregnant at any gestation must have a workplace risk assessment with their school/local authority and occupational health team. Having a COVID-19 vaccine does not remove the requirement for schools and local authorities to carry out a risk assessment for pregnant employees. They should only continue to work if the risk assessment advises it is safe to do so. We advise continuing to use the Scottish Government Covid 19 [Guidance](#) on individual occupational risk assessment and tool.

Non vaccinated or not fully vaccinated women who are pregnant

Non vaccinated or not fully vaccinated women who are pregnant have an increased risk of becoming severely ill and of pre-term birth if they contract COVID. Schools and local authorities should undertake a workforce risk assessment as set out above and, where appropriate, consider both how to redeploy these staff and how to maximise the potential for homeworking, wherever possible.

5. Individual teachers may wish to amend the start date of their maternity leave and we will facilitate this. If an employee is absent because of a pregnancy related illness, and there are fewer than four weeks before her baby is due, she will be deemed to have commenced maternity leave.

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15. Ethnic Minorities

Key links to national guidance

Special considerations

Key points

1. The concerns within minority ethnic communities must be recognised and individual requests for additional protections should be supported wherever possible.
2. The Scottish Government has published COVID-19 Occupational Risk Assessment Guidance which is applicable to the working age minority ethnic population staff and employers in all sectors can use this guidance to provide an individualised and evidence-based approach to understanding risks of COVID-19 in the workplace. This guidance is relevant to all staff and may of particular use for minority ethnic staff who have an underlying health condition, or are anxious about risks in the workplace.

16. Engaging with Parents and Carers

Key links to national guidance

Communications

Key points

1. Parent council meetings should continue to be held virtually as the default position. Where this is not possible, they may be held in the school. This should be based on need, rather than preference.
2. Where parent council members are supporting preparation for activities, they may enter the school, if necessary and in agreement with the headteacher. Numbers should be strictly limited to the minimum necessary.
3. Parents' evenings should continue to be held virtually and timed in line with the working time agreement.

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4. Reporting to parents should continue.

17. Staff Meetings

Key points

1. Staff meetings within the working time agreement should continue to be conducted remotely, where possible.
2. Where meetings are called immediately after the end of the pupil day and it is not practicable for these to be held remotely, all the usual risk mitigations should be in place with regards to distancing, face coverings and suitable location. This should be agreed with staff and their union representatives.

18. Shared Facilities with Highlife Highland

Key points

1. Highlife Highland are working towards fully reopening libraries and swimming pools. Where these are located on a school campus, head teachers should work with HLH to undertake a risk assessment and agree arrangements for shared use of libraries.

19. Excursions

Key links to national guidance

[School Visits](#)

Key points

1. Short local excursions which **promote outdoor learning** (such as a short visit to a local park or green space) is permitted.
2. School day trips beyond the local area to the school are permitted
3. School residential expeditions (camping) is permitted.
4. School residential visits to outdoor education centres is permitted.
5. School excursions involving a residential element should only take place where there is clearly identified educational benefit. This would not include an excursion arranged primarily as an end-of-year treat for pupils.

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6. Updated [guidance on international school and youth work trips](#) has been published. International trips can now take place with appropriate mitigations. However, organisers should undertake a risk-based assessment to consider whether such trips would be appropriate on a case-by-case basis, including in light of their local circumstances and wider guidance on international travel.
7. Schools are required to source appropriate insurance, including provision for cancellation due to Covid or travel restrictions. The local authority cannot provide recommendations directly. Schools should note that it may be difficult to purchase appropriate insurance at this time.
8. School trips to indoor venues such as cinemas, theatres, shopping centres and other venues may not take place, as large gatherings are not permitted for schools.
9. In all cases:
 - a) Schools are required to follow the [guidance detail here](#).
 - b) Complete Evolve with the associated risk assessments for the activity and risk management
10. Have specific consent from parents

20. Seemis and Registration

Key links to national guidance

[Attendance in school](#)

Key points

1. All pupils should be registered daily in Seemis, using the latest issued guidance for recording with the appropriate codes.
2. The registration of pupils continues to be important under the Education Act, and numbers are also uplifted by Scottish Government during the pandemic.

21. Christmas Events within and outwith the School, Parents' Evenings and Other Large Events

Key links to national guidance

[Communications](#)

Key points

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1. Parents' evenings should continue to be held virtually. Parents may attend school individually for planned meetings such as child plan reviews, and discipline matters.
2. Large **outdoor** events should be limited to pupils, staff and the minimum numbers of volunteers to allow these events to go ahead, subject to continued suppression of the virus.
3. Large events (ie beyond a class) should not take place indoors or for a live audience. **This includes within and outwith school settings. Schools should, therefore, not undertake visits to indoor venues with gatherings such as theatres, cinemas, shopping centres and other venues where there are gatherings.**
4. Parents may attend outdoor school sports events as spectators, subject to appropriate risk assessment and organisation. **This does not extend to other outdoor activities such as Christmas fairs, where there would be a mixing of pupils and participants. Schools should continue to limit the number of visitors in line with Section 12: Visitors to Schools.**
5. Parent Council events are a matter for those bodies, as they are separate from schools themselves. However, any such event and the assessment and management of risk, and cleaning etc, is entirely their responsibility. Council resources (including school premises) and staff should not be used. **Such events should take place outwith the school day.**

22. Vaccinations

Key links to national guidance

[Vaccinations](#)

[Protest Guidance for Vaccination Sites](#)

Key points

1. All schools should encourage staff who have not received both doses of the vaccine to seek vaccination as soon as possible, following the recommended gap between doses. Information on securing an appointment can be found at:
[NHS Inform](#)
2. Drop-in clinics for every age cohort (18+) for first and second doses are now available across every mainland health board area.
3. Vaccinations will be offered for those over the age of 12.
4. A programme of vaccinations may be put in place in school, following the scheduled community sessions.
5. Vaccination information and arrangements will be led by NHS.

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6. In the event of a protest around vaccination in or around schools, headteachers should follow the guidance in the link above (appendix 3). The area manager and corporate communications should be notified immediately.

23. School Lets and After School Clubs

Key links to national guidance

[Regulated childcare](#)

[School aged childcare](#)

Key points

1. Lets are resuming in a limited way. These will initially focus on previous regular lets.
2. Groups who receive lets must confirm that they have Covid mitigations in place and are responsible for cleaning touch points.
3. Lets will, largely, finish by 9pm to allow FM staff to check that cleaning and tidying up has taken place. Compliance will be monitored by CCFM.
4. Where a commissioned partner provider for early years normally has a let within a school, may operate.
5. Out of school childcare settings, including breakfast and after school care clubs, may operate.
6. Pupils from different schools may attend an after school childcare setting.
7. After school clubs run by staff can be conducted subject to risk assessment, agreement with CCFM or operators of PPP schools. The outdoors should be used, where possible.
8. Adult visitors to schools should be strictly limited only to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school and arrangements should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community.
9. Schools must continue to book lets for “out of hours” activities such as sports, parent council and other events within the guidance. This does not apply to after school clubs run by staff, which run immediately after the school day.

24. School Communications

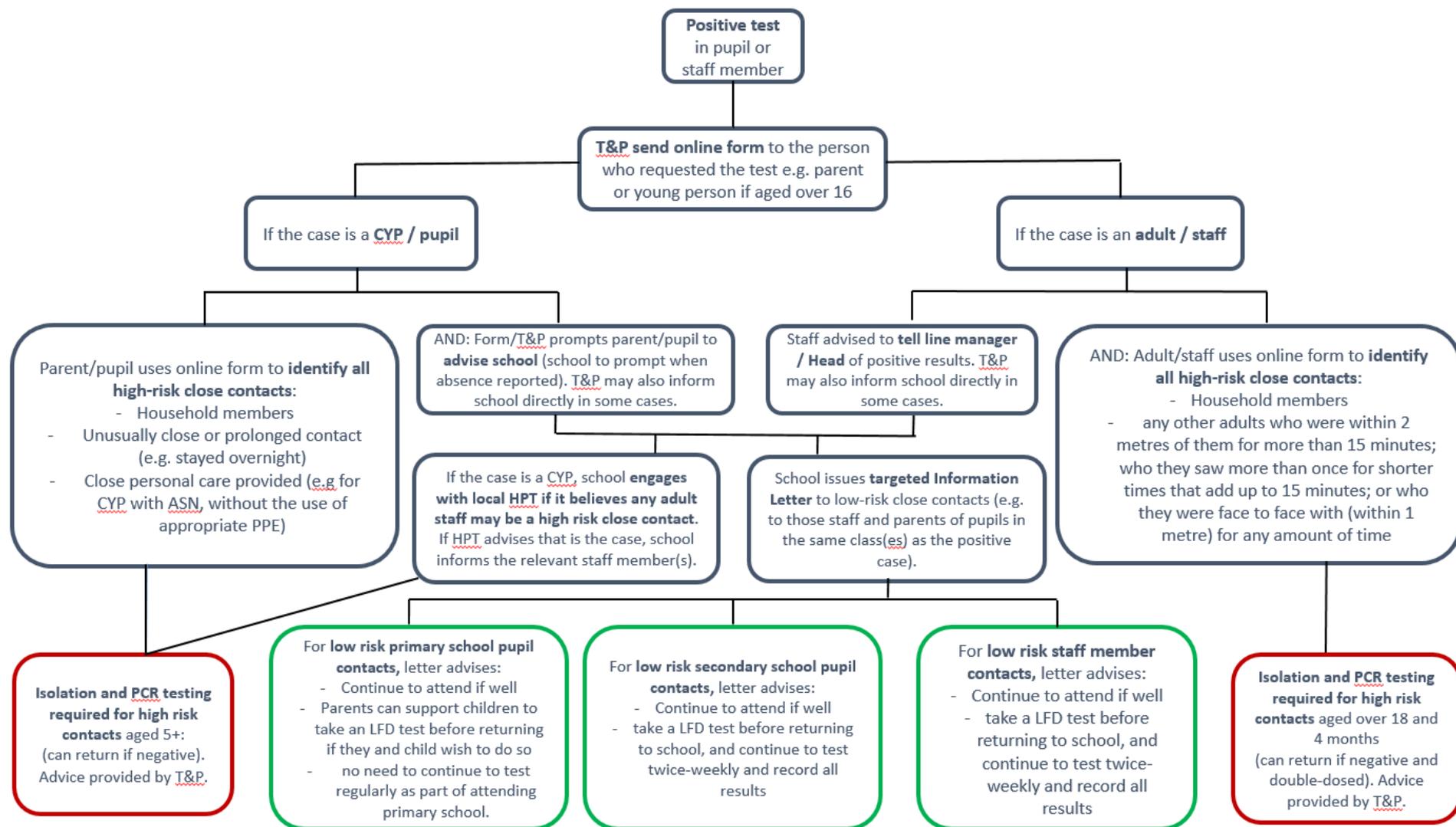
Key points

1. Where appropriate, the health template letters should be sent out by the head teacher.

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2. Further communications around Covid for schools will be issued centrally through the areas
3. Schools must ensure that any other communications regarding Covid are approved by the area education and learning manager in conjunction with the corporate communications team.
4. Approved communication links such as NHS Inform, Parent Club and Young Scot for Covid information would be useful to put on school media sites.

Appendix 1: Flow Diagram Managing Covid in Schools



Appendix 2: Asymptomatic Testing Programme: ELC and SAC settings

Scottish Government – Directorate for Early Learning and Childcare

October 2021

Thank you to all settings who are taking part in the testing programme. Over the last few weeks, we have seen reported uptake in the programme falling. We are not sure whether this is due to staff testing less frequently, or continuing to test but not reporting their results. We are keen to provide an update on how important asymptomatic testing still is as we head into the autumn and winter period.

Why should I do twice weekly LFD tests?

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 may not have symptoms but could still pass the virus onto others. LFD tests are very useful in detecting these asymptomatic cases and preventing further community transmission. Since the start of the programme in March 2021, LFD tests have identified **almost 600** positive cases of COVID-19 in registered childcare staff in Scotland. Although we do not know how many of these staff were asymptomatic, it's likely that, through testing, many chains of COVID-19 transmission will have been broken. LFD tests are also important in helping to support staff confidence among the childcare workforce and community wellbeing.

I test twice a week but I don't always report it – knowing I'm okay is the most important factor isn't it?

It's important to record your results on the online portal each time you take a LFD test – whether it's positive, negative, or void. This helps us understand the effectiveness of the tests, the spread of COVID-19, and the impact of the virus on the childcare workforce in Scotland.

How do I record my LFD test results?

The easiest way to register your test result is online [via NHS Inform](#). You can also call 119 for free from your mobile or landline. Results are shared with NHS Test and Protect. The testing journey is not complete until you register your result online or by phone, whether it is positive, negative or void.

I've been fully vaccinated. Why should I continue to take part in LFD testing?

You should continue to test regularly even if you have been vaccinated. While vaccines reduce the risk of infection, no vaccine provides 100% protection against the virus. People who have been vaccinated can still carry and transmit the virus to others.

I find taking a throat swab really uncomfortable – what are you doing about that?

The ACON Flowflex LFDs that are now being sent to registered childcare settings involve you taking a swab from your nose only and will show results at 15 minutes. ACON Flowflex Self-Test results must be read by 30 minutes, or the result will be void. This [step-by-step video shows how to do the ACON Flowflex LFD test](#).

Some settings may still have stocks of older Innova test kits which require swabs to be taken from the throat and nose, and which show results in 30 minutes. However, once these are used up your setting will receive the new ACON kits.

What if I receive a positive LFD test result?

You must report the result online at [NHS Inform](#) (or by calling 119 for free), self-isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test via [NHS inform](#). We advise [visiting a \(regional or walk-through\) test site](#) as this is the quickest way to get PCR tested.

It is important to begin self-isolation immediately after receiving a positive result from the LFD test, and do not wait until the result of the PCR test. A positive test result via LFD will feed into the Test and Protect contact tracing system and commence contact tracing for the positive case. The person who has tested positive will then be offered a confirmatory PCR test if they have not already taken one.

If the PCR test result is negative, individuals will be contacted by Test and Protect who will advise them on what to do next. In most cases this will involve ending self-isolation and returning their setting, provided the individual continues to have no symptoms. In some limited circumstances the individual may be advised by Test and Protect to continue self-isolation if a risk assessment determines this to be appropriate.

Background and further information

The Scottish Government is working with the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and other key partners to implement a testing programme for those without symptoms of coronavirus in schools/ Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC) settings. All registered ELC and SAC childcare settings in Scotland are part of the programme. Staff in these settings are being asked to take an LFD test at home twice a week – every 3 or 4 days. The testing programme is voluntary but we strongly encourage all settings and staff to continue to take part.

What are LFD tests for COVID-19?

A lateral flow device (LFD) is a self-test that you can use to quickly tell you if you have COVID-19. LFD tests for COVID-19 have been designed to be used by people who do not have symptoms. If you do have symptoms, you must take a PCR test as this is essential for clinical diagnosis and surveillance of people with symptoms.

How do LFD tests work?

A Lateral Flow Device (LFD) is an at-home test which detects the coronavirus antigen (protein) that is produced when a person is infected with COVID-19. Comprehensive guidance on self-testing is covered in the “Instructions for Use” (IFU) which come with every test kit – it is important that this is read carefully. The IFU is also available to download digitally and translated into a number of languages online.

How effective are LFD tests?

No test is 100% accurate. However, research undertaken by the UK Health Security Agency has shown that LFD antigen tests are effective at identifying positive and negative cases. ‘False negative’ results – where you receive a negative LFD result but have COVID – are more likely for LFD tests than for PCR tests. However, this risk is minimised if LFD tests are taken more regularly – this is why we’re asking staff to do tests twice weekly. ‘False positive’ results – where you receive a positive LFD result but do not have COVID – have been estimated to be extremely low. The requirement to take a PCR test if your LFD test is positive helps to minimise the risk of people who may receive false positives having to self-isolate when they don’t need to.

LFDs used by the UK Government undergo a rigorous validation process including evaluations by Public Health England and the University of Oxford. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) provides ongoing regulatory oversight.

Do you have any more questions?

Further guidance and detailed information is signposted within this document and can be found on the document-sharing portal, Objective Connect. If you are taking part in the testing programme but can't access Objective Connect, or have any other questions, please email childcaretestingprogramme@gov.scot

Appendix 3: Protest Guidance for Vaccination Sites

The significant majority of the public support the vaccine programme but there will be some who see an opportunity for publicity if they use a vaccine centre as a place of protest. Staff should also be aware of the potential for anti-vaccine protests as the programme continues, which have the potential to be larger and seek to disrupt. In particular, the vaccination of children has the potential to result in a greater number of protests.

We recommend that this guidance is printed and kept on site in your site folder or equivalent.

Right to Protest

The Human Rights Act (ECHR) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. This has been incorporated into domestic British Law. The community has a duty to respect people's rights to protest specifically under:

- Article 9 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion)
- Article 10 (Freedom of expression)
- Article 11 (Freedom of assembly and association)

Police Scotland will respect people's right to protest or demonstrate and will provide proportionate policing response. The priority is to ensure the safety of the public. Police Scotland has a duty to facilitate peaceful protest and will police any event proportionately balancing the needs and rights of those wishing to demonstrate or protest against the needs of the wider community. Any criminality will be dealt with appropriately.

Currently, no permissions are needed to hold a static demonstration but a specific approval from the local authority is required to march or hold a procession through the streets.

It should also be considered that some protest groups may use non-violent direct action (NVDA) this can include banner drops, road blocks, locking on or gluing on to structures to name a few.

Preparing for a protest

It is good practice to

- Identify and establish a protest response plan, shared with all relevant staff. The example in Annex A can be used as a template and adapted to your circumstances.
- Consider entrance and exit security and access arrangements. Think about courses of action should the entrance be blocked by protesters or should patients have to walk past vocal groups to access the clinic.

- Be clear about staff and volunteer responsibilities in case of a protest.

All staff and volunteers should do the [online training on security and de-escalation](#). This training explains how to engage with difficult people and outlines basic security knowledge.

Encountering a protest

Staff encountering a protest should be advised to:

- Attempt to establish an organiser / spokesperson / liaison for the group that is willing to talk
- Ask who the group are and what the event aims and intentions are
- Ask them if they have spoken with Police Liaison prior to the event
- Contact the Police on 101
- Avoid getting into debate or arguments with protesters
- Try not to take things personally and keep conversation light and transactional
- Avoid providing statements or opinions on behalf of the company / organisation if you are uncomfortable with this.

Staff should only engage with protesters if they feel safe and confident to do so.

Reporting a protest

All protest activity should be reported to **Police Scotland on 101**. This is the case whether the protest is causing a disruption or not, whether it is large or small.

Should you require immediate assistance, ie the protest is turning violent, call 999.

Informing Police Scotland of any protest activity is important as it helps maintain an accurate picture of activities across Scotland.

Police Scotland also informs the FVCV Security Workstream of any activity related to vaccination sites.

When contacting the police, provide the following information:

- Location
- Approximate number of demonstrators
- Issue being demonstrated
- Whether the demonstration is peaceful or disruptive.

You may find it helpful to use an SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) format to record protest activity internally. Please share the filled in form also with vaccinesecurity@gov.scot. A template is provided in Annex B.

If you are unsure when to call 101 or 999, please see ANNEX C for further information.

Additional Information:

If you require further advice or assistance, the FVCV Security Workstream can be contacted on vaccinesecurity@gov.scot.

This guidance has been produced in consultation with Police Scotland by the FVCV Security Workstream.

Annex A: Site Specific Risk Assessment in Case of an Announced Protest or to prepare for an unannounced protest

Please note that this is a template and should be filled in according to site specific circumstances. Descriptions of Risks, Actions, Owners and Status are only examples and should be adjusted accordingly.

Protest Planning	Use this space to describe your site and/or information about the protest.		
Risk (these are example risks, you may need to add further risks or remove some, or adjust the wording)	Action (adapt according to your site)	Owner (adapt according to your site)	Status Red/Amber/ Green (adapt according to your site)
The size of crowd is significantly bigger than anticipated and staff/patients are feeling uncomfortable	Escalate to Police Scotland 101 Ensure both entrance and exits are manned.	Site Management team	
Civil disorder	Escalation to Police Scotland (999)	Site Management team	
Protesters gain access to the building	Drop-in appointments will cease and only patients with appointments will be given access to the building. Inform Police Scotland 999	NHS territorial board	
Patients unwilling to enter the facility due to the protest	Alternative appointments will be provided.	NHS territorial board	
Staff Wellbeing– Risk of verbal or physical assault	A separate point of exit could be provided for staff on the day Staffing numbers will be kept to the minimal required to deliver the service. Any incidents of	Site management team/volunteer coordinators/NHS	

	<p>physical or verbal assault will be documented on appropriate reporting systems, Police will be informed.</p> <p>All staff will be fully briefed prior to commencing shift</p>		
Risk of damage to property	<p>External signage will be removed as appropriate</p> <p>Only essential equipment to be kept on site</p>	NHS territorial board	
Reputational risk/Impact on confidence/Risk of further protests	<p>Maintain business as usual</p> <p>A joint holding statement will be prepared</p>	<p>NHS territorial board/ site management</p> <p>Comms teams /NHS territorial board</p>	

Annex B: SBAR for reporting/recording incidents

Address		Date and Time of incident	
Name (completed by):		Organisation	
Situation	Describe situation/incident that has occurred		
Background	Explain history and impact of incident on services, patient or staff safety		
Assessment	Confirm your understanding of the issues/ risks involved		
Recommendation	What are the lessons learned?		

ANNEX C: When to call 101 or 999

In an emergency always dial 999

- when an immediate response is needed
- when a crime is in progress
- when someone suspected of a crime is nearby
- when a life is in danger
- when violence is being used or threatened
- when serious disruption to the public is likely.

To report a crime that does not need an emergency response dial 101.101 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

More info can also be found online.

- General information about [Call Handling - Police Scotland](#)
- [FAQ on 101](#)