

Covid-19 update from the Education and Skills Team

Professional Advocates for Children in Education, Governor Support, NQTs, Early Years, the Virtual School for Looked after Children and In Year Fair Access

Four week delay for a reason

As expected, there has been more advice from the government following the announcement of a four-week delay in further relaxation of safety measures. The main topic of conversation over the last few days has been the planned transition days for Year 6 into Year 7. A great deal of work has taken place in both secondary and primary schools making preparations for the planned days in early July. We all know that these transition experiences are really important for children and can alleviate a lot of the anxiety felt when moving to a new school.

However...

Far be it for any of us to tell headteachers what they can and cannot do. We do have thoughts and advice to give though. We know that cases in Derby are lower than in other areas of the country but we also know they are rising. We know there are a few cases in some schools and that there will be children who are about to display symptoms but who aren't yet. You have worked assiduously to keep bubbles separate – it is probably down to your careful work that cases in Derby have remained low up to this point. The best way to make sure the new variant travels across Derby would be to spend a few days mixing all the children together and then sending them back into their current school. As a result, **our advice is that the traditional transition days should be paused.**

This doesn't mean you can't do anything.

- You might think about bespoke arrangements for vulnerable children.
- You might think about even more encouragement for your Year 6 pupils to go to the forthcoming secondary summer schools.
- You might think about planning something for Year 11 into Year 12 for the very end of term so they don't go back after they have worked in their sixth form or college bubbles.
- You might think about planning something for the first few days of September.

Derby leaders are creative and inventive people. It is a shame but safety should come first.



Pauline, Jo and the E&S team

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Covid Fire Safety message

All headteachers and other responsible persons are reminded of the government guidance on ventilating rooms during the Coronavirus pandemic; it must be reiterated that self-closing fire resisting doors are NOT to be wedged open as an aid to ventilation.

(A self-closing fire resisting door forms a critical part of the fire safety strategy for buildings – they are identified by having fixed to them a circular blue notice stating ‘Fire Door – Keep Shut’).

Please refer to the ‘Natural Ventilation’ section in paragraph 7, found in the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#system-of-controls>

Phil Knight
Fire Safety Service Manager

Leaders know some of this already but there are some changes



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-the-nhs-covid-19-app-in-schools-and-further-education-colleges>

Information about the app features and situations for pausing the app have been updated.

The app has 6 key features that help to reduce personal and public risk:

1. Trace – alerts the individual if they were in close contact with a confirmed case
2. Alert – provides the individual with information on COVID-19 in their local area, based on the postcode district and local authority they enter; this could include information on local restrictions or variants of concern
3. Check in – allows the individual to check in to locations via the app and official NHS QR codes
4. Symptoms – allows the individual to check symptoms against government guidance and to get advice
5. Test – allows the individual to order a free test, to receive or enter results and to get advice
6. Isolate – provides an isolation ‘companion’, which counts down how many days the individual has left to isolate and provides links to useful advice

Bluetooth needs to be enabled on the phone for the trace function to work, as the app uses Bluetooth low energy to anonymously assess the distance, over time, between people who have downloaded it.

If an individual with the app tests positive for COVID-19, the app will ask them to allow those that they have been in contact with to be notified. If so, the app will then notify relevant individuals if they have been in close contact with a positive case. ‘Close contact’ is based on an algorithm, but generally means you’ve been within 2 metres of someone for 15 minutes or more. Individuals are not informed who the positive case is.

It is possible to pause the contact tracing function (‘trace’) in the app. If it is paused, the phone and Bluetooth remain on but the phone does not record contacts. Pausing contact tracing is only recommended in 4 situations:

- when an individual is not able to have their phone with them, for example because it is stored in a locker or communal area – this is to avoid the app picking up contacts when the individual is not with their phone
- when an individual is working behind a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, fully protected from other colleagues and members of the public, as the individual is considered to be adequately protected from contracting COVID-19
- for staff in a health or care setting who are wearing medical grade PPE (for example, a surgical mask) as these individuals are also considered to be adequately protected
- for healthcare workers working in a healthcare building, such as a hospital or GP surgery

Following our Prime Minister's latest announcement

Guidance

Protective measures for holiday and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Updated 14 June 2021

www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

The main change is to provide additional guidance on residential visits. Until 21 June, out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare providers should undertake overnight stays or residential visits with children in groups of no more than 6 people or 2 households (including at least one member of staff). From 21 June, overnight stays can take place with groups of up to 30 children. You should keep children within consistent groups (bubbles) for the purpose of the visits. There is advice about risk assessments in one of the appendices.

More adjustments following the Prime Minister's announcement

For the last few weeks, the DfE have been sending a daily email to headteachers. The information below was included in yesterday's email and provides some useful guidance on the implications of the four-week delay on some traditional summer activities:

- Step 3 restrictions remain in place, including those set out in the [COVID-19 operational guidance](#). We now 'expect' that England will move to Step 4 on 19 July 2021, which will be confirmed one week in advance.
- Schools should encourage staff, and students, where applicable, to continue to test twice weekly and student bubbles, where they exist, should stay in place. Early years settings should continue to minimise mixing by keeping children in consistent groups.
- Sports days can go ahead. In line with the rest of the system of controls, pupils and students must remain in their bubbles, and early years children should remain in their consistent groups as is usual for your setting. Sports equipment should be regularly cleaned throughout the event. Spectators must adhere to current social distancing requirements. Where events take place outdoors, spectators can gather in separate groups of up to 30 – the legal gathering limit. Multiple groups of 30 are permitted.
- Leavers events - at the moment, avoid hosting large group gatherings indoors for more than one bubble (or in early years more than one consistent group), such as assemblies or mass worship. The [schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) states that children should be kept in separate, independent groups (for example, their bubbles). The [early years guidance](#) states you should minimise contact between groups within settings (for example, keeping children in consistent groups). Outdoor events are generally lower risk. Once you have undertaken a risk assessment and planned your event in line with your system of controls, you may consider an outdoor event (for example a leavers' celebration or prom) that caters for more than one bubble or consistent group, as long as the groups continue to be kept separate. Any parents attending outdoor events must adhere to current social distancing requirements. Where outdoors spectators can gather in groups of up to 30 – the legal gathering limit. Multiple groups of 30 are permitted.
- Transition days - You should complete thorough risk assessments before running transition, taster and open days in your setting, to ensure that they are run in line with your system of controls and align with the advice contained within the guidance for your setting and the [roadmap out of lockdown](#). This means that traditional transition and open days are unlikely to be feasible this academic year but we are keen not to restrict individual settings from designing events which maintain the integrity of bubbles or consistent groups, and adhere to the system of controls in place.
- Singing - If you are planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, you should continue to follow the latest [performing arts guidance](#), and the guidance on [delivering outdoor events](#). Registered early years settings, schools and colleges are, however, exempt from the requirement to limit group numbers to 6 for singing indoors.