

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance to support the reintroduction of school residential visits

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Glossary

Outdoor Education Centres (OECs)

For the purpose of this guidance, an OEC is defined as an establishment whose primary purpose, activity and delivery time is to provide Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to schools using outdoor and overnight experiences. These OECs and their onsite and offsite operations provide education in partnership with schools, with visiting school staff/volunteers and pupils in attendance. They are considered as educational settings. An OEC can be owned and/or operated by local authorities or third parties. OECs may also deliver provision to youth groups undertaking educational practice contributing to young people's learning and development ([Section 1.1](#)).

Outdoor Expedition Providers (OEPs)

For the purpose of this guidance, an outdoor expedition provider is an individual or organisation which delivers/facilitates outdoor expeditions for schools. For example, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award approves activity providers which would fall within this definition. This guidance currently defines the overnight component of expeditions as camping. An OEP can be a school undertaking self-led expeditions. OEPs may also deliver provision to youth groups undertaking educational practice contributing to young people's learning and development ([Section 1.1](#)).

1. Purpose

This guidance supports the safe and effective reintroduction of school residential visits provided by [OECs/OEPs](#), including expeditions associated with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

It seeks to minimise health, safety and financial risks balanced with the significant benefits of residential visits and accepted education risk tolerances.

'Risk is a part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate all risks. What you must do is make sure you know about the main risks and the things you need to do to manage them responsibly. Generally, you need to do everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm.'

Health and Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/managing/managingtherisks.htm>

'Schools should ensure that they implement reasonable and proportionate control measures which reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practical level.'

Scottish Government [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) Paragraph 31

This guidance specifically aims to:

- set out practical approaches to support the safe and effective reintroduction of outdoor residential visits by schools;
- promote broad national consistency in relation to residential school visits whilst ensuring appropriate local flexibility is maintained; and
- provide confidence and reassurance to local authorities and schools in reconnecting with [OECs/OEPs](#) to book or confirm future visits and to undertake those visits.

It has been developed by a national working group with representation from:

- Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE);
- Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres - Scotland (AHOEC);
- Youth Link Scotland Outdoor Group;
- Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS);
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE); and
- Scottish Government.

All the aforementioned organisations endorse this guidance.

Guidance will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect the latest national guidance and good practice.

1.1 Scope of the guidance

This guidance supports [OECs/OEPs](#) and local authorities and their associated schools to:

- reintroduce residential visits in the **2020/21 summer term**, subject to the conditions detailed in the Scottish Government guidance ([Section 2.1](#)); and
- support preparations for residential visits in the **2021/22 academic year**, subject to emerging and changing Scottish Government guidance ([Section 2.2](#)).

This guidance may also be used by:

- grant-aided schools and independent schools; and to
- support residential visits by youth groups undertaking educational practice contributing to young people's learning and development. The [Guiding framework to support the delivery of youth work services](#) specifies that residential youth work activity should be in line with the phased approach and timescales outlined in the updated Scottish Government school visits guidance ([Section 2.1](#)).

Some [OECs/OEPs](#) supply provision to non-Scottish school groups or youth sector groups. Whilst this guidance is not targeted at these situations, some of this guidance may be applicable. Similarly, schools, local authorities and [OECs/OEPs](#) may find some aspects of this guidance useful when planning day visits.

2. Context

In March 2020, the emergence of COVID-19 in Scotland meant that the Scottish Government advised schools and local authorities against undertaking residential visits. This advice was given in recognition of the risk of COVID-19 transmission associated with such visits.

The Scottish Government recognises the impact the extended period of no school residential visits has had on young people's lives and the school residential sector. The Scottish Government has therefore commissioned two-part guidance to support the recommencement of residential school visits.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide practical advice and guidance to support the safe restart and operation of [OECs/OEPs](#). Complementary to this technical guidance, "[Fit for The Future- Scotland's Outdoor Education Centres](#)" outlines the educational value of outdoor residential activity in delivering outcomes associated with Curriculum for Excellence. High quality residential visits form part of a progressive approach to effective outdoor learning.

This COVID-19 specific guidance supplements existing general national guidance for offsite visits: [Going Out There](#) - the Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Off-site Visits. Local authorities have their specific local employer guidance for offsite visits, which should now include COVID-19 guidance for their schools. [OECs/OEPs](#) should consider this information when undertaking their recovery and renewal planning. **Schools need to use their local authority guidance when planning visits.**

The move to restart residential visits is welcomed by the sector. This guidance and the national working group is one part of supporting an incremental restart; given stakeholders the confidence and direction to proceed along the evolving phased roadmap, subject to infection rates and Scottish Government reviews.

2.1 Guidance from the Scottish Government

2.1.1 Scottish Government guidance on offsite school visits

On the 07 May 2021, the Scottish Government confirmed the phased reintroduction of school residential visits subject to the following mitigations – [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for school visits and trips](#) (Table 1 on page 8 below).

Schools and local authorities have autonomy in planning residential visits, however educational visits that necessitate an overnight stay but where the residential aspect is not central to the learning experience are not advised in the summer term of the 2020/21 academic year.

The single occupancy condition is part of an incremental/phased approach to restarting residential visits. **Single occupancy should be risk assessed and include identifying non-COVID risks and potential mitigations to determine if this approach is appropriate and deliverable.**

Updated Scottish Government guidance - 14 May 2021

Visits involving boarding schools

Schools which feature residential boarding or hostel accommodation may already have learners routinely sharing bedrooms or dormitories, in accordance with the bubble arrangements determined and risk assessed by that school. In such a case, the same individuals may continue to share sleeping accommodation (either a room or tent) during a residential school visit and the single room/tent sleeping requirement set out in this guidance need not apply. **This exemption only applies to schools which feature residential boarding or hostel accommodation and have already implemented risk assessed residential bubbles.**

Cross border visits within the UK

Check guidance at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for school visits and trips](#).

Table 1 Scottish Government Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for school visits and trips

From 10 May 2021 Residential outdoor expeditions	From 31 May 2021 School residential visits to outdoor education centres
Conditions	Conditions
<p>Residential outdoor expeditions can recommence subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum group size of 9 including the expedition leader. • Any travel arrangements follow latest guidance as set out in the Scottish Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools. • Relevant school Covid-19 protocols are maintained during the expedition. • Zero interaction with others outside the expedition group. • Individuals sleeping in single person tents outdoors. • Washing and toilet facilities reserved for single person use at any one time. 	<p>School residential visits to outdoor education centres can recommence subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits only allowed when virus prevalence is equivalent to new Covid-19 Protection Levels 0, 1 and 2 at both the school and destination*. • Single school occupancy only - except for Protection Level 0 (at both school and destination) where a maximum of two school groups may attend. • Any travel arrangements follow latest guidance as set out in the Scottish Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools. • Relevant school Covid-19 protocols are maintained during the visit. • Individuals sleeping in either single rooms indoors or single person tents outdoors. • Washing and toilet facilities reserved for single person use at any one time. • Enhanced cleaning in between visits. <p>*School groups may travel through areas subject to higher protection levels but should make every effort not to stop in a higher level area.</p>

2.1.2 Scottish Government guidance on reducing COVID-19 risks in schools

The Scottish Government published guidance on reducing COVID-19 risks in schools - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/>. This informs many of the practical approaches set out in this guidance. In this way schools, local authorities and [OECs/OEPs](#) can more easily ensure that residential visits follow national level guidance and groups maintain relevant COVID-19 protocols during a residential visit.

2.2 Other relevant and evolving guidance

This document sits within the context of the 2020/21 summer term and national level guidance signalling the reintroduction of school residential visits.

Although this guidance has been developed to inform school residential activity in the 2020/21 summer term, the COVID-19 relevant mitigations set out here need to be understood in parallel with evolving school and care systems. That is to say that the broader context of the COVID-19 pandemic may change within the summer term and recommended precautions could be relaxed in the context of wider changes and levels of adherence as the prevalence and incidence of COVID-19 in Scotland reduce.

Conversely, measures may need to be strengthened or reintroduced if there is evidence of a resurgence, or in the light of localised outbreaks. Where other relevant new legislation, guidance, science or risk tolerance has implications for this advice, it must also be taken into account.

This document should also be read and applied in conjunction with employer guidance and the latest national guidance including those listed in [Appendix 1](#).

Nothing in this guidance affects the legal obligations of [OECs/OEPs](#), local authorities and schools with regard to health and safety and public health. [OECs/OEPs](#), local authorities and schools must continue to adhere to all such duties when implementing this guidance. Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, they must have regard to the advice relating to coronavirus from the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland. In the event of any conflict between any applicable legislation (including health and safety legislation) and this guidance, the applicable legislation must prevail.

3. How to use this guidance

This guidance is designed to be comprehensive yet generic in nature. As such, [OECs/OEPs](#), local authorities and schools should exercise their professional and specialist judgement to implement this and other relevant guidance to suit local contexts and to ultimately ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff/adults and pupils, and to minimise financial risks.

This should be considered alongside the significant benefits of residential visits and accepted education risk tolerances.

[OECs/OEPs](#), visiting schools and local authorities should work together to ensure local requirements are met ([see Section 6.1 introduction note](#)). It is anticipated this guidance will inform local authority expectations / guidance and develop some standardisation across this sector.

Schools, local authorities and [OECs/OEPs](#) can use this guidance to inform the development or review of risk assessments, standard operating procedures and visit approval processes / employer guidance; all of which can help to minimise the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus in line with accepted education risk tolerances.

Any identified COVID-19 operating procedures should be implemented consistently and robustly across [OEC/OEP](#) operations. This may include adaptations to the management of facilities, educational activity and workforce development.

In developing or adapting standard operating procedures, risk assessments and employer guidance it is advised there is appropriate consultation with the following people and organisations, recognising that the level and detail of consultation will depend on the group in question:

- [OECs/OEPs](#) staff.
- Local authorities, including staff who manage and approve school visits e.g. SAPOE local authority members.
- School leadership teams, teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Parents and carers.
- Young people.
- Local landowners.
- Suppliers of services and goods.
- Local emergency services.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should consider how to appropriately and effectively communicate changes to schools. Having clear communication mechanisms and opportunities for an ongoing dialogue may instil confidence in the revised arrangements, processes and experiences for visiting school groups. Gaining feedback before, during and after a visit will allow providers to continually develop safe and effective practice.

As the recovery from Coronavirus (COVID-19) evolves and the monitoring of infection rates continues, localised lockdowns and travel restrictions are still a possibility and may prevent some school visits. [OECs/OEPs](#), local authorities and schools should consider this scenario, along with a return to a national lockdown, in their contingency planning.

Local authorities should consider this guidance when updating their schools' offsite visits employer guidance.

4. Additional Developing Resources

4.1 Voluntary self-assessment assurance – a 'charter'

As already detailed, this guidance has been developed to help schools, local authorities and [OECs/OEPs](#) to adhere to aforementioned Scottish Government school visit guidance for the summer term of the 2020/21 academic year, and support preparations for the 2021/22 academic year. In doing so it provides a mechanism to best ensure the safe reintroduction of residential school visits. The demonstration of safe school residential activity in the context of the pandemic will help to ensure that these enriching educational experiences can continue in the short, medium and long term. Schools, local authorities and [OECs/OEPs](#) are therefore strongly encouraged to follow this guidance although it is acknowledged that adherence is voluntary.

To support this, a voluntary 'charter' is being developed alongside this guidance to support self-assessment and adherence. **This charter should be available towards the end of May 2021.** Local authorities can consider how to incorporate this 'charter' within their school visit approval process.

Consideration and application of this 'charter' will help to minimise COVID-19 infection and maximise safe and effective outdoor learning.

4.2 Summary Framework

The national working group is currently finalising a summary framework to complement this guidance. This is an easy to use reference tool / checklist to support OECs/OEPs, schools and local authorities. **This framework will be ready towards the end of May 2021 and will be reviewed and revised regularly.**

5. Operation considerations and practical approaches

The complexities of implementing these considerations and practical approaches in different settings are not underestimated. The impacts of different approaches on staffing requirements, the challenges inherent in reducing interactions between schools and other key issues all require careful consideration to ensure successful implementation.

Scottish Government school visits advice states that visits should be appropriately risk assessed. [OECs/OEPs](#) working together with schools and local authorities to incorporate the practical approaches below into risk assessments will ultimately improve the confidence of all interested parties and support forward planning.

6. General considerations, practical approaches and public health measures

This section of the guidance includes key approaches and public health measures that should be implemented alongside updated risk assessments, which will help substantially to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 transmission and infection.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should liaise with local authorities and schools to develop their approach to minimising risks. It is not practicable for [OECs/OEPs](#) to accommodate every local adjustment from many different local authorities. Applying the latest [Scottish Government guidance on reducing risks in schools](#), guidance in this document and manageable best-fit adjustments for client local authorities should provide a suitable, sufficient and pragmatic approach for supporting schools from different local authorities.

6.1 Risk assessment

Risk assessments should be undertaken in line with the [Health and Safety Executive Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#). All aspects of a residential visit, including transport to and from

the venue/s, should be considered. All risk assessment should be reviewed and updated as circumstances change and where appropriate.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should use the [Health and Safety making your workplace COVID-secure during the coronavirus pandemic](#) to help make [OECs/OEPs](#) COVID-19 secure.

[Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) Annex C provides additional information about COVID-19 risk assessment.

6.2 Determining capacity

[OECs/OEPs](#) should determine their capacity early in their recovery and renewal planning based on

- Scottish Government offsite residential visit conditions ([Section 2.1](#));
- this and other relevant guidance; and
- local circumstances such as buildings and outdoor space capacity and layout including toilet, washing and sleeping facilities, availability and accessibility to offsite venues/resources, predicted staff capacity and deployment, status of local suppliers of goods and services, and feedback from local emergency services and communities.

Capacity will evolve as guidance and local circumstances change.

6.3 Roles, Responsibilities and Routines

[OECs/OEPs](#), visiting school staff/adults and pupils should be actively engaged in agreeing and establishing new practices and routines, and understanding their role and responsibilities.

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting schools should agree clear roles and responsibilities for the duration of the visit. They should consider how to support pupils in undertaking a safe visit. Pupils should understand their role and responsibilities and any routines. This should be adjusted for different school groups and individuals' needs and abilities. Some pupils with additional support needs may require reasonable adjustments and support in understanding key responsibilities.

Public health measures, including good hygiene, should become a core learning outcome for pupils; reinforced and applied throughout their stay.

6.4 Pre-visit planning and visiting school induction and orientation

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting school staff should undertake appropriate pre-visit planning to minimise the risk of transmission and infection. This may include:

- Pre-visit guidance for visiting school staff.
- Pre-visit resources for pupils. Some [OECs/OEPs](#) may choose to utilise 360 photography and film to allow remote familiarisation prior to occupation.
- Preliminary planning visits by school staff to the visit location/s may be an option in some limited cases although general needs should normally be met remotely. Significant caution is

required with preliminary visits so not to increase the risk of interaction and therefore the transmission of the virus.

- Exchanging key information for visiting staff and pupils, including contact information.
- On arrival, visiting school staff and pupils should be inducted to the venue/s including buildings, outdoor areas, equipment, routines and their roles and responsibilities. Visiting school staff and pupils should be familiar with the layout of the buildings and grounds and be able to orientate themselves around the site. Induction and orientation should be built into the visit programme. This should not be rushed and visiting school staff and pupils should have the opportunity to ask questions. Routines and requirements should be reinforced throughout the programme with regular opportunities for feedback between the [OECs/OEPs](#) staff and visiting school staff.
- Clear signage and colour coding on walls and floors may be implemented to help with wayfinding, along with taping off specific areas. Maps can be displayed detailing entry/exit points and circulation patterns. Appropriate visuals will be particularly important for younger pupils and for some pupils with additional support needs. These will need to be clear and child friendly to enable them to be understood by as many pupils as possible. These could include signs in braille (with appropriate arrangements made for hygiene) or signs that display meaningful symbols. Any signage that involves direct interaction from pupils will need to be cleaned regularly.
- Learning activities for visiting staff and pupils aimed to develop familiarity.

6.5. Contact details

It is necessary for [OECs/OEPs](#) to liaise with the visiting school to ensure accessibility to contact information for visiting school staff and pupils. They should also have an up-to-date record of its own staff.

[OECs/OEPs](#) may need to update their privacy notice. It is important to ensure that data is collected and handled in line with data protection laws. [OECs/OEPs](#) may want to refer to the Scottish Government's general [privacy notice](#), which has been developed for the hospitality and tourism sector.

6.6 Key public health measures to prevent and respond to infections

This section has been informed by the Scottish Government [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#).

[OECs/OEPs](#) should aim to maintain relevant school Covid-19 protocols i.e. mirror school arrangements wherever reasonably practicable.

It is important that all persons are reminded the need to follow the relevant guidance, procedures and risk assessments. Involving young people in discussions about how to manage mitigations in new situations away from home and school will be critical to their success; embedded into their learning and part of their work on responsible citizenship.

Essential public health measures include:

- [enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning arrangements](#);
- [maximising ventilation and managing heating](#);
- [minimising contact with others](#) (groupings, maintaining distancing where possible for children and young people in secondary schools and physical distancing for adults);
- [wearing face coverings](#) or appropriate [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) where necessary;
- [staff completing asymptomatic tests](#) and recording results twice weekly;
- [symptom vigilance and a requirement that people who are ill stay at home](#);
- [active engagement with Test and Protect](#); and
- [special considerations for specific groups](#).

6.6.1 Enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning arrangements

6.6.1.1 Personal hygiene

The key personal hygiene measures that all persons should follow to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection are:

- frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, and always when entering/leaving the building, before/after eating, before and after activity and after using the toilet;
- encouraging children, young people and staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose; and
- using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze (good respiratory hygiene - “Catch it, kill it, bin it”), and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.

This needs to include all [OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting staff, pupils, volunteers, contractors and other visitors to maintain personal hygiene throughout the day.

Signage should be applied appropriately, including toilets. This should be reviewed, including consultation with visitors, regularly to ensure effectiveness.

Pupils should be taught good hand hygiene technique and reminded about the importance of putting it into practice in different contexts during their stay e.g. offsite in the wilderness or onsite in-between activities. A video by Food Standards Scotland shows pupils how to carry out effective hand washing <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/education-resources/happy-hands>

Adequate facilities should be available for hand hygiene, including handwashing facilities that are adequately stocked or alcohol-based hand rub at key areas (e.g. entry and exit points).

Consideration should be given to the installation of outdoor hand basins or hand sanitisers at entry/exit points, to allow all building users to wash hands as they enter/leave the building at transition times. Help should be given to those pupils who struggle to wash their hands independently.

Bathrooms should be fully supplied for handwashing and drying.

Offsite working should involve the use of alcohol-based hand rubs / sanitisers. Staff working offsite should carry appropriate resources to support good personal hygiene e.g. spare tissues and a waste bag.

6.6.1.2 Enhanced environmental cleaning

[OECs/OEPs](#) should review cleaning systems and procedures to ensure they are robust and meet the standards set out within [Health Protection Scotland COVID 19 guidance for non-healthcare settings](#). This includes guidance for the environmental decontamination (cleaning and disinfection) after a possible case of coronavirus (COVID-19). Additional guidance may also be found via [The Association of Scottish Self Caterers](#).

It is important for [OECs/OEPs](#) to review various scenarios with their staff including decontamination. This will help to develop confidence and effective practice. Continuous consultation with staff helps to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

Facilities

Consideration should be given to enhanced cleaning schedules and systems. The use of cleaning schedules and detailed check lists for different levels of cleaning will help ensure consistency and quality of cleaning standards.

[OECs](#) should ensure that an enhanced environmental cleaning regime is in place and in line with [Health Protection Scotland COVID 19 guidance for non-healthcare settings](#). This specifies in particular:

- Ensuring regular detergent cleaning schedules and procedures are in place using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses; ensure adequate contact time for cleaning products is adhered to.
- Ensuring regular (at least twice daily) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces (e.g. desks, handles, dining tables, shared surfaces etc.);
- Ensuring that where possible movement of individuals between work stations is minimised and where work spaces are shared there is cleaning between use (e.g. avoid hot desks and instead each individual, children, young people and staff, has a designated desk);
- Ensuring there are adequate disposal facilities;
- Wedging doors (other than fire doors) open, where appropriate, to increase fresh air and reduce touchpoints;
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and physical distancing is achieved as much as possible; and
- Cleaning work vehicles, between different passengers or shifts as appropriate.

There should also be:

- More frequent cleaning of rooms/areas that must be used by different groups, including staff (e.g. toilet blocks). Allocation of dedicated rooms/areas should be maximised whenever reasonably practicable.

Equipment

Careful consideration should be given to the cleaning regime for equipment.

Allocating dedicated equipment to groups is effective. [OECs/OEPs](#) should consider allocating groups sets of equipment to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus. Sets should then be cleaned between groupings/bubbles. Soap, rinse and dry may be sufficient; some chemical based cleaners could have a detrimental effect of life span of PPE equipment such as fabric harnesses and helmet straps. In this case, the manufacturer's advice should be followed.

When allocating dedicated equipment is not reasonably practicable, there are two potential approaches to mitigating risks from surface contamination of equipment. [OECs/OEPs](#) should consider which of these approaches is most appropriate for their circumstances as part of appropriately updated risk assessments.

1. Quarantining equipment for 72 hours remains an effective measure to mitigate the risks of handling equipment. The amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surface is likely to have decreased significantly after this time. [OECs/OEPs](#) adopting this approach may wish to develop quarantine procedures for used equipment including equipment drops and dedicated quarantine area that can be easily labelled. This approach may be best suited to reducing transmission during outbreak situations. In other circumstances it may be disproportionate to the risks involved, particularly if it has a significant impact on learning opportunities.
2. Careful hand washing with soap and warm water/use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after handling equipment mitigates the need for quarantine for 72 hours before, and 72 hours after. As far as possible and in line with effective practice, persons should avoid touching their mouth, nose and eye area. Good hand hygiene should be sufficient to prevent transmission of infection from equipment, even if they are contaminated, as long as the person handling the item does not touch their face between handling the item and decontaminating their hands. Good respiratory hygiene ("Catch it, kill it, bin it") is also required at all times.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should identify how they will clean different equipment. 'Smart' timetabling of the learning programme may facilitate the safe use of equipment.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should develop robust procedures for isolating and cleaning any contaminated equipment (used by symptomatic persons or confirmed COVID-19 cases). This can include immediate cleaning of equipment or if it cannot be cleaned immediately, it should be bagged, tagged and quarantined until such time it can be cleaned. Further information available via: [Health Protection Scotland COVID 19 guidance for non-healthcare settings](#) regarding cleaning contaminated equipment.

Where [OECs/OEPs](#) use fixed activity base equipment, such as high ropes courses and climbing walls where cleaning may not be reasonably practicable, good hand hygiene should be the priority. Hand hygiene should be used before and after contact with the equipment and the persons contacting the equipment should avoid touching their face between contacting the equipment and decontaminating their hands.

Clothing

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting staff and pupils should not share clothes. Clothes used from a [OECs/OEPs](#)' kit store should be allocated to individuals for the duration of their residential visit. They should then be cleaned or quarantined for 72 hours. Robust record keeping and high expectations of staff and pupils are essential.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should develop robust procedures for isolating and cleaning any contaminated clothing (used by symptomatic persons or confirmed COVID-19 cases). This can include immediate cleaning of clothing or if it cannot be cleaned immediately, it should be bagged, tagged and quarantined until such time it can be cleaned. Further information is available via: [Health Protection Scotland COVID 19 guidance for non-healthcare settings](#) regarding cleaning contaminated clothing.

Changeovers

A risk assessment should be completed for changeover cleaning. This should be used to create or review an operational procedure for changeovers. Additional advice on cleaning standards and considerations for risk assessment and cleaning schedules can be found from [The Association of Scottish Self Caterers](#).

If [OEC](#) staff are not present or on call, for example at night, visiting school staff should be provided with adequate guidance and instructions to assist in effective infection prevention and control measures for departures.

6.6.2 Ventilation and heating

Using the outdoors should be maximised. [OECs](#) should as a minimum ensure adequate levels of ventilation and appropriate temperatures are maintained in line with statutory obligations.

Measures to improve ventilation are being viewed as an increasingly important mitigation when indoors.

Relevant [OEC](#) facilities management staff should examine ventilation guidance in more detail, including but not limited to:

- Scottish Government [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#);
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) [roadmap to improve and ensure good indoor ventilation in the context of COVID-19](#); and
- Scottish Government [ventilation guidance](#).

As well as natural ventilation, this may include a consideration of mechanical ventilation, fans, and CO2 monitors. Where any necessary expertise is not available within an [OEC](#), they may wish to draw on expert external advice to inform their strategies.

Natural ventilation and temperature

The primary effective method of increasing natural ventilation remains the opening of external doors, vents and windows. Wherever it is practical, safe and secure to do so, and appropriate internal temperatures can be maintained in line with statutory obligations, this approach should be adopted.

Internal fire doors should never be held open (unless assessed and provided with appropriate hold open and self-closing mechanisms which respond to the actuation of the fire alarm system). The Fire Safety risk assessment should always be reviewed before any internal doors are held open.

Potential approaches for Autumn / Winter, the suitability of which will depend on a range of local factors including weather conditions, may include:

Ventilation:

- partially opening doors and windows to provide ventilation while reducing draughts;
- opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts; and purging spaces by opening windows, vents and external doors (e.g. between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused, or at other suitable intervals if a space is occupied for long periods at a time).

Temperature:

- providing / supporting additional and appropriate clothing for all while indoors;

- adjusting session times;
- flexibility in seating to reflect individual student/staff temperature preferences (an approach which has been trialled in some schools and proven to be a useful measure when used in combination with other strategies); and
- adjusting indoor heating to compensate for cold air flow from outside (e.g. higher system settings, increased duration).

6.6.3 Physical distancing

Visits by primary school groups

On the basis of the scientific advice, and subject to all other risk mitigation measures set out in this guidance being appropriately implemented:

- there is no requirement for physical distancing **between primary pupils** of the same grouping / bubble on a residential visit by a school;
- 2m distancing **between adults not from the same household** should be maintained; and
- 2m distancing **between adults and pupils whenever possible**.

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting staff should still encourage physical distancing between pupils wherever practicable and does not impact on the safety and quality of learning.

Visits by secondary school groups

Although there is no requirement for physical distancing between secondary school pupils outwith of their existing groupings on a residential visit by a school, [OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting staff should plan and encourage physical distancing wherever safe, practicable, especially indoors and emphasise its importance along with other mitigating measures/conditions identified in this guidance plus:

- maximise outdoor working and activity;
- discourage social physical contact;
- use all available space;
- avoid sitting face to face;
- adjust activity to maximise distance; and
- adjust size of groups.

Adults must continue to apply strict 2m+ distancing when with other adults and with secondary pupils.

Practical approaches to physical distancing – use of indoor spaces

[OECs](#) and visiting schools should consider the following practical approaches to ensuring the effective implementation of physical distancing strategies for physical distancing requirements.

- Layout of rooms. Consideration may be given to how to create zones within shared rooms to maintain physical distancing.
- Careful consideration should be given to the removal of unnecessary items in rooms to maximise capacity and decrease the number of items requiring cleaning.
- Storage of these items should be considered at a local/individual setting level.

- Repurposing rooms/areas to increase capacity. Very large indoor spaces may be repurposed to accommodate multiple purposes.
- Temporary screens may be used to divide the space to provide appropriate separation between persons.
- Floor markers may be considered to ensure relevant persons queue 2m apart from each other.
- All staff rooms, bases and offices should be reconfigured to ensure the physical distancing rule of 2m is maintained.
- Ensure there are adequate handwashing and toilet facilities accessible to all. Note there may be an increased demand due to the increased frequency of hand washing.

Practical approaches to physical distancing – use of outdoor spaces

- Evidence suggests that outdoor environments can limit transmission, as well as more easily allowing for appropriate physical distancing between adults and pupils, and adults and other adults. [OECs](#) should consider providing even more activity, including briefings at the start and end of the day, outdoors. Safety in all weathers and security issues would require to be considered in each location. Additional shelter may be required.
- Select appropriate activity locations so adults and pupils can space out and maintain physical distancing.
- Modify the activity programme to avoid activities that can only operate in confined spaces.
- Modify individual activities to consider the location, task and individual needs.
- Increase shelter provision and size so that adults and pupils can space out and maintain physical distancing.

6.6.4 Minimising contacts (groupings)

[OECs/OEPs](#) should adhere to the conditions detailed in [Section 1.1](#) e.g. summer term (2021) condition of single school occupancy for visits to [OECs](#) - except for Protection Level 0 (at both school and destination) where a maximum of two schools may attend.

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting staff of primary, secondary and special school groups should keep pupils within the same groupings for the duration of the visit; mirroring existing visiting school arrangements. Consistent groups reduce the likelihood of direct transmission, allow for quicker identification of those who need to self-isolate and may reduce the overall number of children, young people and staff who need to isolate in the event of a positive test or COVID-19.

When undertaking emergency evacuations e.g. fire evacuation, [OECs/OEPs](#) should prioritise safety, but may consider muster points and whether these need to be altered to ensure a greater degree of separation. Fire risk assessments should be reviewed and updated.

Practical approaches to minimising interactions

The following practical approaches may be used to minimise interactions between groupings, including those from different schools when permitted:

- **Outdoor education staff movements.** To minimise the need for large numbers of pupil transits, it may be beneficial to keep groups of pupils in one location and have staff move to them. Reducing the amount of pupil circulation minimises contact with surfaces such as door handles which can help reduce virus spread.

- **One-way systems.** Managing pupil circulation by adopting one-way systems within corridors and stairs may help avoid bottlenecks and ease travel around the [OEC](#).
- **External circulation.** As part of an amended circulation strategy, it may be beneficial to encourage the use of outdoor areas to move between parts of the building. This would reduce the density of use of the internal areas and also provide some movement and fresh air. Outdoor one-way systems may also avoid bottlenecks in external locations that are narrow, particularly in areas that may involve queuing. Appropriate solutions would be specific to each location.
- **Soft changeovers.** Regardless of the number of transitions in a day, the density of use of circulation space may be reduced by having soft changeovers. Consideration may be given to flexibility on session start/finish times and avoids the intensity of flow which some [OECs](#) may experience i.e. all sub-groups start and finish at the same time. It also provides a calm and managed experience which better prepares staff and pupils for the next session.
- **Signage/communication.** Appropriate signage or verbal communication about the system adopted should be implemented. This will should be included during induction and orientation activity and reinforced throughout the visit.
- **Timetabling dedicated zones.** Creative timetabling has the potential to reduce interaction and thereby the transmission of infection. Some approaches that [OECs](#) may consider include the following:
 - Avoid the use of shared indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities between different separated school groups within a single school or across different schools. This should include toilet and washing facilities. Allocate dedicated rooms to different groups/schools and consider the access and exit arrangements to minimise interactions. Allocate different outdoor areas/zones, which can be timetabled. Clear signage and good communication will ensure interactions are minimised.
 - Groups being offsite throughout the programme to ensure a more even spread of offsite and onsite provision e.g. avoid all the groups being onsite on one afternoon.
 - Avoid bottlenecks at different outdoor offsite venues. This may involve reviewing offsite location and finding new sites. The safety of sessions must never be compromised by changing locations and using less suitable sites. Local negotiations with landlords may be required.
 - Minimising transitions e.g. extending activity times and reducing the number of different activities in one day. This needs to be carefully balanced between the value of minimising interaction, other safety considerations and the educational value of the experience.
- **Dining times and locations** Adequate and appropriate supervision should be planned. Arrangements in each setting may depend on whether the dining hall is used as an additional learning or meeting space (additional cleaning would then be required):
 - Staggering break and mealtimes for different groups. Include cleaning in-between groups.
 - Pre-packed cold food at lunchtimes may allow more flexibility to use indoor locations other than the dining hall and outside. Food should be delivered to an allocated space rather than pupils and staff lining up at a central location. Robust hygiene arrangements should be adhered to.
 - Limiting the number of staff using staffrooms and bases at any one time. Numbers will naturally be less than usual if staggered lunch/break times are implemented.

- Timetable social times and allocate indoor and outdoor spaces to minimise interaction. Good signage and communication will minimise risks.
- **Allocation of [OEC](#) staff.** Assigning one multi-activity instructor to one sub-group or within a group for the duration of the visit significantly reduces interactions across separated school groups. The safety of activity sessions should never be compromised, and staff must be competent to supervise an activity. Adjustments may need to be made to the range of activities available or to individual activity. Interactions between instructors assigned to different separate groups should be minimised whenever possible. This may for example include separate safety-briefings at the start and end of each day.

Evacuation

If the layout of facilities is changed, and/or circulation routes or entry/exit points are altered, consideration should be given to evacuation procedures (e.g. in the event of a fire or other incident). Creating longer and/or more complex evacuation routes should be avoided. Muster points should also be considered to maximise appropriate separation and minimise interaction as far as practically possible. This should be included as part of the fire risk assessment for the [OEC](#). Evacuation arrangements for pupils with complex needs or disabilities should be reviewed in light of any changes.

Arrival and departure

Staggered arrival and departure times, good circulation, clear signage and good communication including appropriate pre-visit information and liaison should minimise risks. Large gatherings of people should be avoided and appropriate physical distancing maintained.

Toileting provision

This should involve allocating specific facilities to certain groups for the duration of the visit. There should be clear signage and good communication to visiting school staff and pupils. If some sharing of facilities cannot be avoided, then this should be risk assessed and robust mitigating measures implemented. This may include timetabling and robust cleaning in-between use.

OECs/OEPs staff facilities

[OECs/OEPs](#) staff should be consulted in organising appropriate facilities and provision. Dedicated washing and toilet facilities for centre staff should be provided with clear signage. Visiting staff and pupils should know to avoid these facilities. Two metre physical distancing should be maintained in toileting facilities and good personal hygiene followed. If the sharing of washing facilities such as showers cannot be avoided, this should be risk assessed and robust mitigating measures implemented. This may include timetabling and robust cleaning in-between use.

6.6.5 Physical distancing and minimising contacts for adults

Two metre physical distancing between adults, and between adults and pupils who are not from the same household should be maintained.

This includes visitors to the [OEC](#) e.g. contractors, delivery people etc. Visitors whilst schools in attendance should be strictly limited only to those that are necessary to support the running of the [OEC](#). Scheduling visits when school groups are not on site, in buildings or not in residence is an effective way of minimising risks.

6.6.6 PPE and other protective barrier measures

[OECs/OEPs](#) should use the [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) (116 – 122) and [Health Protection Scotland COVID 19 guidance for non-healthcare settings](#) to review and implement arrangements for the use of COVID-19 related PPE.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should liaise with visiting schools to meet the needs of pupils with more complex needs.

Specific guidance has been developed and published for first responders ([COVID-19: guidance for first responders](#)) who, as part of their normal roles, provide immediate assistance requiring close contact until further medical assistance arrives. This guidance sets out clearly what a first responder is required to do if they come into close contact with someone as part of their first responder duties. It covers the use of PPE and CPR. [OECs/OEPs](#) should consider this guidance when reviewing and updating their first aid risk assessment. [OECs/OEPs](#) should also select appropriate outdoor first aid training that includes opportunities to discuss and practice COVID-19 adjustments.

Risk assessments should already exist for pupils with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments should be updated for a visit to an OEC.

The types of PPE required in specific circumstances are set out below:

Routine activities	No PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities.
Suspected COVID-19	See Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools paragraph 122.
Intimate care and Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff if they are looking after a child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and 2m distancing cannot be maintained while doing so.• If the child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 needs direct personal care, gloves, aprons and a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff.• Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.• Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

6.6.7 Face coverings

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting staff should apply the latest [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) phase specific and general advice for the use of face coverings – paragraphs 123 – 144. Use of face coverings should be considered alongside delivering activity safely i.e. non COVID-19 safety considerations.

Key points include but not limited to:

- Face coverings are not required outdoors if 2m physical distancing can be maintained.
- Anyone (whether adult or pupil) wishing to wear a face covering should be permitted to do so.

- Some individuals are exempt. Further information on exemptions can be found in wider [Scottish Government guidance](#).
- Face coverings should be worn by adults wherever they cannot keep 2m distance with other adults and/or pupils (should be minimised as much as possible e.g. for emergencies).
- Face coverings should be worn by visitors.
- Those supporting children with Additional Support Needs, who may routinely have to work within two metres should wear face coverings as a general rule (see [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) paragraph 134).
- Face coverings should not be considered as PPE.

6.6.8 Testing (asymptomatic, symptomatic and close contact testing)

Asymptomatic testing using lateral flow devices (LFDs) - testing if you do not have symptoms

Regular testing using LFDs, also known as rapid tests, helps to find positive cases in people who have no symptoms, but who are still infectious. If people who test positive self-isolate, the chain of transmission can be broken and limit the spread of COVID-19.

- The asymptomatic school testing programme using LFDs is for all school staff and secondary pupils. Some [OECs/OEPs](#) may be accessing this and should continue to do so.
- Free, fast and regular testing for people who do not have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) is available to everyone in Scotland: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): getting tested in Scotland](#).

[OECs/OEPs](#) should ensure staff know about LFD testing and consider how LFD testing is used along with other mitigations to reduce transmission and infection risks. Developing a robust internal arrangement for reporting positive results is an important part of responding quickly to managing transmission and infection risks (as well as reporting positive and negative results via the NHS online portal).

Asymptomatic testing is an additional measure and should not replace other mitigations set out in this guidance. Additionally, asymptomatic adults and secondary pupils who receive negative LFD test results must not regard themselves or behave as if they are free from infection.

Symptomatic testing

Symptomatic persons should not use LFD tests and must not attend work. They must access a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test as per their usual symptomatic testing channel. If a symptomatic person has used a LFD test and has returned a negative result, they must still self-isolate and arrange a PCR test. Effective communication between line managers and staff is essential.

When close contacts of any confirmed COVID case are identified through Test and Protect, they are now asked to get tested as soon as possible. Close contacts will be asked to book a PCR test through the UK booking portal.

Further guidance is available via [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): getting tested in Scotland](#) and [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) (paragraphs 145 – 151).

6.6.9 Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms and confirmed COVID case management

Everyone should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and to understand what actions they should take if someone develops them, either onsite or offsite.

The most common symptoms are:

- New continuous cough.
- Fever/high temperature.
- Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

It is essential that people do not attend a residential visit or attend work if symptomatic or have an asymptomatic positive test (LFD) result.

Guiding principles to support the response to COVID-19 symptoms:

- Everyone, including pupils, should know they must inform a member of staff if they feel unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Physical distancing is maintained – 2 metres plus wherever possible.
- The symptomatic person should wear a face covering wherever possible.
- Those displaying symptoms should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in a bin.
- Visiting schools and [OECs/OEPs](#) need to ensure a member of staff is available support an affected individual where required.
- Staff should liaise to find somewhere safe for a symptomatic person to sit which is least 2 metres away from other people.
- Where possible and if onsite, a separate bathroom should be designated for the individual to use.
- Waste bin or bag, and spare tissues and alcohol-based sanitiser available.
- Guidance on use of PPE is followed (see [Section 6.6.6](#)).
- Advice on cleaning of premises after a person who potentially has COVID-19 has left the premises /area can be found in the [Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#). Arrangements should be known by staff and incorporated into plans and risk assessments.
- Individuals should wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell (see [Section 6.6.1.1](#)).

Planning

[OECs/OEPs](#) and schools/local authorities should undertake planning and produce guidance to ensure their staff know what to do when someone is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 and a positive COVID-19 case is reported. This should be incorporated into incident management planning via exploring different scenarios.

Practical ideas include but not limited to:

- [OECs/OEPs](#) can liaise with client local authorities and their local Health Protection Boards (HPTs) to develop suitable and sufficient plans, which are incorporated into incident management plans.
- Local authorities should develop guidance for schools in dealing with symptomatic school staff and pupils and COVID-19 confirmed cases whilst on a residential visit. This can include key contact persons and contingency plans/options for transporting pupils and staff who are

symptomatic or confirmed COVID-19 cases back to their homes (on the approval and advice of local HPTs). Some local authorities are addressing this by putting in place dedicated transport solutions for specific scenarios / contexts.

- Pre-identifying dedicated rooms or areas which can be ventilated where affected persons can be safely isolated.
- Put in place an effective record system to support contact tracing. This will include access to past rotas and programmes so that potential close contacts can be identified and contacted. Implementing a reporting process for staff to record ad-hoc close contacts e.g. emergency situations will aid identifying persons.
- Plans are tested with staff using different onsite and offsite scenarios including these considerations:
 - Transport solution for returning a person undertaking offsite activity back to a centre (maintaining physical distancing wherever possible and appropriate supervision).
 - Different times including at night [OECs/OEPs](#).
 - Symptomatic persons with more than minor symptoms, and ensuring .

Test and protect and outbreak management

The effective application of [Test and Protect](#) on a residential visit will be an important means of preventing any spread of the virus. The management of single cases, clusters and outbreaks of COVID-19 is led by the local Health Protection Team (HPT) and in educational settings this occurs inclusively alongside local partners such as schools, local authorities and should also include [OECs/OEPs](#) for residential visits by schools.

All educational establishments are considered complex settings and cases will be prioritised and escalated to specialist HPTs. The key initial step is the self-isolation and rapid testing of all symptomatic persons.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should ensure that they understand the Test and Protect process and now how to contact their local Health Protection Team (HPT). [OECs/OEPs](#) should liaise with their local HPT who will assess what action is needed. They may also need to liaise with the visiting school's local HPT.

[OECs/OEPs](#) and local authorities should consider developing their incident management plans in consultation and partnership with their local HPT. This will allow schools, local authorities and OECs/OEPs to consider different scenarios and potential responses in preparation for actual COVID-19 cases.

6.6.10 Special considerations for certain groups

6.6.10.1 Support for children and young people with Additional Support Needs

Every child and young person will have different levels of required support. For pupils with Additional Support Needs, visiting schools should work in a timely manner in partnership with parents/carers, lead professionals, pupils and [OEC/OEP](#) staff to establish what support, mitigations and plans need to be put in place to meet their needs for the visit.

It will be important as part of the risk assessments carried out to consider the individual needs of a child or young person. 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), and regularly wash their hands before and after contact. Guidance on [supporting children and young people with complex additional support needs](#) is published by the Scottish Government.

[OECs/OEPs](#) may consider contacting appropriate staff from visiting school local authorities to be proactive in planning for supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs on residential visits. This will allow plans to be developed and may include workforce learning and development.

6.6.10.2 Support for anxious children, young people, families and staff

This has been a time of considerable change and there will undoubtedly be moments of anxiety. Some may be anxious about the prospect of residential visits.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should consider how they can reassure [OECs/OEPs](#) parents/carers and pupils prior to their visit. This will help to overcome barriers and maximise the number of pupils attending. Visiting staff may also be anxious and it is important for school leaders to engage with staff early and to liaise with local authority staff and [OECs/OEPs](#) to address questions and concerns. A similar approach should be adopted by [OECs/OEPs](#) for their staff.

Practical approaches may include:

- Regular dialogue with staff, identifying concerns and solutions.
- Working closely with schools and local authority staff to identify specific challenges and solutions.
- Online resources including easy to read steps taken by [OECs/OEPs](#) to minimise risks.
- Online pre-visit workshops for parents/carers and pupils involving school and [OEC/OEP](#) staff.
- Case studies of schools who have visited since the restart of residential visits by [OECs/OEPs](#); sharing their experiences, lessons learned and outcomes.
- Local authority wide communication to families detailing the importance of residential stays and the steps taken to minimise risks.

6.6.10.3 Other groups

The [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) (paragraphs 188 – 220) provides information on other groups including those on the shielding list (highest clinical risk); have underlying health conditions; considerations related to pregnancy; and support for minority ethnic staff.

It is important that these groups are engaged with and employer individual risk assessment processes are used to support those in the groups above.

7 OEP/OEC Operations

7.1 Health and Safety Check

If an [OEC](#) has been closed for many weeks/months or if parts of the building have been out of use for a long period, the centre should undertake a health and safety check of the building and outdoor areas concerned and deep cleaning prior to reopening where necessary.

[OECs](#) may consider using guidance from The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE): [Emerging From Lockdown Safely Re-Occupying Buildings](#) and [sportscotland](#).

7.2 First aid

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting schools should review their first aid needs to ensure they can provide the cover needed for persons that are present onsite and offsite and the activities that they are doing. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance covers [first aid requirements in non-healthcare settings](#) during the outbreak, as well as first aid cover and qualifications.

Exploring different scenarios with staff helps to prepare them for actual situations.

See also [Section 6.6.6 PPE and other protective barrier measures](#).

7.3 Food operations (preparation and dining)

[Food Standards Scotland advice](#) is designed to assist businesses in following government guidance on infection prevention and control measures against COVID-19. It has been produced with input from the food industry and Trade Unions and reflects the most up to date advice from Scottish and UK Government and Health Protection Scotland.

[OECs/OEPs](#) staff should check this advice and the Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings](#) guidance regularly and update their practice appropriately.

For any self-catering led by visiting school staff the [OECs/OEPs](#) should provide adequate guidance and instructions to assist in effective infection prevention and control measures.

Based on the available information, three risks have been identified by Food Standards Scotland:

1. Risk from contaminated food – evidence suggests that the risk from contaminated food is very low. It is highly unlikely coronavirus can be spread through food however as with other infections good hygiene practices should be followed in food preparation.
2. Risk from infected food handlers – evidence suggest the main mechanism of transmission is considered to be human to human. All food workers should ensure the necessary personal and environmental controls are in place to prevent the transmission of pathogens through food, food preparation surfaces or food packaging, in line with their business' Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP).
3. Risk from contaminated food contact materials - evidence suggests that the risk from food contact materials is very low. Good hygienic practices should already be in place during the manufacturing stages to significantly reduce the risk of contaminating any food contact materials and articles.

It is always important to follow good hygiene practice when handling food, taking the following precautions to prevent the spread of infection:

- Washing hands thoroughly throughout the preparation of food, in particular: after coughing or sneezing; after going to the toilet; and before eating and drinking.
- Hand sanitiser gels can be used in addition to hand washing, but they only work on clean hands. They should not normally be used as a substitute to hand washing. If this is unavoidable, such as for handling packed lunches offsite, appropriate sanitiser should be used to minimise risks. Pupils and staff should not share food.
- Minimise whenever possible direct hand contact with food by using tongs and utensils. Gloves can be used to minimise direct contact with food. However, gloves can become

contaminated with bacteria in the same way as hands so are not a substitute for good personal hygiene and hand washing.

- Ensuring any crockery and cutlery in shared kitchen areas is cleaned with warm general-purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use.
- Avoiding leaving food stuffs (e.g. crisps, open sandwiches) exposed and open for communal sharing unless individually wrapped.

For the routine operation of [OECs/OEPs](#) facilities and operations, standard procedures can be used for cleaning cutlery and crockery.

To minimise interaction and infection risks visiting school groups may decide not to use offsite sit-in restaurants or equivalent.

For whole-day activity sessions packed lunches may be taken offsite. [OECs/OEPs](#), visiting school staff and pupils should follow good hygiene practice at all times when handling food as detailed above.

7.4 Planned learning activities, including sport and physical activity

The [Getting Outside During COVID-19 Active Outside](#) webpages may assist [OECs/OEPs](#) by bringing together current national advice and outdoor organisations to help them decide where to go and what to do.

7.4.1 General Considerations for Activity Sessions

The safety of the activity should not be compromised. If by applying COVID-19 measures to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus means the activity is deemed too high risk, then the [OECs/OEPs](#) should modify the activity or cancel it. Modifying an activity may involve changing the task, location, timing, equipment and supervision.

Standard operating procedures and risk assessment should be reviewed, modified and implemented to reduce the risk of transmission and infection. [OECs/OEPs](#) may consider creating an overarching risk assessment to include general COVID-19 risks and controls and / or provide specific COVID-19 mitigations within existing documents unique to that activity.

Outdoor activity. The use of outdoor activity should be maximised. Scientific advice is that transmission risks are very low in the outdoors. There are no restrictions on the length of time staff and pupils can be outside. There are no limits on the number of activities that pupils can do in a day.

Maximise adult physical distancing. Maintain two metre physical distancing between adults and adults and adults and pupils. When this is not possible, have appropriate mitigating measures in place, which should include a face covering, and ensure that time spent within 2 metres of applicable individuals is kept to an absolute minimum. [OECs/OEPs](#) should devise a method of recording potential close contacts to support contact tracing if required.

Reducing interaction. If possible, allocate staff to the school group for the duration of the visit. Pupil and staff interaction across separated school groups should be reduced as much as possible.

Personal hygiene. Everyone should adopt an increased emphasis on hand hygiene and cleaning. Regular hand washing should be required for everyone. If offsite away from hand-washing facilities, alcohol based hand-sanitiser should be used regularly and especially before eating food.

Sharing of activity equipment. Sharing of equipment across groups should be avoided where possible. Activity equipment should be allocated to groups whenever reasonably practicable. If

sharing of equipment is unavoidable, a standard cleaning schedule should be put in place and enforced for cleaning between groups of pupils using it. Where cleaning of equipment is not possible or contrary to manufacturers guidance emphasis should be on hand washing before and after use, while encouraging participants to avoid contact with the face and mouth ([Section 6.6.1.2](#)).

Activity locations. When selecting activity onsite and offsite locations, where possible the preference should be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces. Interaction with other school groups and members of the public should be avoided. This should involve timetabling of activity and the appropriate selection of activity locations to minimise risks.

Meeting needs. Liaise with visiting school staff to understand pupil and visiting staff needs. This will assist the instructor in make reasonable adjustments to the activity. This should be considered in advance of the activity and dynamically assessed throughout the activity.

Plan, prepare, deliver and review. Activity providers should consider adjusting activity time in order to implement essential COVID-19 specific measures including robust cleaning schedules. Visiting school staff undertaking self-led activity should be adequately inducted and briefed about essential COVID-19 specific measures. Feedback should be reviewed regularly with adjustments made to minimise risks.

Emergency first aid treatment. Outdoor residential visit providers should review first aid procedures in line with the latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice for [first aiders](#) and in consultation with competent organisations. Outdoor residential visit providers may undertake supplementary in-house training with their staff to ensure first aid requirements meet the COVID 19 environment.

Consideration of others. Planning and delivery should be mindful of the potential impact activity could have on other users of offsite locations, local communities and local emergency services.

7.4.2 Activity-specific guidance

Additionally, [OECs/OEPs](#) should regularly review sport and activity national governing bodies or equivalent activity-specific advice. [OECs/OEPs](#) need to consider the [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) alongside this advice to ensure compliance with school operations.

sportscotland has published [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and resources](#) which provides website links for sport governing bodies and [Coronavirus \(COVID 19\) & Sport FAQ](#).

7.5 Facilities management

Any maintenance work carried out should adhere to the principles of key public health measures to prevent and respond to infections in [Section 6.6](#).

Facilities management staff should consider reconfiguring layouts and marking out zones. If facilities staff cannot adhere to the principles of physical distancing, then consideration should be given to possible mitigation measures to minimise the closeness and duration of time that is spent within 2 metres, including the use of face coverings. A risk assessment should be undertaken.

If spaces are to be used in different ways from those originally designed/intended, and with less/more overall footfall, consideration should be given to the ongoing facilities management of these spaces.

7.6 Early supplier engagement and deliveries

[OECs/OEPs](#) may consider the following:

Suppliers; undertake early engagement with suppliers to understand order windows to secure supply of goods and services which are essential to its day to day operation.

Deliveries; a risk assessment and procedures in place for deliveries to minimise person-to-person contact. Deliveries should be timed to avoid when visiting groups are onsite or if this is not possible to avoid key transition times, with methods devised to reduce the frequency of deliveries e.g. ordering larger quantities less often. Provide appropriate hand hygiene facilities at drop off points, with clear signage on access rules.

7.7 Transport

7.7.1 between the school and OEC

Scottish Government guidance on offsite school visits ([Section 2.1.1](#)) requires local authorities and schools to ensure any travel arrangements follow latest guidance as set out in the [Scottish Government's Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#).

Schools should check and adhere to their latest local authority employer guidance regarding travel arrangements for offsite visits.

School transport dedicated services, such as dedicated coaches and minibuses, should be regarded as an extension of the school estate.

The journey to and from the outdoor centre or expedition venue, including stops, should be risk assessed and consider the following:

Important mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Hand sanitising should be required for everyone on every entry to dedicated school transport.

Pupils and adults should be assigned seats which they use consistently throughout the journey; and that the consumption – and especially the sharing – of food and drink (including snacks) is not allowed.

Any adults travelling by dedicated school transport should conform to the requirements for public transport and local authority requirements. Visiting schools will need to liaise with transport suppliers in accordance with local authority arrangements to ensure there is sufficient capacity and physical distancing for adults is maintained.

Some pupils with Additional Support Needs require adult carers to travel with them, often in close proximity. In general, it is advised that these adults should be very alert to symptoms and should wear face coverings as a general rule. However, this should be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child, recognising that face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children. Any measures should be part of the pre-visit planning process.

Drivers, adults and pupils should follow general hygiene guidance throughout the journey. Where hand washing is not possible hand sanitiser should be used regularly throughout the journey, in particular during toilet and eating stops and after performing any tasks that involve touching a surface that may have been touched by someone else.

7.7.2 OECs/OEPs transport

[OECs/OEPs](#) transport refers for vehicles such as minibuses which are used solely for the purpose of transporting visitors during their residential visit. Where journeys in these vehicles are reserved for the exclusive use of staff and pupils from a single visiting school, they can be treated in the same way as dedicated school transport (see [Section 7.7.1](#)). However, robust cleaning schedules and routines should be used to clean vehicles in-between different groups and drivers. Good record-keeping and staff training will ensure guidance is adhered to. The use of dedicated transport should be risk assessed as a matter of course.

7.8 Workforce development

Initial and ongoing training is essential to build a common understanding of requirements within the new working norm and instil confidence that changes made will contribute to a safe working environment.

Workforce planning and training should be implemented across the [OECs/OEPs](#) operation with particular focus on 'skill fade'. Skill fade is recognised by national governing bodies and other organisations e.g. [Mountain Training – Skills Fade](#). Training should be documented and recorded as part of workforce planning and development.

[OECs/OEPs](#) should consider a re-opening induction process for all staff covering new public health measures. This will demonstrate how [OECs/OEPs](#) have adapted their working environment to manage COVID-19 risks. This should increase workforce and visiting schools' confidence; communicating that the workplace is safe while also being clear on individual employee and visitor responsibilities.

Staff should be consulted in their training needs at the start and during the recovery and renewal process. Training programmes can then be adjusted to best meet the needs of the workforce.

Each [OEP/OEC](#) may choose to have a COVID-19 Officer identified within the work force and have completed training such as [Sport Scotland has COVID-19 Officer E-Learning](#) module. sportscotland has published advice Getting Coaches Ready for sport via their Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and resources which will help providers prepare the workforce for return to sports delivery.

7.9 Temporary staff

The simultaneous use of tertiary/casual/freelance/self-employed/sessional/ transient staff working with different [OECs/OEPs](#) clearly presents a higher risk of transmission to and between providers, school groupings/bubbles and staff teams. [OECs/OEPs](#) should whenever reasonably practicably aim to employ these staff for grouping/bubble visit blocks of dedicated working. This will reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. However, like schools, it must be assumed that temporary and supply staff may be an essential response to sudden reduced staffing due to self-isolation or reduced industry workforce capacity. Consideration should be given to COVID-19 testing for

peripatetic and transient staff to reduce the risk of transmission between settings. Activities should not be undertaken without adequate supervision by competent persons.

7.10 Significant occurrences

OEC and visiting schools should review their significant occurrence plans, procedures and resources to incorporate COVID-19 related significant occurrences.

7.11 Expeditions involving camping – additional considerations

7.11.1 Remote supervision

- Expeditions involving remote supervision, staff should ensure as part of the pre-expedition check that all participants adhere to COVID-19 mitigations identified in policies and any risk assessment.
- Supervisors shall be responsible for briefing participants, monitoring compliance with the policy / risk assessment and intervening in the event these are not being adhered to.
- During an expedition, supervisor/s shall monitor whether remote supervision is appropriate and shall be responsible for adopting direct or close supervision should there be a concern about non-compliance with the policy / risk assessment.

7.11.2 Tents

- All tents must be single occupancy. Exception – see [Section 2.1](#): visits involving boarding schools.
- Single occupancy should be risk assessed and include identifying non-COVID risks and potential mitigations to determine if this approach is deliverable.
- Campsites should be monitored to ensure that COVID-19 mitigations are maintained, including maximising physical distancing. It is acceptable for participants to work together to put up tents, but they must do so with care for maximising the distance between them and use hand sanitiser after touching another participant's equipment.
- To avoid weight becoming prohibitive with insufficient smaller tents available, additional tents may be taken to the camp by vehicle, and expeditions should be planned with this in mind.

7.11.3 Outdoor cooking

- Participants do not need to wear face coverings whilst at camp and cooking but they should be mindful to limit touching, wash hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitising gel etc (taking care not to be naked flames).
- Participants (and staff) should use separate stoves, plates, mugs, and cutlery.
- To avoid weight becoming prohibitive, additional stoves and gas may be taken to the camp by vehicle, and expeditions should be planned with this in mind.

7.11.4 Limited facilities to wash hands

- All participants should carry, and keep ready to use, alcohol-based hand sanitiser. This should be used throughout the day, whenever surfaces must be touched, prior to and after eating.
- Plenty of hand soap and water should be available at campsites (5 litre bottles of water or similar, biodegradable soap if possible, or a suitable drainage area identified) and all participants to wash hands thoroughly in the evening after tents are up and dinner completed, and in the morning once tents are put away and the group are ready to leave, as a minimum.

7.11.5 Journeying

- All participants to carry alcohol-based hand sanitiser and keep this accessible.
- All groups to be briefed on how to minimise risk when using gates etc. at start of expedition and reminded where needed by leaders.
- When using gates, minimise how many participants must contact the surfaces by having one person open the gate, prop it open (using rucksack or similar), stand back to allow everyone to come past whilst maintaining distancing, then close gate.
- Anyone who touches a gate / stile etc. should sanitise their hands both before doing so, and again afterwards.

7.11.6 Reporting and managing symptoms

- In the event that an individual taking part experiences symptoms indicative of COVID-19, the responsible Supervisor shall follow the procedure below. In circumstances where an instructor experiences symptom another instructor or accompanying adult should substitute and take responsibility for the following procedure:
- Participants within the expedition group and the instructor attending to the casualty, should wear a facemask.
- The person experiencing symptoms should be separated from the rest of the group in a space that is well ventilated.
- First aid should be administered as appropriate; for example, keeping the individual comfortable, sheltered from the weather etc. Tissues used as appropriate to catch coughs and sneezes.
- Arrangements should be made for the person experiencing symptoms to be taken home. The base contact should be informed.
- The instructor attending to the casualty and any other participants that have been in close contact with the casualty should wash their hands and wash any surfaces or equipment as appropriate (e.g. pots and pans) with soap and water.
- Lead staff should assess whether to continue with the expedition or to abandon the expedition and arrange for the transportation of the participants back to base.
- The instructor shall write up an incident report to be shared with appropriate agencies as required.

7.11.7 The Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition Flexibilities

A list of flexibilities for DofE expeditions is available via [Appendix 2](#) or check for the latest version via: <https://www.dofe.org/dofewithadifference/expedition-flexibilities>. These flexibilities will be available until 31st December 2022.

7.12 Communication and feedback

[OECs/OEPs](#) should ensure regular, timely and clear communication with their visiting schools. This should make visiting staff feel informed and confident about their visit.

Visiting schools should communicate appropriate information to parents/carers to facilitate their confidence in the visit and to provide suitable opportunities to answer any questions.

Centres should listen to feedback from their staff and visiting staff and pupils. This should be used to further develop practice and procedures.

7.13 Incident Reporting

[OECs/OEPs](#) and visiting school staff should know procedures for reporting COVID-19 related incidents, including near misses and report to HSE under RIDDOR as required. Incident reporting is an important part of ensuring practice is reviewed and developed. Lessons learned should be embedded into the regular review of risk assessments and arrangements for residential visits.

7.14 Terms and Conditions and Visiting Group Insurance

This is a key area for [OECs/OEPs](#) and local authorities to work collaboratively and reasonably to minimise financial risks to both parties and to ensure pupils can attend and benefit from high quality residential visits.

- Many [OECs/OEPs](#) have already amended their terms and conditions relating to pandemics and COVID-19 in particular. They are willing to work in partnership and be flexible with schools/local authorities to further negotiate terms and conditions if adjustments are required.
- Local authorities should consider developing processes that proactively engage with [OECs/OEPs](#) and check that terms and conditions meet a required and reasonable threshold / set of conditions. This should assist in mitigating financial risks associated with local authority insurance arrangements that do not cater for cancellations due to pandemics. Early action will reduce the lag time in reopening of provision and actual visits.
- Local authorities should develop guidance for schools regarding 2021/22 academic year bookings. This may include updated information and resources for schools about who they can book with; insurance (what is and what is not catered for); understanding the contract relationship and liabilities between parents/carers, the school and the provider; and guidance on what information and advice should be shared with parents/families.

- Local authorities should continue to bring colleagues from different business/service areas, including outdoor learning (local authority SAPOE members), legal, insurance and finance together to overcome challenges and create manageable plans and systems for the future. Engagement with frequently used [OECs/OEPs](#) can facilitate this further.

Early action will support significant progress in enabling schools to confirm bookings or make new bookings, and in turn allows [OECs/OEPs](#) and schools to plan and deliver safe and high-quality residential visits.

National discussions and engagement with partners continue and sharing good practice across local authorities is welcomed and will be facilitated. This aims to maximise consistency across Scotland.

7.15 Residential for all

All those involved in the planning and delivery of school residential visits should work together to support the inclusion of all. COVID-19 has presented additional challenges, and it is important the sector works to overcome challenges to ensure every young person has the opportunity to benefit from a high-quality residential visit.

7.16 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Effective monitoring, evaluation and review are important parts of a health and safety culture and will minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. [OECs/OEPs](#) should have robust management systems which enable continuous improvement.

Appendix 1 Related and linked guidance and support

SAPOE [The Educational Value of Scotland's Outdoor Education Centres 2020](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#)

[Health Protection Scotland COVID 19 guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)

[Health and Safety making your workplace COVID-secure during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

[The Association of Scottish Self Caterers](#)

[Coronavirus COVID-19 guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) Annex D provides a comprehensive up to date list of related guidance and links.

Appendix 2 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expedition Flexibilities

From the [Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Expedition Flexibilities](#):

With social distancing restrictions seeming likely to remain in place in one way or another for some time, we've made a number of temporary rule changes to the Expedition section. These changes will help LOs and AAPs to run expeditions to support new cohorts of participants and those young people whose expeditions have been delayed. This may be outside the 'usual' expedition season – although it's worth noting that DofE expeditions can always be run at any point of the year.

1. Bronze participants who progress to Silver will be able to use their Silver practice expedition as their qualifying expedition at Bronze, enabling them to achieve both their Bronze and Silver Awards. This expedition must meet the minimum requirements of the Silver practice expedition (two days and two nights). Participants wishing to do a combined Silver/Bronze expedition must meet the age requirements of the higher level (they must be in the year group in which their peers turn 15) and they must be enrolled at Silver. Similarly, **Silver participants who progress to Gold will be able to use their Gold practice expedition as their qualifying expedition at Silver**. This expedition must meet the requirements of the Silver qualifying expedition (three days and two nights). In addition, participants wishing to do a combined Gold/Silver expedition must meet the age requirements of the higher level (they must be at least 16 years old) and they must be enrolled at Gold.

As practice expeditions are not under qualifying conditions, combined expeditions will not require an Accredited Expedition Assessor, but we recommend that an Assessor is present if possible. In order to ensure the outcomes of the section are met if an Assessor is not present, the Expedition Supervisor for the practice expedition must provide a short statement which is added as 'evidence' (not an Assessor's Report) to the participant's Expedition section in eDofE. This statement will confirm that the practice expedition has been completed and used for the participant's qualifying expedition, and that the outcomes of the Expedition section have been met as best they can.

If centres have mixed teams with some participants completing just the qualifying expedition and some participants completing a combined practice/qualifying expedition, minimum team numbers will still need to be met. This may mean that some participants have an extra night beyond the duration of a Bronze qualifying expedition (for a Silver/Bronze hybrid) or an extra day beyond the duration of a Gold practice expedition (for a Gold/Silver hybrid).

Practice expeditions are an important part of the preparation and training participants carry out to ensure that they can undertake a safe and enjoyable remotely supervised expedition. For that reason, all Gold and Silver participants will still have to do both a practice and qualifying expedition.

2. At Silver and Gold level, practice expeditions and qualifying expeditions can be delivered 'back to back'.

3. We've relaxed the rules around recommended environments, so participants don't have to leave their local area to complete an expedition. This means that Gold expeditions can take place outside of wild country.

Additionally, participants can complete an expedition in an urban environment in their local area. It may be appropriate for participants to spend a greater proportion of time investigating their aim, and they should plan to travel through a range of environments e.g. parkland, commons and waterways. If these environments do not permit the use of a stove, participants could be transported to/from a location, such as their school or youth group grounds, where they can cook a hot meal at an appropriate time during the expedition. For example, on a Bronze expedition this might be at the end of the first day before participants go home to sleep.

As the normal terrain requirements have been relaxed, it is possible to take all levels of teams to the same location. However, you must consider whether it is safe and practical to do so (for example, each team will still need to meet the appropriate duration requirements), whether you have obtained the appropriate permissions from your Licensed Organisation (LO), and the potential pressure on campsites and other facilities.

In addition, teams can journey in terrain that is familiar to them. This could be where they did a previous level or undertook training walks or a practice expedition. However, expeditions should still be a fun and challenging experience for all participants. Therefore, new routes and campsites, even if they are within familiar or 'pre-used' areas, should be used if possible.

4. Leaders can use motorised transport to take participants to the start point of their route and pick them up at their end point. Travel to and from the expedition location each day is additional to the required hours of activity time.

5. Teams at all Award levels are allowed to return home to sleep during their expedition. They should, however, still plan and cook their meals as a team, and of course meet the minimum hours of planned activity during each day. Expeditions must be self-sufficient so, even though participants are going home to sleep, they need to carry appropriate expedition kit. Participants should carry some form of shelter and warmth in case of emergency, although this could be a survival shelter rather than a tent. Participants should also carry all food and clothing that they will need for the whole expedition.

Alternatively, if you have permission to use your school field (or any other area) for camping, then this is acceptable under the new temporary flexibilities. Journeying from, and returning to, the same camping area each night is also allowed.

6. Expedition Assessors for Silver and Gold levels can be known to the group. This includes helping run the DofE group or supporting expedition training – although they must still be an Accredited Assessor.

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