



Guidance for Hackney Education staff visiting schools and early years settings during the coronavirus pandemic

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Head of HR
Jo Larkin

Operations Lead
Lolita Brown

Hackney Education
1 Reading Lane
London E8 1GQ
T. 020 8820 7000
E. info@hackney.gov.uk

education.hackney.gov.uk
hackneyservicesforschools.co.uk

1. Who is this guide for?

- Schools and early years settings staff in the London Borough of Hackney.
- Hackney Education staff or appropriate stakeholders visiting a school or an early years setting to support children or staff .

2. About this guidance

This guidance applies to all Hackney Education staff and relevant stakeholders from 8th March who may visit schools and/or early years settings as part of their work.

This guidance is in line with the government guidance for the reopening of schools from 8th March: [Schools coronavirus \(COVID - 19\) operational guidance](#).

Hackney Education recommends that visits to schools continue to be carefully considered, in terms of:

- **The purpose of the meeting (is it necessary/important?)**
- **The meeting cannot be carried out as effectively using alternative methods**
- **The meeting can be carried out in line with the [systems of controls](#) of the school and the guidance outlined in this document**

This coronavirus pandemic requires us to adapt some of our working practices to reduce the risk of transmitting the coronavirus (COVID-19) to children and staff.

Hackney Education and schools and early years settings should work together to consider a balance between carrying out the services that usually require them to meet in person whilst minimising any risks from coronavirus. This means each opportunity to meet should be considered on a case by case basis in line with current government guidance and the guidance outlined in this document.

This guidance has been written so that schools and early years settings and Hackney Education staff are aware of the latest official national guidance on how to reduce the risk of contracting or transmitting the virus that causes Covid-19 when meeting in a school or early years setting or an outside space.

Please note: as government guidance is frequently updated, often at short notice, this guidance may need to be adapted on a regular basis. Schools, settings and Hackney Education staff are advised to check on Aspire or the Services for Schools website regularly to ensure that they are referring to the most current version of this guidance.

3. Introduction

In line with current [Schools coronavirus \(COVID - 19\) operational guidance](#), the current Government guidance is:

Supply staff and other temporary or peripatetic staff can move between schools. Such staff and visitors must follow your school's arrangements for managing and minimising risk based on the [system of controls](#). They should also have access to information on the safety arrangements and be provided with this as soon as possible after the booking.

This also applies to other temporary staff and volunteers working in schools such as:

- *support staff working on a supply basis*
- *peripatetic staff such as music tutors and sports coaches*
- *those working in before and after school clubs*

There is further guidance in [Schools coronavirus \(COVID - 19\) operational guidance:systems of controls](#).

'Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual. They, as well as supply teachers, peripatetic teachers or other temporary staff, can move between settings. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Such specialists will be aware of the PPE most appropriate for their role.

They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Such specialists will be aware of the PPE most appropriate for their role. Schools should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, catering staff and deliveries, as well as cleaning staff on site who may be working throughout the school and across different groups. This will require close co-operation between schools and the other relevant employers.

You should have discussions with key contractors about the school's control measures and ways of working. They should ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen safely outside of school hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors with sufficient detail to support rapid contact tracing if required by NHS Test and Trace.

Hackney Education staff and stakeholders who are visiting schools and early years settings should participate in lateral flow testing (please see Section 7 for further details).

Hackney Education recommends visits to schools and early years settings by Hackney Education staff and other stakeholders are carried out only if they are regarded as necessary or important, cannot be carried out as effectively using alternative methods and with authorisation from their line manager. (please see Section 4 for further information on the types of visits that **may** be considered necessary). This is particularly the case for members of staff whose role would normally require them to visit a number of different settings during the course of their work (please see Section 7 for further information).

Before a visit to a school or an early years setting is agreed it is recommended that the school/setting and the visitor/s explore alternatives to a physical face to face meeting such as a phone call or virtual meeting.

Only if these are not possible or if the work involved in the visit is carried out more effectively in person, should plans be made for a meeting in person.

- This guidance is to help Hackney Education, settings and school staff minimise the risk of the spread of COVID-19.
- This guidance is for Hackney Education staff attending meetings in schools and early years settings and outside spaces. Where Hackney Education staff are meeting any individuals in their dwellings please read this guidance in conjunction with Hackney Council's Entering into dwellings protocol available on the [Intranet](#). However, please note that practitioners wherever possible should continue to hold virtual meetings with families.

This guidance is consistent with national guidance:

- [Schools coronavirus \(COVID - 19\) operational guidance](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare settings and children's social care settings including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Face coverings in education](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safe travel guidance for passengers](#)

Please also refer to Hackney Council's [standard operating practice](#) for schools and settings.

4. How should Hackney Education and the school/setting decide if a visit is necessary?

At the moment Hackney Education staff should only be visiting a school/setting if it fits with the criteria laid out and **all visits should be authorised by the line manager**.

The priorities for Hackney Education and the school/setting are as follows from highest priority to lowest:

1. protecting the lives of Hackney Education, school/settings staff and the children attending the premises or outside space
2. protecting Hackney Education, school/setting staff and children attending the premises or outside space from injury
3. supporting school recovery and curriculum delivery
4. providing specialist support
5. protecting the environment
6. protecting property
7. making sure that processes are followed

Examples of reasons for meetings that are high priority which may need to be in person **if alternative methods can't be used** include:

- child protection visits
- gross misconduct and safeguarding investigations
- priority specialist support and guidance
- providing specialist health or wellbeing support
- providing specialist support and guidance
- serious staffing issues
- supporting school recovery and curriculum recovery
- traded services

Lower priority visits should be postponed for the time being. We will update this guidance to reflect further information from the Government and Public Health England.

When deciding whether or not to visit a school or setting, it is essential that both the school/setting and the Hackney Education staff member/s consider:

- Government [advice](#)
- the level of priority and urgency of the visit
- whether the visit is categorised as lone working – Hackney Education staff should refer to the Guidance for Lone Workers for further details
- the control measures the school/setting has in place in line with government guidance
- whether the visit can be carried out using alternative methods e.g. virtually.

For the remainder of this guidance, meetings are defined as those that cannot be undertaken using alternative methods and are considered to be necessary (as outlined in Section 4).

5. Deciding if individual staff can attend meetings in a school or setting

Schools/settings and Hackney Education staff should decide if it is appropriate for staff on an individual basis to attend a meeting. This will depend on an assessment of a combination of factors for each individual including:

- Is the member of staff classed as part of a vulnerable group (either clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable) or living with or care for people who are clinically vulnerable and has concerns regarding attending the meeting?
- What are the social distancing arrangements and hygiene measures for the meeting?
- How will the staff member be travelling to and from the meeting?

Staff with underlying health problems increasing their risk of illness from COVID-19:

As shielding has been paused from 1st April 2021, Hackney Education and schools/settings staff who are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can participate in meetings provided that the school or setting can implement

the [systems of control](#) as outlined in government guidance and the measures outlined in this guidance.

If a person who is categorised as clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable wishes to contribute to the meeting through other methods rather than attending in person then they should be supported to do so. If it is considered essential that the person attends the meeting, arrangements should be made to discuss any concerns the individual may have and make accommodations to the meeting to reduce these concerns.

Staff who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can also attend meetings provided that social distancing and control measures can be adhered to. If these staff have any concerns then they should discuss these with their manager.

Please note: Discussions around arrangements for staff with medical conditions should be handled sensitively and the individual does not need to disclose the nature of their medical condition/s with other parties involved in the meeting. They should disclose to their manager if they are classed as part of a vulnerable group so decisions on appropriate arrangements can be made.

Staff who have [symptoms](#) including:

- A high temperature.
- A new, continuous cough.
- Loss or change of sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

should not attend meetings and should follow the stay at home guidance.

6. PPE and face coverings

6.1 PPE

The [current government advice](#) is that most staff in education, childcare and children's social care settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.

If a child, young person, or student already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, the same PPE should continue to be used.

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, additional PPE is only required in a very limited number of scenarios:

- if an individual child, young person or student becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- when performing [aerosol generating procedures \(AGPs\)](#)

In line with this guidance, Hackney Education and schools/settings staff would not be required to wear PPE during a meeting or visit unless their visit/s will involve the circumstances as outlined above.

Depending on the circumstances of the visit including: contact with others, handling of equipment, requirements of the school/setting, personal circumstances of the individual and frequency of meetings/visits attended, Hackney Education supports the right of the attendees to wear appropriate PPE if they wish (provided this is not detrimental to the nature of the visit and is in agreement with the school/setting). Individuals should discuss any arrangements for wearing PPE with their manager and the school/setting prior to the visit.

There is further guidance on [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) which includes information about preventing and controlling infection, including when, how PPE should be used, what type of PPE to use, and how to source it.

6.2 Face coverings

The government has also published [guidance for face coverings in education](#) which covers the general approach to face coverings.

Visitors should check with the school/early years settings what the approach is for wearing face coverings prior to their visit and, where possible follow this approach whilst on the premises.

7. Testing

Hackney Education staff or stakeholders who are regularly visiting schools or settings as part of their role should participate in asymptomatic testing twice per week.

If a member of staff visits schools or settings infrequently and does not normally participate in the twice weekly lateral flow testing, Hackney Education recommends they undertake a lateral flow test and receive the result prior to visiting the school/setting. The test and result should be timed as close to when the staff member/stakeholder is due to attend the meeting as possible in order to detect any recent COVID-19 infections.

Staff may be able to book a lateral flow test through their [local council](#) or by visiting one of the Hackney [sites](#). All the lateral flow test sites in Hackney now have walk-in availability for staff, and they no longer need to book in advance. Staff will need to show their Hackney ID badges and fill out the NHS test registration form when they arrive. They will then receive their results by text or email the same day.

Alternatively, staff who are required to visit schools or early years settings can also [order home rapid test kits](#) to be delivered to their homes.

If a member of staff/stakeholder has symptoms of Coronavirus or has a positive lateral flow test result, they must not attend the school/setting and must immediately self isolate and book a PCR test at a test centre or order a home testing kit on the [NHS website](#).

8. Frequency of meetings

Some Hackney Education staff may be required to visit a number of sites during the course of their work. Whilst there is no current guidance on the set number of visits external visitors can make, it is recommended that they follow these measures when deciding whether to attend a meeting:

- Only attend meetings considered essential (see Section 4).
- Discuss and agree the arrangements for the meetings with the line manager.
- Plan visits to reduce travel between meetings/home/office and at quieter times of travel and the working day.
- Become familiar with and follow the school/setting's control measures.

9. Planning for the visit

If both the school/setting and the Hackney Education service are in agreement that a meeting is important and cannot be carried out using alternative methods of communication, then both must make arrangements for the visit to minimise any risk of transmission of COVID-19.

- Meeting discussed and authorised by line manager.
- Decide on a meeting organiser who can coordinate and communicate arrangements for the meeting.
- The meeting organiser should keep a record of the meeting attendees for contact tracing reasons.
- Agree the best time to carry out the meeting e.g. in less busy times for the school or setting (e.g. out of schools hours where possible) and avoiding peak travel times.
- Attendees to become familiar with and follow the school/setting's control measures, allowing appropriate additional time before meetings to implement necessary controls
- Does anyone attending the meeting have any underlying medical conditions or live with someone who has underlying medical conditions? If so, please refer to Section 5.
- Attendees should make or have arrangements in place for lateral flow testing (see Section 7).
- How will the visitor/s be travelling to/from the school/setting? If by car or bike, can parking or safe bike storage be arranged? If traveling by public transport, meetings should be scheduled to avoid peak periods. Attendees are required to wear face coverings whilst travelling on public transport. Please see government guidance on [safer travel for passengers](#) for further guidance.
- How will the visitor/s be entering the meeting location? Can this be done in a way to minimise contact with other staff and children?

- Who will be present at the meeting? Essential people should only attend. The school/setting and Hackney Education staff should consider accepting contributions from other possible attendees via video link/phone call in order to reduce the number of attendees present.
- Will social distancing be possible during the meeting? If for any reason social distancing cannot be maintained, then the school/setting staff and Hackney Education staff are recommended to wear appropriate PPE.
- Will any attendees be required to or wish to wear PPE?
- Will any equipment be required for the meeting? This should be cleaned prior to and following the meeting. Attendees should prepare to bring their own equipment, stationary and refreshments to avoid any sharing of items.
- Attendees should avoid bringing additional items e.g. bags or shared equipment where possible.
- Arrangements should be made for appropriate toilet facilities.
- Attendees should keep in regular contact in the lead up to the meeting and all attendees should be informed of any changes (such as any attendees or anyone at the school/setting displaying [symptoms of Covid-19](#)) as soon as possible which may result in the meeting being postponed or cancelled.
- Will the visitor/s be attending any classroom/childcare settings where children will be present or will the visitor will have contact with any children? If so, please refer to [government guidance](#).
- Children will be accommodated in bubbles, and practitioners must adhere to risk measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 between bubbles.
- Before entering the meeting, attendees should wash their hands, for 20 seconds, using soap and hot water or use hand sanitiser if this is not possible.

10. During the meeting

- All attendees should be made aware of the evacuation procedures for the meeting in case of fire etc.
- Arrangements for a side room for pre meeting and adjournments allow for social distancing, if applicable.
- If possible, meeting rooms should be well ventilated.
- Social distancing should be adhered to at all times.
- If for any reason, any individual feels uncomfortable with arrangements during the meeting, the meeting should be adjourned.
- Strict hygiene standards should be followed
- Visitors should not be in the school/setting any longer than necessary or visit any areas not previously arranged
- Meetings should be confined to agreed areas.
- Attendees should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

11. After the meeting

- All equipment used should be removed e.g. laptops and wiped with an alcohol based wipe. If the equipment has stayed in the bag and not been used then they do not need cleaning. Dispose of waste in the usual way.
- Meeting areas should be cleaned in line with government guidelines
- After leaving the premises, visitors should use soap and hot water to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.
- If, within 10 days of face to face contact, any attendee either develops symptoms of coronavirus (i.e. high fever, continuous dry cough and / or loss of sense of smell or taste) or is tested positive for coronavirus, they should:
 - Immediately self-isolate and arrange for a test using the [online tool](#). Essential workers should follow the [guidance for essential workers](#)
 - Alert the school / meeting organiser (the school should refer to advice set out in [Standard Operating Practice guidance](#)).
 - Other meeting attendees do not need to self-isolate unless the individual displaying symptoms receives a positive test result. If an individual tests positive should, please refer to the [Standard Operating Practice guidance](#).

12. What if a member of staff wants to have a meeting in an outside space?

There may be occasions where it is more convenient for a member of Hackney Education staff and other individuals to meet in a private outside space such as a garden or an outside area of a school or setting. Meetings can be arranged in private outside spaces but as for meetings in the school or early years settings, these will take planning and precautions including:

- Meetings should be kept to a minimum time and only essential individuals should attend.
- Consideration should be given to if any clinically vulnerable individuals would be attending the meeting and if it is possible for them to do so.
- Consider all forms of transport before using public transport and where attendees are taking public transport, meetings should be held at times to avoid travel during peak times.
- Maintain social distancing and hygiene measures.
- Avoid using public facilities if possible or practice social distancing and good hygiene.
- Make sure it is possible to maintain confidentiality during the meeting.

13. What if there is a suspected or known case of Covid-19 in the school

If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow guidance for [households with possible or](#)

[confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), which sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to [have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19)

There is more specific guidance in the Council' [standard operating practice](#) for schools and settings.

If anyone in the school/setting develops symptoms of Covid-19 or a case/s has been confirmed then visits should be postponed, unless the visit is considered an emergency.

Visits may resume once either testing for Covid-19 is negative or the school ends any self isolation measures following confirmed cases.

If the visit is considered an emergency and no alternative arrangements can be made, visitors would need to wear PPE and abide by infection protection guidelines.

14. What should visitors do if they only discover a person has symptoms of Covid-19 when they arrive at a school/setting?

Unless it is an emergency, the visit should be immediately postponed. If the meeting cannot be postponed, visitors should wear PPE or if this is not possible keep 2 metres separation from the people in the school/setting at all times while they are on the premises.

Everyone in the school/setting, especially if they have symptoms of Covid-19, should keep separate from visitors, ideally staying in another room.

If this is not possible due to the size of the meeting area then visitors must wear PPE.

If possible, open windows to ventilate the work area, air movement will disperse airborne droplets.

There should be no physical contact with other people. If a child tries to approach a visitor (for example, to hug them) they should ask them to stay the required distance away and alert a member of the school/setting staff. If a child manages to make physical contact, then the visitor should follow guidance to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Appendix 1: Checklist for visiting schools during the coronavirus outbreak

Action	Who	Complete
Prior to the visit		
Decide with attendees if the visit is urgent/necessary (with Line Manager approval)	All	
Decide on a meeting organiser to coordinate the visit	All	
Keep details of meeting attendees for contact tracing reasons	Meeting organiser	
Arrange the meeting time to minimise contact with other individuals in the school setting /busy travel times	Meeting organiser	
Attendees should become familiar with details/procedures for control measures for the meeting site, allowing appropriate time to implement necessary controls	Meeting organiser	
Who will be attending the meeting? Keep attendees to a minimum.	Meeting organiser	
Check if accommodations need to be made for individuals who are clinically vulnerable or live or care with anyone who is clinically vulnerable	Meeting organiser	
Attendees should make or have arrangements in place for lateral flow testing	All	
Discuss travel arrangements to and from the meeting. Attendees traveling by public transport will be required to wear face coverings whilst travelling	All	
Plan how attendees will enter the building/use toilet facilities to minimise contact with others	Meeting organiser	
How will social distancing/hygiene standards be maintained during the meeting?	Meeting organiser	
Will a side room be required for pre-meets/adjournments	Meeting organiser	
Are any of the attendees required to or wish to wear PPE?	Meeting organiser	
Will any equipment be used during the meeting? If so, make arrangements for it to be cleaned before and after the meeting. Attendees should avoid bringing additional items e.g. bags or shared equipment.	All	
Will the attendees be visiting any classroom/childcare settings or have contact with any pupils? If so please follow government guidance .	All	
Attendees should bring their own refreshments, equipment and stationary	All	
Keep in contact prior to the meeting and update attendees of any changes	All	
Communication on arrangements for the meeting sent to the attendees	Meeting organiser	
During the visit (attendees to familiarise themselves with guidance before the meeting)		
If possible; meeting rooms should be well ventilated	Meeting organiser	
Social distancing should be adhered to at all times	All	
All attendees are made aware of fire and evacuation procedures/toilet arrangements	All	
Follow strict hygiene standards	All	
Meetings in the school/setting should be no longer than is necessary	All	
Meetings will be confined to an agreed prearranged area.	All	
Attendees should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.	All	
Following the meeting		
Remove all equipment that is used and arrange for it to be cleaned	All	
Meeting rooms should be cleaned following a meeting in line with government guidance	Meeting organiser	
After leaving the meeting attendees should use soap and hot water to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available	All	
Attendees should alert the meeting organiser, if they become symptomatic of coronavirus in the 10 days following the meeting	All	