PROPERTY AND GROWTH BUILDING BULLETIN: 019

Waltham Forest

Subject: GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS AFTER LOCKDOWN - COVID-19

Action			Function		
	URGENT	✓		Information	
	IMPORTANT			Guidance	✓
				Consultation	
	DISTRIBUTE TO STAFF	✓		Data Collection	
	DISTRIBUTE TO GOVS	✓		Bidding opportunity	
	DISTRIBUTE TO PARENTS			Courses	
	REPLY BY			Other	
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SUMMARY: The attached Guidance has been devised to assist School during the reopening phases after the lockdown period from COVID-19 pandemic.

On 10 May the Prime Minister announces that potentially schools would re-open for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from the 1st June 2020. Schools were effectively closed due to COVID-19. However, Schools remained partially open to supporting Keyworkers and vulnerable children as directed by the Education Secretary, Mr Gavin Williamson, which is still in effect and will remain so as schools start to re-open for Nurseries, Early Years, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Primary schools providing Keyworker or Vulnerable children support for secondary aged children will need to plan this in to their reopen plan.

There are other significant areas that schools will be considering in terms of management, staffing, access and egress from site, interaction with parents and the most pressing, how to maintain a social distance with younger children, timetabling, what the curriculum will look like are to name but a few

The guidance and action plan template is not exhaustive and is to be used as an aid memoir to support schools during this time and can be adapted to suit the needs of the school.

It is recommended there a named person is responsible for completing the action plan however, most school already have a named person in place with the default being the Headteacher/ Executive Headteacher or Trust Lead.

It is essential that schools ensure that their buildings must be maintained to continue to deliver the critical services required of them during the pandemic and on return to full school activities.

GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING STAND ALONE NURSERIES AND SCHOOLS AFTER THE LOCKDOWN - COVID-19.

The following guidance note should be used to assist in completing the schools risk assessment and maintaining the Health and Safety of the staff and pupils. This guidance note covers key controls which schools will be expected to have in place.

It is also advisable to create; an additional advisory document called a School/site Protocol. This document is referred to within the template risk assessment and essentially is a document stating what the school has put in place to reduce the risk, the controls the school has in place if a person does contract Covid-19, and the expected behaviour of staff, pupils and parents, during this time. More government guidance is available in section 7 of Planning guide for primary schools.

Practical Steps to reduce risk

You should plan for putting in place protective measures to reduce risks, for example by adjusting timings of the school day and agreeing this with the relevant body (such as your governing board). The overriding aim here is to reduce contact between different groups.

You should consider steps including:
how you might stagger start and end times between year groups by a short period to reduce volume at the entrance

- ensuring parents and carers are aware of recommendations on transport to and from school, which means reducing any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport where possible (for example, by walking or cycling to school) and avoiding peak times
- using signage to guide parents and carers about where and when they should drop off and pick up their children - you will want to communicate this to parents in advance
- working out arrangements for breaks or play times so that ideally only one group of maximum 15 children is in the same play area at any one time
- ensuring that staff remain at a safe distance from each other at lunchtime or during breaks (including how to manage if your school has a small staff room or other staff areas)
- arranging for assemblies to take place with individual groups in their allocated classroom spaces rather than bringing children from different classes together into one hall or large space

You should work with your catering provider, and kitchen staff on arrangements for lunchtime. With your kitchen staff, you will need to consider how meals will be prepared and served safely. Plans will need to be in place to ensure food supplies are in place for when children return.

Work out arrangements for lunch (and any 'snack' times for early years) so that children do not mix with children from other groups – this could mean having several lunch sittings or serving lunch in more than one location, including if appropriate in a classroom, or asking your caterers to look at other flexible ways of giving pupils access to lunch such that it can be eaten in the small group setting (for example taking cold or 'packed' lunches to children in the areas they are in for the day).

Section 1 – Building Requirements

Arrangements must remain in place to ensure that children and staff are in safe buildings during reduced occupancy arrangements

Schools should review their arrangements for all building-related systems but in particular the following:
• Hot and cold-water systems including chlorination of systems
• Gas safety
• Fire safety
  • Carry out weekly checks of alarms systems, call points and emergency lighting;
  • Carry out regular hazard spotting to identify escape route obstructions;
  • Check that all fire doors are operational.
  • Fire drills should continue to be held as normal
• Kitchen equipment
• Security including access control and intruder alarm systems
• Ventilation

Staff should be familiar with "Guidance for schools about temporarily closing" on gov.uk and work with their responsible bodies to ensure that statutory health and safety arrangements are in place. There are increased risks related to safety concerns around water hygiene, building and occupancy safety and building hygiene due to reduced occupancy. Follow the guidance below to manage these risks.

Contact your contractors and suppliers to check on any special interim arrangements in place due to COVID-19.

In all educational settings, a member of staff should be identified with responsibility for managing premises. In cases of staff illness, cover arrangements should be put in place as soon as possible.

Cleaning of the premises
Deep cleaning is not required if no-one has been into the premises during the time of closure. However, if someone goes into the premises within five days before the date of reopening, any areas accessed by that person must have a sanitised clean of surfaces, specifically in high traffic areas such as corridors and toilets. Clean and disinfect all areas and surfaces before reopening and if necessary, utilise pest control for insect infestations, particularly in kitchen/food preparation areas. Deep clean the kitchen before reopening before food preparation resumes.

Once children are back in school, all frequently touched surfaces, equipment, door handles and toilets used during the day will need to be cleaned thoroughly each day. Talk to your cleaning provider about what will be needed.

It is advisable to refer to the following guidance for more information cleaning non-healthcare settings and implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings which provides detailed advice on measures schools need to consider.

You may also wish to consider your plans for:

- the availability of soap and hot water in every toilet (and if possible, in classrooms)
- the location of hand sanitiser stations, for example at the school entrance for pupils and any other person passing into the school to use, and their replenishment
- the location of lidded bins in classrooms and in other key locations around the site for the disposal of tissues and any other waste, their double bagging and emptying
- ensuring you have a good supply of disposable tissues to implement the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach in each classroom and enough to top up regularly

Other points to consider

Implement robust strategies for handwashing (every hour, for example), records of handwashing should be kept using the template handwashing check list. Where handwashing facilities are not available close by, hand sanitiser should be provided. However, this

- may have a significant impact on school budgets.
- Core building-related electrical systems, including internal and external lighting, small power, CCTV, access control and alarm systems (fire, intruder, panic and accessible toilets) to remain in use/energised in normal operating mode.
- For drainage systems, check traps have not dried out and ensure water seals are in place to prevent smells within the building e.g. hygiene rooms, sports hall showers etc.
- Update your keyholder information. Intruder alarm/lift/ fire alarm companies often have remote monitoring stations (response centres) – follow advice from these providers.
- Continue with all regular cleaning, enhanced disinfection appropriate for COVID-19, maintenance, testing and statutory compliance activities.
- Continue carrying out a thorough examination and testing of lifting and pressure equipment during the coronavirus outbreak following updated HSE guidance: https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/work-equipment-coronavirus.htm
- Inspection of all known asbestos sites. These may have been damaged during the closure, ensure that areas are clear of debris and there has been no change from the last inspection. If in doubt contact the Schools Asset Manager.

Section 2: Safe Entry and Exit to The School

Access and egress to and from the school at the beginning and end of the day will be a key risk as it is a variable that is outside the control of the school. Schools will need to consider how parents can safely drop off and pick up children. This may include having a single-entry point to the site with a ban on visitors beyond the school gate.

LBWF highways team are currently investigating a wide range of shorter-term measures for the public highway to aid with social distancing and active travel, the first few of which are in the process of being delivered. This includes new on-street publicity around social distancing in the form of signage and on-pavement markings/stencilling. Schools will also be considered, and more detail will be provided in due course.

Schools will need to decide how deliveries are received and visitors can attend site during the day These may be similar to current school policies, but this may need to be adapted to ensure non-contact deliveries can be made safely.

Schools should consider providing handwashing/sanitation stations at the site entrance for all arrivals. These should be temporary and not fixed as to reduce the risk of legionella.

Section 3: Maintaining Social Distancing in Classrooms

The DfE acknowledge early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. Following the below hierarchy of measures will reduce the risks:

- avoid contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices (e.g. blow your nose into a tissue, then immediately discard in a bin and wash your hands)
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between everyone as much as possible, so children, young people and staff where possible, should only mix in a small, consistent group and those small groups should stay away from other people and groups. If you can keep older children within those small groups 2 metres away from each other, you should do so. While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk

Classrooms will also need to be rearranged to ensure they meet any government requirements for social distancing,

This is likely to mean significantly reducing room capacity with a standard 55m2 classroom taking a maximum of 15 students, depending on fixed furniture in the space and the age of the pupil. However, the LA are aware that there are a number of schools with smaller classrooms and in some circumstances, it may be that something closer to 10 pupils per class will be necessary based on the meterage to remain compliant with DfE guidelines for social distancing. Six general teaching spaces which would normally accommodate 180 pupils may now only be able to accommodate a maximum of 60. Examples are appended at the end of the guidance for your reference.

It is recommended that schools carry out an audit of every space to assess the potential capacity of each room under social distancing rules, to provide an idea of the likely capacity that the school can accommodate, which could be below the guidance requirements, however meets the requirements of the school.

Areas such as staff, administration and facilities management spaces could also be incorporated, however, you will need to consider the impact on staff well-being if these spaces are removed and how school will manage distancing with staff.

It is recommended that the school scenario test one-year group at a time to see what impact the reduced capacity would have on staffing and timetabling

Schools should consider the location to stack/store surplus chairs tables within or away from the teaching space and remove non-essential items to "de-clutter" the learning space. In primary classrooms, for example, book boxes, rugs and role-play equipment can

be moved out of the classroom to give additional space for social distancing. However, schools will need to ensure that by removing items they are not creating a risk elsewhere, and the impact this may have to staff e.g. manual handling risk assessments will be required.

Consideration should be given to staff and students being limited to specific rooms or buildings within the school to avoid unnecessary travel around the site. It is normal practice at Primary level to stay in one place for most of the day, however this will need to be assessed for secondary and SEN/ AP provisions. If pupils are to move, corridors should be one way if they are not wide enough to maintain social distancing with a two-way flow of students

Some breakout spaces previously used for small group activities may now be unsuitable due to distancing requirements. If class sizes are now significantly reduced, collaboration may be able to take place safely within the classroom. Teachers will need to consider if the same pupils stay in the same small group every day, again consideration will need to be given to pupils with SEN.

School may wish to factor in the use of non-classroom spaces being used for classrooms. Some areas may be easier to convert, such as Libraries/Learning Resource Centres, but others may be less useful because of their scale and mass, either too large or too small and high ceilings which will impact on acoustics, for example, dining spaces or sports halls.

Schools may be offering a reduced curriculum, what will this look like? how will PE be managed, if at all? It will be important for pupils to have some form of exercise during the day, but the ability to change safely or carry out contact sports will be severely limited.

Consideration should be given to making more use of external spaces for learning (Forest School approaches) This may be more practical in the Summer term, however, Primary schools may have an outdoor learning programme that takes place throughout the year and could provide useful pointers to using the whole site for learning.

Schools may wish to start offering breakfast and after school clubs again, and will need to consider how these will operate? If the aim of reopening schools is partly to allow parents to return to work, can parents manage any new drop off and pick up times that the school implements?

Section 4: Maintaining Social Distancing in Social Spaces

It is important to reduce contact between everyone as much as possible, children, young people and staff where possible, should only mix in a small, consistent group and those small groups should stay away from other people and groups. If you can keep older children within those small groups 2 metres away from each other, you should do so. While in general, groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk.

Should students be 'self-sufficient' during the school day? This may mean students bringing their lunch and equipment so that it is easier to maintain social distances and avoid sharing of resources. If this is the case where will students eat, in their classrooms or another space in the school? Schools would still have to cater to students who are eligible for Free School Meals.

For schools that have remained operational for Keyworkers and vulnerable children, school kitchens would have remained open, however, how might the dining space be laid out to maintain any social distancing requirements for UIFSM and catering for children of keyworkers etc? Will food be brought to students to avoid them queueing and inadvertently touching crockery and cutlery that others might use? Do schools have have the staffing resources to do this? If the dining hall is multifunctional, as in many schools are, will it need to be designated for one activity only to avoid unnecessary strain on setting up furniture and cleaning between uses?

Restricting the school day to morning and/or afternoon sessions may negate the need to operate a lunch break. If some students still need to be catered for, such as those receiving Free School Meals, how will this be dealt with logistically?

Schools will need to consider what socialising will be permitted during the school day and how students will be supervised, what about external play equipment how will the school manage these areas, possibly identify them as a no go zone until further notice, remember the key is to avoid sharing.

Staff will need to consider equipment and learning resources that are normally shared such as desktop computers, sandpits items that would require the student to be in close contact with each other, consider not including them in your lesson planning to reduce risk of contact.

The school will need to think about signage, directional arrow outlining routes 2mtr distance markings, Handwash stations etc consider purchasing with neighbouring schools to reduce cost or approaching a federation. What about free sign or stencils already designed, they may not necessarily be to the schools liking but do you have the funding to spend on redesign cost, do you have the time.

It is recommended suitable posters are displayed in every classroom to be used, at the main entrance, front office, in places visible to those at the school gate if possible, in the staffroom and in all toilets. When considering posters to be purchased or made, consider the site users and who will read the posters.

e-Bug has produced a series of helpful coronavirus posters and other information tips:
- Horrid hands
- Super sneezes
- Hand hygiene
- Respiratory hygiene
- Microbe mania

Section 5: Maintaining Health, Safety and Well-Being for all

On top of everything else, the headteacher will need to need to ensure that the Health safety and wellbeing of staff and students is managed effectively.

If a member staff or a pupil become unwell with a new continuous cough or a high temperature in the workplace, they must be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance. The incident must be reported on the AIR line call 03300 586 469 so an investigation can be completed and a RIDDOR report made, where required.

The coronavirus outbreak may have caused mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children. It is important to recognise that while 'getting back to normal' is important and will be reassuring for many, school staff will need to consider how to support some children.

Some children may also have experienced bereavements in their immediate family or wider circle of friends or family or had increased/new caring responsibilities. All children will have missed the routine of school, seeing their friends, and being supported by their teachers and other adults in the school.

Alongside this, governing boards and school leaders should consider the mental health and wellbeing of staff (including school leaders themselves), you may be working with some staff who are anxious and may value the opportunity for discussion and reassurance.

Consideration of flexible working practices in a way that promotes good work-life balance for teachers and leaders, whilst using and promoting an Employee assistance programme if there is one in place, or other only platforms such as Sarmatians, may be of some assistance.

Schools may need to identify a designated isolation space within the school if a student or member of staff falls ill whilst on site. How will the school ensure students can be safely collected by a parent or carer if this happens? What procedures have been put in place to assist a member of staff who becomes ill? are staff named contact person information up to date?

You may need to review key policies to ensure that they address this type of emergency such as the Behaviour Policy, Staff Wellbeing Policy, bereavement policy and the school's complaints policy.

Refresh your risk assessment regularly, and update guidance for children, young people and staff in light of recent government advice, identifying protective measures where required. If in doubt contact the councils Health and Safety Team to see what services they can assist with, some of this maybe at a cost.

Consider undertaking the assessment in conjunction with your Union Representatives to support continued good practice within the school.

Section 6 Communicating with Staff and Parents

Schools will need to consider how they are going to keep parents, staff and the community informed. The school may wish to identify a member of the senior leadership team to manage this area utilising the school's media platforms.

Parents
You should communicate with parents to make sure they know:
- whether their child will be able to attend from the week commencing 1 June
- what protective steps you're taking to make the school a low-risk place for their child
- what you need them to do (such as on drop off and collection)

You may also want to consider senior leaders calling parents in eligible groups to discuss with them directly, where this is feasible.

Staff
Undertake an online staff meeting before wider opening from the week commencing 1 June, to take staff through arrangements if possible.

Ensure you or senior colleagues are free to be present around the school especially during the early part of wider opening. Staff and pupils may require additional support and reassurance, and you will be more easily available to pick up on any issues or problems.
Arrange regular opportunities to get feedback from staff on the new arrangements.

Section 7: What does this mean for Current and Future capital Projects.

Schools may need to rethink current and future building projects going forward. Over the coming months, there may be more manufacturers promoting anti-bacterial or infection control furniture and schools may wish to consider specifying these products when undertaking capital projects or refreshing their current furniture.

Schools will need to reprofile their schools' asset management plan in accordance with COVID-19 and assess the impact this has on the delivery of capital works and the schools' development plan.

The LA may continue to delivery agreed maintenance works with strict controls in place, e.g. out of hours working, restrict works to holiday periods. This will be discussed with the school before works being undertaken to ensure that all parties are in agreement with the way the work will be carried out.

There are several documents available for schools to use as reference points, which cover most of the concerns which will be raised by schools.

Attached is an action plan that schools can use as a starting point to base on the information in the guidance and from the documents listing below.

There is also the link to the Copenhagen International Schools website, which has kindly agreed that schools can review for ideas on timetabling lesson planning and how they are communication with parents. etc. https://www.copenhageninternational.school/c19/ as they have started to return and are planning for grades 6 – 10 to start next week, which is essential secondary age to year 12/13.

RESOURCE AND REFERENCED DOCUMENTS USED.

The Department of Education
Letter from Rory Kennedy dated 20 April 2020 - Guidance for Managing School Premises, which are Partially Open, during COVID-19 issues to schools as a Bulletin – 018

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings#how-to-implement-protective-measures-in-an-education-setting-before-wider-opening-on-1-june

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/opening-schools-for-more-children-and-young-people-initial-planning-framework-for-schools-in-england

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools

Education Construction Networks and the Learning Crowd reopening schools after lockdown.
https://www.theacn.co.uk/ecn

NASUWT The Teachers' Union
 www.nasuwt.org.uk.

Planning guide for primary schools NEU/GMB/Unison/Unite Commentary and checklist
 https://neu.org.uk/planning-guide-primary-schools