

Nottinghamshire County Council personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance for schools and other educational settings during the COVID-19 pandemic

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This guidance is in line with current national COVID-19 guidance issued by the government.

COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation and this guidance is subject to change in line with national guidance.

Date	Version	Key changes
20/08/2020	2	Updated in line with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new Government guidance for schools and educational settings for full reopening from Autumn Term 2020, dated 7 August 2020 revised guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings including use of PPE and treatment of people in clinically vulnerable categories dated 21 July 2020 revised guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people who were previously shielding, dated 4 August 2020 revised guidance about the use of face coverings dated 31 July 2020 new information about local PPE supply arrangements, including PPE for use in AGP situations
27.8.2020	2.1	Updated in line with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional information about use of PPE in AGP situations added to section 5.4. New Government guidance on the use of face coverings in schools, dated 26 August 2020
01.09.2020	2.2	Section 4 updated to reflect new guidance about pupils and staff in the extremely clinically vulnerable category contained in the Guidance for Reopening of Schools dated 28 August 2020.
05/11/2020	2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Considerations for acute personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages' guidance on re-use of certain PPE has been withdrawn Changes to the guidance on use of face coverings in education
18/11/2020	2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition to Section 6 'Face coverings'. Change to Section 7 'Where to order supplies of PPE'.
08.12.2020	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change to the re-use of PPE guidance. Removal of section 5.3 'Decontamination of PPE'. Addition to Section 6 'Face coverings'.

05.01.2021	2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update of the link in section 5.3.6 on AGPs
02.03.2021	2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update of face coverings in schools guidance 1 March 2021 for reopening of schools on 8 March 2021
30.03.2021	2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendments to section 5.2 on re-use of PPE and to section 6 with additional information about supply of transparent face coverings.
7.04.2021	2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update of face coverings in schools guidance for after Easter. Changes to shielding advice for people in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable category.
12.5.2021	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update of face coverings in schools guidance in line with changes due to come in from 17 May.

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1. Background

The Government has produced national [guidance to support operation of schools during the COVID pandemic](#). This guidance applies to primary schools, secondary schools (including sixth forms), special schools, special post-16 providers and alternative provision, 16 to 19 academies, infant, junior, middle, upper schools, and boarding schools. Additional operational guidance has been produced for [special schools and other specialist settings \(including alternative provision\)](#). Separate guidance has been produced for [early years settings](#) and [further education colleges](#).

This document outlines the personal protective equipment (PPE) that is recommended in these settings as part of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

2. Measures to prevent transmission

The use of PPE is only one measure within a wider package of measures that can be implemented to prevent transmission of COVID-19. Key infection control precautions that schools and educational settings should be taking include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or someone in their household does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges
- cleaning hands thoroughly more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- introducing enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing between individuals and maintaining distancing (ideally 2m) wherever possible by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times)

Further information related to the full opening of schools and general measures to reduce coronavirus (COVID-19) risk can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Further information on the use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

3. When PPE is required in school and other educational settings

The majority of staff in education 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.

PPE is only needed if:

- an individual child, young person or other learner becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- a child, young person or learner already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

Table 1 summarises what PPE is needed when in schools and other educational settings.

Face coverings are not classed as PPE, because they are not manufactured to a recognised standard and not CE marked, nor do they offer a proven level of protection for work risks. However, face coverings are included within this guidance for completeness. On 10 May 2021, new advice was issued on use of face coverings by staff, pupils and students in schools and further education in England. From 17 May 2021, the following changes apply:

- For pupils and students in all schools, face coverings will no longer be recommended in classrooms or communal areas.
- For staff in all schools, face coverings will no longer be recommended in classrooms.
- For staff and visitors in all schools, it is still recommended that face coverings should be worn in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).

Depending on their age, children may be required to wear face coverings on the way to and from school by bus. More information on the use of face coverings by children is given in Section 6 below.

3.1 PPE required when children become symptomatic during the school day

If a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 while in their setting and needs care until they can be collected by a member of their family or household, a fluid-resistant Type IIR surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant Type IIR surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>)

If symptomatic children or young people have to be transported home or between residential settings as a responsibility of the setting, then the driver should use PPE, unless the vehicle has a bulkhead or partition that separates driver and passenger, or a distance of 2m can be maintained. The passenger should also wear a face covering if they are old enough and able to do so.

3.2 PPE required during the COVID-19 pandemic for personal care

Unless a child, young person or other learner is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 whilst in the setting, when personal care is required, no additional PPE is required beyond that which would ordinarily be used for delivery of personal care. The exception to this is for aerosol generating procedures (AGPs), where additional PPE is specified as set out in Table 1. Further information on AGPs is given in Section 5.4.

3.3 Who needs to wear PPE in school and other educational settings

Only supervising adults in the above situations need to wear PPE in school settings.

Face coverings are not classed as PPE but are included within this guidance for completeness. See Section 6 below for further information on face covering use in schools.

Table 1: Summary of what PPE to wear when

Scenario	Disposable gloves	Disposable apron	Disposable fluid-repellent coverall/gown	Fluid resistant (type IIR) surgical mask	Filtering face piece (FFP3) respirator	Eye protection
Managing a child who develops symptoms of COVID-19 where 2m distance cannot be maintained and contact is not necessary				✓		✓ Risk assess
Managing a child who develops symptoms of COVID-19 where 2m distance cannot be maintained and contact is necessary	✓	✓		✓		✓ Risk assess
Performing an aerosol generating procedure (AGP) on a child.	✓		✓		✓	✓
Cleaning an area which is heavily contaminated with bodily fluids from a child with suspected COVID-19	✓	✓		✓		✓
Delivery of personal care to children without symptoms of COVID-19	Use PPE that is standard for the delivery of the care.					

4. People who are extremely clinically vulnerable

[Extremely clinically vulnerable individuals](#) are people with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19, who were previously identified and advised of their vulnerability by their clinician or through a letter. People in this category were previously advised to shield in their homes to keep themselves safe, for certain periods of national restrictions. On 1 April, shielding advice was paused.

4.1 Clinically extremely vulnerable children

Children and young people (0 to 18 years of age) who have been classed as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' due to pre-existing medical conditions were previously advised to shield, not to attend school or college and be supported at home as much as possible. More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from COVID-19, even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow this advice. Parents are advised to speak to their GP or specialist clinician, if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable were previously advised to shield for certain periods, not to attend school or college and be supported at home as much as possible, with schools making appropriate arrangements for them to be able to continue their education at home. On 1 April 2021, shielding advice was paused and children who are still classed as clinically extremely vulnerable should now attend school.

4.2 Clinically extremely vulnerable staff

Staff who have been classed as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' due to pre-existing medical conditions were previously advised to shield, not to attend the workplace but work at home if it was possible to do so. Shielding advice was paused on 1 April 2021. The latest [government guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people](#) states that clinically extremely vulnerable staff are advised to work from home where possible, but if this is not possible, they can attend work from 1 April 2021.

4.3 Staff who are pregnant

Pregnant women are generally considered in the moderate risk 'clinically vulnerable' category (not 'extremely clinically vulnerable', unless they have certain underlying health conditions). Employers should conduct a risk assessment for pregnant employees in line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW). The Government has published [advice for pregnant employees](#), which also contains advice for women from 28 weeks gestation or with underlying health conditions who may be at greater risk. Employers and pregnant employees are advised to follow this guidance and to continue to monitor for future updates to it.

5. Using PPE

5.1 Donning and doffing PPE

Staff should ensure they know how to safely use all PPE, including putting it on (donning) and putting it off (doffing) correctly.

See links below for quick reference guides and Public Health England videos on donning and doffing:

Instructions for PPE being used for non-aerosol generating procedures:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-non-aerosol-generating-procedures>

Instructions for PPE being used for aerosol generating procedures:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-aerosol-generating-procedures>

If using a disposable respirator, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has produced guidance on donning and checking the respirator fits, which can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/disposable-respirator.pdf>

Staff should put on and take off (don and doff) their PPE when at least two metres away from the person they will be delivering care to or who is symptomatic.

5.2 Re-use of PPE

Given the improved supply of PPE, the 'Considerations for acute personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages' guidance re-use of certain PPE has been withdrawn.

All eyewear issued by Nottinghamshire County Council as PPE, should be treated as **disposable only**.

Disposable gloves, face masks and aprons should not be re-used.

5.3 Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs)

An [Aerosol Generating Procedure](#) (AGP) is a medical procedure that can result in the release of airborne particles (aerosols) from the respiratory tract when treating someone who is suspected or known to be suffering from an infectious agent transmitted wholly or partly by the airborne or droplet route.

Within educational settings, AGPs are only undertaken for a very small number of children with complex medical needs, such as tracheotomy.

Staff performing AGPs in these settings should follow Public Health England's [Infection prevention and control guidance](#) and wear the recommended enhanced PPE during all AGPs. The respirator (mask) required for AGPs must be fitted correctly by undergoing 'fit testing'

5.3.1 What do you need to have in place?

If you have a child in your school who requires an AGP you will need to have in place:

- Appropriate PPE
- Fit testing arrangements
- Risk assessment(s) completed and understood
- Any required property adaptations completed

More detail on each of these is provided below.

5.3.2 Appropriate PPE

Staff undertaking the AGP task must wear enhanced PPE as follows:

- FFP3 mask
- Gloves
- Disposable fluid-repellent coverall or long-sleeved fluid-repellent gown
- Eye protection/Visor

Where an AGP is a single procedure, PPE is subject to single use with disposal after each patient contact or procedure as appropriate.

Staff undertaking AGPs should arrange to change their clothing at the end of the day before returning home. Clothes and reusable gowns must be washed in biological washing powder at 60 degrees or above and tumbled dried.

PPE should be purchased and provided by the school directly. Please see section 7 of this guidance for further details of PPE sources for Nottinghamshire educational settings. However, if your school is struggling to source the required enhanced PPE please contact ppe@nottsc.gov.uk

5.3.3 Fit Testing

Fit testing is required to check that the FFP3 being used matches a person's facial features and seals adequately to their face to provide adequate protection.

Fit testing needs to be carried out by a trained and competent fit tester and is available through the County Council Health and Safety team. We now have the capability of three teams to undertake testing county wide. This can be arranged via hands@nottsc.gov.uk and is available from NCC at the following rates.

	Charge (£)
NCC Maintained schools	Free of charge
Academies buying S4S Health and Safety service	Free of charge for first 10 tests then charge as below
Standard test charge /revisit retest	£60
Retest charge if within the same session	£30
Alternate 4 hr open session (no test limit)	£350

5.3.4 Risk Assessment

You need to have conducted a risk assessment for the AGP, which should include PPE, space and ventilation requirements. Health and Safety colleagues are able to support schools with the risk assessment process and can be contacted via hands@nottsc.gov.uk.

Schools will also need to complete and have in place SEND risk assessments for the child(ren) in line with DfE guidance:

[Supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening](#)

5.3.5 Property Adaptations

Your school may need to be adapted if there is a child requiring AGPs, to ensure appropriate space and ventilation requirements are met. For enquiries about property adaptations identified in your risk assessment, please contact planned.maintenance@nottsc.gov.uk

5.3.6 Further information

Separate, detailed local guidance on [AGP procedures in educational and children's social care settings](#) has been produced.

There is also further information on PPE for AGPs in section 8.1 of this Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-guidance-aerosol-generating-procedures>.

5.4 Disposal of used PPE

PPE that has been used with a symptomatic pupil or staff member should be put into a disposable rubbish bag, placed into a second bag, tied securely, labelled with the date and time and marked for storage for 72 hours, or until a negative test result is known for the individual, whichever comes first. The waste should be kept in school in a secure specified area (e.g. away from pets and children). After 72 hours, or the negative test result if earlier, it should be put it into the usual household school waste bin.

All other PPE should be disposed of in the usual way.

Used PPE should not be put into recycling bins.

6. Face coverings

A face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. Face coverings are required in law in a number of indoor settings, including public transport, shops, community centres, libraries, museums and places of worship. Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings but may be used in addition to one. This is because face visors or shields do not adequately cover the nose and mouth.

Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Updated guidance on use of face coverings in schools was issued on 10 May 2021 and applies from 17 May 2021.

- For pupils and students in all schools, face coverings will no longer be recommended in classrooms or communal areas.
- For staff in all schools, face coverings will no longer be recommended in classrooms.
- For staff and visitors in all schools, it is still recommended that face coverings should be worn in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).

The reintroduction of face coverings may be advised for temporary periods in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. This would be decided by Local Action Committees for a locality, or by Incident Management Teams in response to significant outbreaks in specific settings.

Further details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

Those children coming to school by bus will need to wear face coverings whilst travelling if they are aged over 11 and able to do so. Local advice for children travelling by bus to school is available at <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/travel-to-schools/covid-19-pupils-travelling-on-dedicated-mainstream-school-transport-from-september-2020>.

Schools and colleges will need to communicate quickly and clearly to staff, parents, pupils and learners any arrangements requiring the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

If face coverings are to be used, it is vital that these are worn correctly. Schools should provide clear instructions for the use of face coverings, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risk of transmission. These should cover:

- Wash hands thoroughly before putting on face covering
- Don't touch your face or face covering with unwashed hands or gloves
- When you remove the face covering, try not to touch the front or face covering area
- Store removed face coverings in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Do not place them on tables or other surfaces.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling your face covering

- If a face covering becomes damp, it should be removed and replaced carefully. Staff and pupils may consider bringing a spare face covering to wear in the event that their face covering becomes damp during the day.
- Reusable face coverings can be washed with other laundry but single use ones should be disposed of carefully in a waste bin and not put in recycling
- Do not give removed face coverings to others to use
- Do not use damaged face coverings

More detailed instructions can be found in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings, such as children under 11, those with health needs that might make wearing a face covering difficult, or people providing assistance to others with particular communication needs, such as people who rely on lip reading or facial expression to communicate. Transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn. NCC can also supply face coverings with a clear panel (subject to having sufficient stock) if needed for communication with deaf/ lip-reading pupils, via www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/covid19ppeordering.

Most staff and young people can be assumed to have access to face coverings, but educational settings should stock a small contingency supply to use in case someone is struggling to access a face covering, has forgotten their face covering or it has become damp, soiled or unsafe.

No one should be excluded from education because they are not wearing a face covering.

7. Where to order supplies of PPE

If you have a requirement for **COVID-19 related PPE**, education providers can order through www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/covid19ppeordering.

You will need to register on this system before you can place your first order.

There is a [User Guide](#) explaining more about how to use the site.

Remember that this is only for **COVID-19 related PPE**, for use only when:

- a) caring for a child or individual who develops coronavirus symptoms while attending their setting (and then only if a distance of two metres cannot be maintained);
- b) performing aerosol generating procedures (AGPs).

Please note, you will need to upload a form to evidence your PPE usage for symptomatic children when placing orders. The exception to this is when requesting PPE for AGPs.

For all business as usual PPE you should continue to use your existing supply routes.

If you have any difficulties using the site, or any other queries related to obtaining PPE, please email ppe@nottscc.gov.uk

In addition to existing procurement routes, settings and local authorities can source PPE and cleaning products through the [Crown Commercial Service \(CCS\) safer working supplies website](#). Suppliers and products listed on this website meet standards set out by the Department of Health

and Social Care. Products purchased through this route will not detract from supply available to medical settings. In addition, public sector buying organisations have pre-existing experience and relationships across the education, childcare and children's social care sectors. Some of these organisations have e-catalogues offering PPE and cleaning products. They include:

- [ESPO](#)
- [YPO](#)
- [NEPO](#)