

### **When will schools be reopening?**

In line with guidance from the Government all schools in Northumberland are planning to be open on Tuesday 1st September in accordance with the NCC 2020-2021 term dates. Schools will have made their own decisions regarding teacher training days and this may affect the first day of term for pupils.

We are working with head teachers in schools across the county to support them in the implementation of appropriate health and safety measures based on their risk assessments, and in line with Government guidance.

Parents should stay in touch with their child's school for the latest information.

### **Which primary/middle children will be allowed back to school?**

In accordance with the current guidance and plans from the Government (Monday 10th August) all pupils will be returning to school.

See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

The guidance is intended to support schools, both mainstream and alternative provision, to prepare for September. It applies to primary, secondary (including sixth forms), first, middle and high schools and includes school-based nurseries. The guidance also covers expectations for children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), including those with education, health and care plans in mainstream schools.

Further guidance is also available for early years, further education colleges and for special schools.

### **How will schools be kept safe?**

The Department for Education (DfE) has set out guidance (see link above) to prepare for pupils to return to full-time education from the start of the autumn term.

Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place the proportionate control measures. As a result, NCC schools are reviewing their health and safety risk assessments and are drawing up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the system of controls set out below. These are adapted from the protective measures put in place during the summer term:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

- grouping children together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

To support NCC schools, the Corporate Health and Safety Team has produced a revised COVID19 School Model Risk Assessment. This incorporates Government guidance for schools fully reopening from September. This guidance will be updated as and when further Government guidance is provided.

### **Will pupils have to stay 2m apart?**

The DfE guidance says 'Schools must do everything possible to minimise contact and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.' Ideally pupils and adults should be kept two metres apart if possible - but the DfE accepts that young children cannot always be expected to keep that distance apart, from each other or staff. Schools will maintain distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix and to keep the numbers as small as possible.

Groups should be kept apart meaning that large gatherings such as assemblies should be avoided and staggered timings for break and lunch times, as well as starting and finishing times, should be planned.

### **What other safety precautions will children and staff take?**

NCC schools will be following the Government's System of controls: Protective Measures.

These controls include six actions linked to 'Prevention' and three actions linked to 'Response to infection'.

Actions linked to 'Prevention' included cleaning hands more often, promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and enhanced frequent cleaning, particularly of shared use areas such as toilets.

Actions linked to 'Response' include engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process and managing confirmed cases of coronavirus in the school community.

The wearing of masks, however, is not recommended, for either pupils or teachers. Schools will make sure that all staff and children are aware of the extra measures in place to ensure safety.

### **How else will risk of infection be reduced?**

Schools will ensure that other considerations are taken within their risk assessments and plans. These considerations will include:

- Preparing pupils, including pupils with SEND, for planned changes to normal routines
- Engagement with supply teachers and peripatetic staff who move between schools

- Engagement with visitors to school sites
- Engagement with immunisation providers
- Use of equipment and resources
- Use of outdoor equipment

### **What happens if a child is unwell?**

Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell or have someone in their household who is unwell is the first priority action in the 'Prevention' actions.

Staff and children or young people should not attend school if they have coronavirus symptoms, or have tested positive in at least the last 10 days, or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household. This is in line with the Government's guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are the recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or high temperature and a loss or change in their normal sense of taste or smell.

If a child or member of staff has these symptoms, they must be sent home, follow the stay at home guidance and self-isolate for at least 10 days. All other members of the same household (including siblings) must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days (The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill).

### **What is the advice for families who have a parent who is shielding?**

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1st August. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding

### **Will there be a transition phase for children in middle school/three tier establishments?**

NCC schools developed and managed their own plans and activities for transition from year group to year group, key stage to key stage and from school to school. Parents will have been made aware of any plans organised by the child's school. These plans have included virtual tours and online meetings as well as activities to carry out at home during the summer holiday period.

NCC developed a padlet of learning resources to help parents and carers with transition: <https://padlet.com/nies1/parentcarerresources>

The Inclusive Education Team have a padlet of resources entitled 'Returning to School': [https://padlet.com/nies1/return\\_to\\_school](https://padlet.com/nies1/return_to_school)

The NCC School Improvement Team added to their home learning resources with 'Boredom Busters' activities for the holiday period: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FQmZ\\_WkFsuQGSHfbKvrVHbhras8KauuB/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FQmZ_WkFsuQGSHfbKvrVHbhras8KauuB/view)

The Team has also created a range of activities to prepare for learning in September:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FTF9UNY7-x74kREQdI2L7fTIFnca8TIQ/view>

The Early Years Team have continued to add to their padlets of resources and guidance:

<https://padlet.com/clairrealisonjohnson/ufqivcbb0ck>

In addition NCC publicised resources from NHS England to support 'Transition to Year 11':

[http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/securing\\_good\\_transition\\_s\\_leaflet\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/securing_good_transition_s_leaflet_final_web.pdf)

'Returning to School after a Period of Absence':

[http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/returning\\_to\\_school\\_leaflet\\_final\\_web\\_.pdf](http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/returning_to_school_leaflet_final_web_.pdf)

### **What's happening about pupils returning to secondary/high school?**

It is expected that secondary and high schools will open in line with the expectations of the DfE guidance on the full reopening of schools. This is the same guidance being followed by first, middle and primary schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Parents should stay in touch with their child's school for the latest information.

The Government has produced additional guidance on the wearing of face coverings for Year 7 and above pupils:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>

Again, parents should contact their child's school for any further information.

### **Will online resources continue to be available for homeschooling if parents choose to keep their children at home?**

The Government has stated: 'Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, well-being and wider development...School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply.'

### **Will school transport be provided?**

Two guidance documents have been produced for parents and students regarding school transport:

1. A letter for parents setting out guidance and information regarding arrangements for students who use the Home to School Transport service:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FbOjJSLE7I5SmXH3xQ\\_QRGvV3P1nw4KOMJqhZ\\_JVnDo/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FbOjJSLE7I5SmXH3xQ_QRGvV3P1nw4KOMJqhZ_JVnDo/edit)

2. Guidance and information for students who use school transport:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yUmZuUksamG0THc2CX-RszjMQfCSaMxZvmT6EbAo2cl/edit>

Schools have sent the following message to parents regarding these documents:

"Please find attached guidance and information for parents and carers whose children will be using the Council's Home to School Transport Service when they return in September. Read the guidance carefully and discuss the requirements within the letter with your child. Also enclosed is a guidance sheet for students travelling on home to school transport; please encourage your child to read this carefully where they are able to, or discuss the requirements within it with younger children. Thank you in advance for your assistance."

### **My child receives free school meals. Will meals be available at school once they Reopen?**

Pupils will continue to receive free school meals if they are eligible.

### **Is my child at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 by attending school?**

The Government states,

'The prevalence of coronavirus(COVID-19) has decreased, our NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and we are clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools.

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.'

Useful links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outrreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>  
<https://padlet.com/nies1/parentcarerresources>

[https://padlet.com/nies1/return\\_to\\_school](https://padlet.com/nies1/return_to_school)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FQmZ\\_WkFsuQGsHfbKvrVHbhras8KauuB/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FQmZ_WkFsuQGsHfbKvrVHbhras8KauuB/view)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FTF9UNY7-x74kREQdI2L7ftIFnca8TIQ/view>

<https://padlet.com/clairalisonjohnson/ufqivcbbe0ck>

[http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/securing\\_good\\_transitions\\_leaflet\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/securing_good_transitions_leaflet_final_web.pdf)

[http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/returning\\_to\\_school\\_leaflet\\_final\\_web\\_.pdf](http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/returning_to_school_leaflet_final_web_.pdf)