This risk assessment process follows the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) general basic five steps principle. This guidance focuses on producing one separate

risk assessment for the specific activities where there could be a potential exposure or transmission of COVID-19. This risk assessment considers the general hazards and controls.

Risk assessments must be completed using your provided Risk Assessment Template.

The risk assessment process in a step-by-step guide for each stage is given below. Ensure not to lose sight of the normal activity safety and health risks posed by operations. It remains important to maintain effective control of exposure to these risks too.

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| **Steps to Risk Assessment** | |
| **What should the risk assessment cover?** | The risk assessment must recognise that COVID-19 virus as a hazard. It should also reflect that the virus is spread in minute water droplets that are expelled from the body through sneezing, coughing, talking, and breathing. The virus can be transferred to the hands and from there to surfaces. It can survive on surfaces for a period after transfer (depending on such things as the surface type, its moisture content and temperature). The risk assessment should conclude that if it is passed from one person to another, while many survive infection, some may die from the disease. It should be regarded as a high hazard.  Insert all other relevant information onto the form, i.e., what activity the assessment relates to, the date you are undertaking the assessment, the planned review date / period, and your own reference number.  Your risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know – you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks. Consider all elements of the process/operation/activity, the people at risk, the environment, equipment, and emergency situations. |
| **Who might be harmed? (exposed to COVID-19 virus)** | You need to identify all those who may be exposed to the COVID-19 virus to identify the best way of managing the risk.  That doesn’t mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people and where they will be working.   * Employees, pupils, cleaners, visitors, contractors, agency staff, work experience, maintenance workers, volunteers, etc. |
| **How might they be harmed? (by COVID-19 virus)** | First you need to work out how those identified could be exposed to the virus. Here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:  **Considerations**   * Some workers have specific requirements, e.g., new, and young workers, new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities or where there are language barriers, as there may be an increased risk. * You will need to Identify which employees are vulnerable and at higher risk byundertaking an individual employee assessment and if necessary, an Individual Employee Risk Assessment. * How might employees be exposed to other employees, members of the public, school staff and employees, clients, or anyone else who may potentially spread the virus, whether at an Educational Setting site or another environment that the employee needs to visit i.e., Educational Settings, warehouses, offices, storerooms, communal areas, external areas etc. * Exposure to virus through close interactions between employees and children where close interaction has been identified as essential. * Exposure to virus through close interactions between employees and Educational Settings and staff whilst using welfare facilities. * How often are interactions and for how long. * If you share your workspace and at other third-party sites, before an employee attends you will need to think about how your work affects others at those sites, as well as how their work affects your employees. It needs to be a partnership to allow activities to take place safely and effectively. * In which places do people find it difficult to avoid one another (e.g., entrances & exits, lifts, stairs, foyers, canteens, toilets, resource rooms) What can you do to smooth out their use and reduce the interaction (e.g., phased shift and break times, closure). * Most commonly touched areas (e.g., Handles, handrails, kettles, desk surfaces, instruments, books, toys, stationery, canteen utensils) * Also consider how controls have been applied at external sites that employees and children visit. |
| **What control measures are in place to reduce/prevent the risk of exposure to COVID-19 virus** | **Covid-19 hierarchy of control**  The COVID-19 hierarchy of control can support you in considering what can be done. Any mitigation controls devised and implemented must reduce exposure of employees and anyone else who could be infected by your employees and/or work activities.  Control considerations must include identification of those who may have the virus or may spread the virus, effective preventative measures and what to do if you find if an employee has contracted the virus.  Most effective  Elimination (not applicable)  Substitution (not applicable)  Engineering controls (ventilation, physical barriers)  Least effective  Administrative controls (training on distancing, distance markings and signage)  PPE/RPE  (masks, respirators, gloves)  **Elimination** is the best form of control. Can we eliminate the virus? Only through vaccination, so there is little that can be done. Monitor [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) for updates on Coronavirus. Social distancing and staying at home are not forms of elimination, but an administrative control.  Next in descending order is **substitution**: replacing the virus for something less harmful is not possible.  **Engineering** controls place a physical barrier between the person and the hazard or provide mechanical reduction of the hazard. Placing screens between people (e.g., receptions in buildings) will interrupt the flow of air from one person to another and therefore provide protection.  **Considerations include:**   * Can eBooks be used instead of hard/paperbacks? * Can instruments be allocated to an individual rather than being shared? * Can you redesign your workspace to maintain social distancing? * Can you repurpose meeting rooms to spread employees out? * Can you provide more hand washing or sterilisation facilities around the workplace? * Can you encourage walking or cycling to Educational Settings /sites to avoid public transport at peak times? * Can you increase the air flow through mechanical ventilation (desk, portable and freestanding fans should not be used)   **Administrative** controls provide the best options for most educational settings. The risk assessment must consider how you will keep the workplace and equipment clean, adjust your working practices and ensure people are safe.  **Considerations include:**   * Agree what learning is appropriate (including the relationship between face-to-face and remote education), for example, identify curriculum priorities, agree revised expectations, and required adjustments in practical lessons, and any approaches to ‘catch up’ support. * Identify what provision can be reasonably provided for in line with education health, and care (EHC) plans. * Work with other Educational Setting-based provision as necessary to ensure policies and procedures are aligned where they need to be. * Try to maintain social distancing if and when required, such as consistent groupings, staggered start and finish times, minimising bringing parents onto site. * Ensure that all staff understand that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who   does, should not attend an Educational Setting in any circumstances. Ensure staff understand that if they develop coronavirus symptoms that they are entitled to a test and are encouraged to organise one in this scenario following government [guidance on getting tested.](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)   * Employees should be aware of procedures to be followed if they come into contact with someone with potential COVID-19 symptoms. * Employees are aware of the test and trace guidance [In the workplace](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance) * Consider vulnerable employees and their environment. Can they carry out their duties in a lower risk environment? * Ensure Educational Settings have completed risk assessments for their other activities, e.g., manual handling, slips and falls, working at height. * Ensure employees and children are aware of your ventilation controls (keeping high windows open, classroom doors) and ensure that fire doors are **not** propped open. Desk, portable and freestanding fans should not be used. * What arrangements are in place to safely transport staff / children where necessary. Must additional controls be implemented such as ventilation and social distancing? * Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using standard cleaning products. * Consider staff wellbeing, including any support that may be needed for those who have suffered bereavement, and discuss their needs with them. * How will equipment or supporting tools for children brought from home be cleaned and stored (maybe include in individual / personal plans) * Consider how you keep commonly touched surfaces sterile and how much more frequently they need to be cleaned * Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions as set out in the [Guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19) have been considered * Agree any flexible working arrangements needed to support any changes to your usual patterns (for example, staggered start/end times). * The availability of staff, as well as your own and family circumstances, may change, so agree a policy for updating your risk assessment on a continuous basis and how you will communicate this with staff and parents. * Children with education health and care (EHC) plans, it may not be possible to provide the full range of provision set out in the plan, and it may be necessary to make different arrangements if some of the support services are not available in their usual form * Is an effective strength of cleaner and enough provision of products in place to maintain regular cleaning regime * Where and how are contaminated cloths disposed of * If equipment must be shared, then how will it be cleaned between uses (e.g., phones, desks, stationery)? * What washing/hand sterilising facilities are available and how frequently should they wash their hands to reduce potential viral load and spread on equipment and in the environment? * When employees and contractors must work together, how will you agree your local Covid-19 control arrangements? * What adjustments to contractor control may be necessary, if any? * What process have you got for employees to report possible infection or exposure, and what do you then require them to do? * Advice on Covid-19 is constantly changing. How will you keep your advice current and how will you update your employees & <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> * Where temporary workers are used, how will you ensure their competence in applying Covid-19 controls? What changes are necessary to your induction programme?   The last resort in the hierarchy of risk control is **personal protective equipment**. It is considered the weakest control because it relies on people using it correctly. It introduces many possibilities for error: being the right specification, its cleanliness, its storage, its replacement, and availability.  **Considerations include:**   * As described in the hierarchy of control, PPE is the least effective control in the Hierarchy to control the hazard. It is essential to identify what individuals and roles need PPE/RPE. This should be based on the level of close interaction, if essentially required for the activity to take place and in conjunction with Educational Setting requirements in individual cases. * A face covering can be worn if considered in your local arrangements, although is not currently a government requirement * If required, consider the instruction and training that staff will need on infection control, for example [Face covering guidance](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).   All these questions and considerations relating to the workplace, equipment, safe systems of work and people will lead to the design of good procedures and management systems that will help to reduce exposure to the virus. |
| **Considering your controls, what is the risk level?** | Once all control measures have been identified the risk level should then be evaluated using the risk matrix below. This is to identify whether your current control measures are suitable and sufficient in reducing the risk to the lowest possible level. You will therefore need to decide how ‘likely’ it is that the harm will occur with the controls in place; and what the ‘likely severity’ will be. To calculate the risk, you multiply severity x likelihood. Using the matrix, this will provide you with an outcome of either, ‘low’, ‘medium’ or ‘high’.   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | LIKELIHOOD | | | | | | VERYUNLIKELY *(freak event – no known history)* | UNLIKELY *(foreseeable under unusual circumstances)* | LIKELY *(having a greater- than- even chance of occurring)* | HIGH LIKELY *(to occur-foreseeable)* | ALMOSTCERTAIN *(of occurring)* | | **SEVERITY** | **NEGLIGIBLE**  *(no real visible injury / illness)* | **LOW** | **LOW** | **LOW** | **LOW** | **LOW** | | **MINOR**  *(no long-term effects, first-aid injury)* | **LOW** | **LOW** | **LOW** | **MEDIUM** | **MEDIUM** | | **SERIOUS**  *(deep flesh wound, requires medical treatment)* | **LOW** | **MEDIUM** | **MEDIUM** | **MEDIUM** | **HIGH** | | **SEVERE**  *(over 7-day lost time injury and major/specified injuries)* | **LOW** | **MEDIUM** | **MEDIUM** | **HIGH** | **HIGH** | | **VERY SEVERE**  *(long-term injury/illness/ fatality)* | **MEDIUM** | **MEDIUM** | **HIGH** | **HIGH** | **HIGH** | |
| **Do you need to do anything else to control the risk?** | Based on your calculated risk level using the matrix, refer to the table below:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Low: | It is unlikely that harm will be caused, and the outcome would result in very minor injury/damage.  No further controls are needed. However, consideration may be given to a more cost-effective solution or improvement that does not mean more cost. Monitoring is needed to make sure that the current controls are maintained and effective. | | Medium: | There is the possibility that harm may occur. The level of harm will depend on your evaluation.  You must consider whether the existing control measures are sufficient or if any further action could be taken to reduce the risk to a low level.  The consideration of whether measures need to be implemented should be “as far as is reasonably practicable”.  (The risk level may remain as Medium where the risk is inherent in an activity/process/operation). | | High: | Certain or near certain that harm will result in serious injury/damage.  The planned activity/process/operation must not continue. The risk assessment action plan must be completed to identify what further action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable lower level. | |
| **Action to be taken** | If you therefore deem further controls are necessary, these must be recorded and actioned appropriately. When considering controls, apply the principles of the COVID-19 hierarchy of control to eliminate the risk where possible or reduce it to the lowest possible level:  Remember, prioritise, and tackle the most important things first. |
| **Details and signatures** | All completed risk assessments must be signed by the competent risk assessor and Headteacher. This will demonstrate that the Headteacher /Senior Manager agrees with the significant risks that have been identified and the control measures that are in place to eliminate/reduce those risks.  Also, as good practice, each assessment should be shared and as part of consultation with those employees affected by the hazards. This should also be uploaded to your Educational Setting’s website to enable parents and members of the public to view the controls in place*.* |
| **Monitor and review** | Monitor – on an ongoing basis monitor your work activities to ensure that the control measures you’ve implemented are working as planned.  You must review any risk assessments following the govt guidance, sector specific guidance to ensure your controls are in line with these guidance requirements.  Review - Few work activities stay the same. Changes may bring in new equipment, substances, processes, and procedures that could lead to new hazards. It makes sense, therefore, to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. **All risk assessments should be regularly reviewed, monitored, and updated following significant changes.** When you review consider.   * have there been any changes? * are there improvements you still need to make? * have your employees spotted a problem? * have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?   Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.  if there is a significant change, don’t wait. Check your risk assessment and, where necessary, amend it. It is essential to consider the risk assessment as an integral part of your planning process. |

Further supporting guidance.

[Actions for Schools during Coronavirus Outbreak](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreakreak-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings)

[Early Years and Childcare Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures)

**The list of guidance below provides sources of further help on health and safety related risks within Educational Settings to be considered:**

[Workplace safety for teachers, pupils and visitors - checklists for all classrooms](http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/risk-assessment/classroom.htm)

[Work at Height](http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm)

[Slips and trips in educational establishments](http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/slips-in-education.htm)

[On site vehicle movements](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/sitelayout.htm)

[Managing Asbestos in your school](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asbestos-management-in-schools--2)

[Control of Hazardous substances](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/)

[Selecting and managing contractors](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg368.htm)

[Good estate management for schools](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools)

[School building design and maintenance](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-building-design-and-maintenance)

[Manual handling](http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manualhandling.htm)

[Managing work related stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/)