

COVID 19 Guidance for staff and consultants returning to work within schools

Overview

We are aware that since lockdown, our face to face interactions with schools suddenly ceased as the world became more virtual. Normal services and face to face meetings stopped and the role of BEP became more the provision of emotional support to schools and Heads, who were facing huge challenges about how to maintain levels of teaching and learning for their pupils at a distance.

The Government has now promoted the return of children to schools and with that some of our normal services are resuming with requests for face to face meetings being received.

With this in mind, we have prepared the guidance below, to help staff and consultants understand the process they need to follow when school visits are being arranged.

To be clear, whilst BEP supports the restarting of these visits, the safety of our staff and consultants remains its top priority.

Key Principles

- Where possible and if effective, continue to have virtual meetings. It is recognised that for most of the school improvement work this may not be practical and therefore school visits will be required.
- Where this is the case, and prior to the visit taking place, you must always ask the school for a copy of their COVID 19 Risk Assessment. This will detail the measures that the school will need you to comply with whilst on school property. Most schools will have uploaded it to the website so it may be worth checking there first.
- Maintain social distance at all times, in line with government guidelines.
- Wash your hands before you arrive, regularly whilst there and when you return home.
- Carry hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes and use regularly, wiping down surfaces, desks, light switches and door handles that you use, as appropriate.
- Wear a face mask, especially when/if moving through the corridors. You will need to consider your audience here ie if the person you will be meeting has a hearing impairment, you will need to have either a perspex mask or a visor so that they can continue to lip read.
- Take your own drinks cup or flask where possible to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- Try to make adjustments to the way things are done ie utilising larger meeting spaces, if you have to review classrooms then do so from the doorway rather than going in.
- Minimise, where possible, the number of people you have to interact with.
- If you are part of a vulnerable group and wish to apply additional safety precautions, then please do. For example, even though masks are mandatory whilst walking around the school, they may not be mandatory in the classrooms or within the meeting space itself, whereas you may wish to wear one.

Basically, it is just using your own sense of what is appropriate and complying with the school's rules but remember your safety comes first and if you do not feel comfortable, then don't go.

Other considerations

If during the school visit you identify instances where breaches of school policy relating to COVID are placing children at risk, you should raise this with the HT as a safeguarding concern.

If you are delivering training to a group of staff in school , you may wish to email/ telephone in advance to check that the venue and mode of delivery is appropriate.