

16 July 2020

LGA update on PHE-endorsed system of controls (Face Coverings and Cleaning)

As most of you will be aware [DfE published guidance for the full opening of schools](#) in September, which includes a set of protective measures which make up a PHE-endorsed system of controls. This system of controls includes a number of mandatory elements; which include:

The third item of the system of controls 'Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach'. Within the DfE guidance, it includes information about the **use of face covering in schools**. See extract below

'Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education. Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (for children over the age of 11) or when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient.'

DfE colleagues agreed today (16 July) that the PHE approved guidance does not intend to prohibit the use of face coverings in all situations. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people **you do not usually meet** and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, as for example happens on public transport or in shops.

The DfE published guidance is intended to simply confirm that PHE do not recommend the use of face covering in schools in general. However, DfE colleagues clarified that where following appropriate risk assessment(s) and supportive discussions with staff, it may be appropriate in individual circumstances or situations to allow/enable staff to use face covering. To be 100% clear - face coverings are not recommended but are not banned in any circumstances within schools and may be appropriate following risk assessment(s) and or careful consideration.

Enhanced cleaning

The fourth item of the system of controls must be in place in all schools, all the time (4) **introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents**. You may find the guidance ['cleaning in non-healthcare settings'](#) useful (last updated 15 July).

Updates on school transport and workforce guidance

We have raised many of your concerns around school transport issues, and the difficulties involved in supporting and encouraging more staff to return to work in school from the start of the term in September. DfE have confirmed they plan to issue updated guidance that will help to address these issues. This is expected to be published over the next week or so.

LGA Webinar's

Early notice - we are currently in the process of designing a webinar to further support you on the reopening of schools to all in September and are securing speakers from PHE, Directors of Public Health and DfE representatives and scheduling that webinar towards the end of August.

Don't forget we also have two school focused webinar's on 24th July:

Session1 - Pay webinar – a free webinar Time: 10am

Session 2 – Employment Law – this webinar costs £25

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