

This protocol, based on a risk assessment, is designed to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 infection for our In-school Volunteers. It follows Government advice. It updates the version of 25 March 2021.

Schools

We ask that schools:

1. Give volunteers an induction on their Covid-19 protection measures
2. Provide a well-ventilated workplace for the volunteer and child with enough surrounding space so that social distancing can be followed by other people
3. Copy volunteers promptly on an email (or similar) chain to alert them of any changes in health & safety re Covid-19, including any cases in the school.

We will discuss and agree this protocol with each school before volunteers go in.

Volunteers

1. Follow your school's measures in connection with Covid-19. (If you do not receive a health & safety induction from your school, please request it. If it is not forthcoming, please inform Number Champions accordingly and withdraw from the school until the situation is resolved. We will follow up directly with the school.)
2. We do not require you to wear a face covering. If the school requests this, please let your Area Leader know if this presents a problem for you and the charity will try to assist.
3. Maintain social distancing to the extent practical, and if you feel that you are not safe in an environment then please explain to the school and move out.
4. When sitting for your session with a child, try to maintain a distance of at least one metre. As the virus can be spread by droplets in the breath, it is better if you can face the same way as the child rather than directly towards them.
5. Before and after working with each child, clean your hands using hand sanitiser or soap and water. (We will pay expenses for a small hand sanitiser if requested.) You should also clean your hands after you leave the school.
6. In addition, as there is a small risk of infection from touching surfaces in the school (such as a bell pad or desk), when you have done so, clean your hands before touching your face.
7. Government advice is now that, although infection by touching objects is possible, it is much less likely than previously thought. The requirement above to clean your hands before and after working with each child therefore appears to be a reasonable mitigation of the risk of infection between you and a child from touching the same objects. In addition, the children will now be touching the same objects as each other throughout the day, so that there is limited additional risk of infection from child to child through the objects you use.

We have therefore removed our requirement that you should isolate objects you are going to use with each child.

However, you should continue to require that children bring their own whiteboards and pens to the session, as this is straightforward for them and slightly mitigates risk.

8. Check with the school if they require children to wash their hands after the session with you. If so, remind the child at the end of the session – however, it is not your responsibility to ensure that children do wash their hands.
9. If you have any reason to believe that you may be carrying Covid-19 – in particular if you or anyone in your household is showing any of the symptoms or has tested positive or has been advised to self-isolate – do not go into the school. Please inform the school and Number Champions promptly.

Government advice

“Transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) mainly occurs through respiratory droplets generated during breathing, talking, coughing and sneezing. These droplets can directly infect the respiratory tracts of other people if there is close contact. They also infect others indirectly. This happens when the droplets get onto and contaminate surfaces, which are then touched and introduced into the mouth or eyes of an uninfected person.”

Source: ‘Education and childcare during coronavirus’ - Department for Education

Medical advice is that face coverings do not prevent the wearer from contracting the virus, but they do reduce the risk of a wearer who has contracted the virus from transmitting it to others. It is government policy that masks should not be worn in schools unless there are special circumstances.

The government also advises everyone aged 16 or over to be doubly vaccinated against Covid unless there are specific medical reasons why an individual should not be vaccinated. This advice is extended to cover a third booster dose for those over 50 or particularly vulnerable.