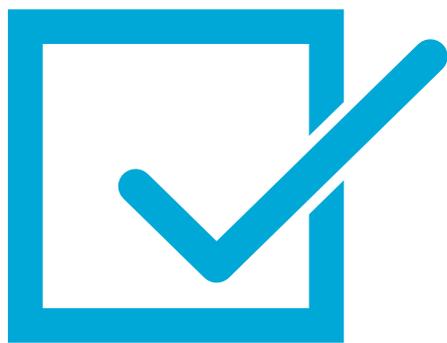




Inspection briefing and checklist for NEU health and safety reps



Coronavirus crisis
Workplace checklist



Although it is clearly not 'business as usual' in education at the moment, it is now more important than ever that National Education Union (NEU) health and safety reps continue with their functions and use their rights to ensure every member is working in as safe an environment as possible, whether at school/college or at home. For details of your role and rights see [here](#).

One of your key functions is to undertake an inspection of the premises. For full details of these rights see [here](#).

You have the right to physically inspect the workplace every three months, as long as you give reasonable notice in writing to your head teacher/principal. Where there has been a substantial change in conditions at work, more frequent inspections are permitted. The Covid-19 pandemic is an evolving situation in terms of how it impacts on educational establishments so more frequent inspections are recommended.

It is of course the case that undertaking an inspection during the current crisis is going to be a very different exercise compared to pre-pandemic. Parts of the premises may be inaccessible to you because of rules around 'bubbles'. This is likely to mean a greater emphasis on talking to members about any concerns, with the physical aspect of the inspection restricted to those areas that you can safely access.

The guidance and checklist below has been specifically designed to help you plan and undertake an inspection during the Covid-19 crisis, focusing on Covid-related issues. If you wish to combine this with a more general inspection please see [here](#). You should also consult where appropriate the relevant NEU planning checklists for extended opening in [primary schools/early years](#), [secondary schools/colleges](#), [further education](#) and [special schools](#).

In preparation for your inspection

Before you undertake a physical inspection, ask yourself a couple of questions:

Has your school/college consulted with you “in good time” about all actions or proposals over Covid-19?

This would include: minimum staffing levels, distancing, fair rotas, enhanced cleaning arrangements, hygiene procedures, eg handwashing protocols, safe travel to school, provision of PPE where appropriate, distance teaching, contact with students and their families at home, to name but a few. If this hasn't happened, request a video conference or phone consultation meeting with the head teacher, or a socially distanced meeting if that is appropriate.

Yes No

Have you been consulted over your school or college's risk assessments for Covid-19?

Are they “suitable and sufficient”? What do members think? If you haven't yet been consulted, request copies and an urgent meeting to discuss this. Examining the risk assessment is an important part of the inspection process, particularly at the present time. To help you assess the adequacy of your school or college risk assessment see [here](#).

Yes No

Have risk assessments for individual staff been undertaken?

What do members think? This [guidance](#) aims to assist leaders in undertaking this exercise.

Yes No

A combination of talking to members about any concerns, followed by a physical inspection of the premises will help you to assess whether the preventative measures in the risk assessment are working properly or not. **So, talk to your members, via email, video conferencing, or in a socially distanced meeting (or a combination of these) and ask for views on the following issues, plus any others that you think relevant, this is not an exhaustive list:**

Do they feel that arrangements to travel to and from school/college are safe?

There should be no car sharing apart from with household members and no use of public transport unless social distancing is possible.

Yes No

Do they have any concerns about the arrival of pupils at the start of the day and the behaviour of parents?

Yes No

Are they happy with how safe distancing is being implemented, in classrooms, corridors, at the start and end of working day, and at break and lunch times, for staff and pupils?

Yes No

Is enhanced cleaning taking place with the premises cleaned by cleaning staff before the start of every day, paying special attention to door handles, table/counter tops, taps computers including mouse and keyboard, light switches telephones, chairs, bannisters, toys and other areas touched regularly by staff and children, with additional checks and cleaning during the day?

Yes No

Does anyone have an issue with the cleanliness of a particular area?

Yes No

Are any teachers and support staff undertaking any inappropriate tasks, eg cleaning the premises (apart from wiping surfaces in their own classroom)?

Yes No

Are hand washing protocols in place and working smoothly?

Yes No

Does everyone, staff and pupils, wash hands on arrival?

Yes No

Are there arrangements in place to ensure adequate supplies of soap, warm water, sanitiser and tissues with checks during the day? If staff report shortages they should be promptly dealt with.

Yes No

Have non-essential meetings and procedures been cancelled and other communal gatherings, eg assemblies and sports events, been suspended and is this policy being adhered to?

Yes No

Are there concerns about workload, both for those working at home and at school?

Yes No

Are [staff who are more at risk](#) happy with their working arrangements?

Yes No

Is there a policy of no visitors, including parents, or contractors on site, unless in emergencies and is it being followed?

Yes No

Does everyone know [what to do](#) if someone, staff or pupil, develops Covid-19 symptoms during the day, including the cleaning procedure needed?

Yes No

Are there adequate supplies of [PPE](#) where there is a risk or airborne contamination because of pupils coughing, sneezing or spitting on staff?

Yes No

Are all staff trained in [how to use and dispose of it safely](#)?

Yes No

Has [guidance](#) been issued on safe working at home and do staff feel supported by management?

Yes No

Have efforts have been made to prevent mental health conditions arising and to support staff who may be experiencing [mental health issues](#)?

Yes No

Is everyone happy that where pupils and their families are [contacted by phone](#) that this is done safely?

Yes No

Does everyone know what to do in the event of fire, including how to assemble, taking into account the need for physical distancing?

Yes No

Are there sufficient rest facilities for when staff take their breaks, allowing for staff to eat, drink and rest in a safe, clean environment?

Yes No

Are staff able to use the toilets/washrooms safely and without undue delay?

Yes No

Is there a clearly understood procedure for when a child or member of staff develops symptoms during the day?

Yes No

Are mechanisms in place for staff to be able to safely report any concerns and incidents so they can be promptly actioned?

Yes No

Undertaking the inspection

Once you've considered the risk assessment and talked to members about any concerns, it's time to undertake your physical inspection of the workplace. Make sure you are clear which areas of the premises you can safely inspect.

It is helpful to ask a management representative to accompany you so you can try to agree how to resolve any problems as you walk around the premises. Remember you are checking that your school/college is complying with Government and NEU guidance.

Make sure you undertake the inspection during the working day while staff and pupils are present and ensure that you comply with protocols for social distancing. You might want to focus on particular areas and times, eg arrival and departure or lunch time, in which case it may be best to split your inspection up rather than doing it in one go. Below are examples of issues that you would need to check, but there may be others.

Is hand sanitiser available at reception?

Yes No

Comments

Are corridors and stairways clear, unobstructed and hazard free to prevent slips and trips (which could cause contact between people) and to aid social distancing?

Yes No

Comments

If a one-way system is in place, is it working?

Yes No

Comments

Are there floor markings to help keep people apart?

Yes No

Comments

Do all classrooms have windows which can open in order to allow proper ventilation?

Yes No

Comments

So far as possible, are windows opened daily to reduce the risk of airborne contamination?

Yes No

Comments

Can every classroom in use safely accommodate the number of children using it, allowing for 2m distancing?

Look out for examples of where this is not happening or not possible.

Yes No

Comments

Is there warm water, soap and hand towels in every washroom?

Yes No

Comments

Do the toilets/wash areas look clean (staff and pupil)?

Yes No

Comments

Is there hand sanitiser and tissues in every classroom, also cloths, gloves and disinfectant to allow for immediate wiping down if someone coughs or sneezes on a surface?

Yes No

Comments

Is there a first aider on duty?

Yes No

Comments

Does the first aider have access to PPE?

Yes No

Comments

Is social distancing for staff or students operating according to the protocol, for example, at the beginning or end of the school day, at lunch and break time?

Yes No

Comments

Can you spot examples where teachers or support staff are undertaking inappropriate work, eg cleaning work beyond wiping down surfaces in their own classroom?

Yes No

Comments

Are there sufficient senior staff on hand in corridors, playgrounds etc to monitor and control movement?

Yes No

Comments

Can you spot examples of where pupils are deliberately refusing to comply with social distancing or hygiene procedures?

Yes No

Comments

Can you spot any issues around the behavior of parents that may need to be addressed?

Yes No

Comments

After your inspection

- Prepare a written report listing the working practices and arrangements that you consider to be unsafe or unhealthy.
- Send to your head teacher/principal and copy to the chair of governors and request a written response.
- Share your report with members.
- Seek to agree any remedial action with management.
- Agree a deadline and check that the issues have been rectified.
- Keep members informed of progress and celebrate the role of the NEU health and safety rep in keeping everyone safe.
- If management does not act on concerns escalate to your branch or district secretary/ health and safety adviser. See [NEU guidance](#) on the health and safety aspects of schools opening more widely.

