



September opening: supplementary advice for peripatetic employees



Coronavirus crisis
Workplace checklist



Through our [checklist for September opening](#), the NEU is seeking to ensure that the anticipated full opening of schools and colleges in September can happen safely.

This document gives supplementary advice for peripatetic staff who work across a number of schools and/or undertake home visits.

As a peripatetic worker, your safety should be considered both by your own employer and by the employer in control of any premises which you may be visiting. Risk assessments should be conducted which consider the risks to you and the protective measures which need to be taken to help you work in safety.

Steps to be taken by employers in control of premises

For every school, there should be a risk assessment (conducted in consultation with staff) which sets out the measures in place for minimising contact and maintaining social distancing, arrangements for enhanced cleaning, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, for use of protective equipment and for managing suspected and actual cases of the virus. It should also set out contingency plans if full opening cannot happen, or needs to be rolled back in the future,

Protective measures should be considered for, and applied to, visiting staff as well as those permanently based in that school or college.

The NEU checklist sets out that:

- the school's risk assessment and procedures should take proper account of visiting workers;
- arrangements should be in place to ensure that supply and peripatetic workers and their employers are informed about the school's procedures and that visiting workers are supported in respect of safety measures when in school;
- procedures should ensure that authorised visitors, such as peripatetic staff, can access the premises without undue delay; and

- everyone in the school community (including visiting workers) should be told not to come into school if they have Covid-19 symptoms or have tested positive in the last 7 days and to self-isolate for 10 days and arrange to be tested if they develop symptoms.

The NEU is asking schools and colleges to ensure they adopt a policy that supply and peripatetic workers are continued to be employed as necessary, in order to ensure such staff are able to continue to offer support as needed.

Steps to be taken by your own employer

Your own employer needs to address your health and safety, in consultation where necessary with any schools or colleges that you may be visiting, as part of its own risk assessment arrangements.

Your employer, whether it is a local authority or trust, agency or private company, has overall responsibility for your health and safety. It must be satisfied that the workplace in which you will be working offers a safe working environment generally but also that your own specific working arrangements will be safely managed. This will require liaison between your line manager and the schools and colleges that you visit, in order to check that safe working for visiting staff has been adequately addressed as part of the risk assessment and that adequate protective measures are in place and will be communicated to you.

If you are medically vulnerable or otherwise at higher risk, or live with people who are, your employer should conduct a specific individual risk assessment which considers your circumstances and appropriate measures to protect you which might include working at home. Further NEU guidance for members in such groups is available [here](#).

Peripatetic staff face particular hazards associated with their working pattern.

These can include:

- ❑ Attending more than one educational setting in a day.
- ❑ Working across more than one bubble in each setting. (Government guidance is that teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable but at the same time schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing.)
- ❑ Travel between settings.

Each of these factors increases the number of contacts and potential for mixing during the working day, and your employer should consider how these risks could be mitigated.

- ❑ Can your engagements be carried out without actually visiting the school or college?
- ❑ Can your working pattern be arranged so that, as far as possible, you make one longer visit to each school, rather than visiting the same school on more than one separate occasion?
- ❑ Is it possible to limit your work to, for example, a maximum of one or two schools per day?
- ❑ Is it possible for schools to store your resources safely between visits, rather than requiring you to transport them?
- ❑ When working in a school, how can you be accommodated to carry out your role with as little movement as possible across bubbles, whether classes or year groups? If your role is a teaching role, is it possible to use a blended learning approach with a mixture of virtual and on-site teaching to help in this respect?

- ❑ If you have been classified as clinically extremely vulnerable, is it possible to use technology to carry out work from home? If not, and your work creates a significant risk due to necessary close personal contact with students who can't control behaviour such as spitting, coughing or sneezing, will PPE be provided as part of the risk assessment?
- ❑ If you cannot drive between settings, how can your use of public transport be minimised? Minimising movement during the day will help in this respect, as will engagements in locations within walking distance of each other.
- ❑ Waiving any requirement to return to the base/office as frequently as usual will also reduce the levels of travel.
- ❑ Issuing laptops will also reduce the need to return to the office/base as well as supporting virtual learning and meetings.

Visiting students in their home

As a general principle, the number of home visits should be minimised and only take place when their purpose cannot be achieved through, for example, a phone call, on-line meeting or meeting at another venue.

No visit should take place until the employer has undertaken a specific risk assessment for that visit in consultation with the worker undertaking the visit. This should also consider whether that person is at greater risk due to factors such as sex, age, ethnicity, or underlying medical conditions and whether the risks can be sufficiently mitigated with protective measures.

Even if the risk assessment determines that PPE is not required, anyone conducting a home visit should be permitted to wear a face covering if they wish to do so.

Before the visit takes place

1. Liaison should take place with the student and their family to seek agreement to maintain social distance of 2 metres during the visit and to let them know if you will be wearing a face covering/PPE.
2. If the family/student is deemed likely to not comply with social distancing, generally the visit should not go ahead. In some circumstances the risk assessment may conclude that it is safe to go ahead if appropriate PPE is used. In such cases the PPE must be provided by the employer and training given on its use and disposal.
3. The health status of the household should be checked on the day of the visit to establish: if anyone in the household has confirmed Covid-19, symptoms (including a dry persistent cough, raised temperature, sore throat or loss of taste/smell), or is self-isolating. If so, then the visit should not go ahead.

During the Visit

4. Any PPE used should be used in accordance with training given.
5. On arrival hands should be sanitised.
6. If possible, you should ask that windows, or doors where appropriate, be kept open.
7. You should keep 2 metres away from the student where possible.
8. As far as possible you should not put personal items down on surfaces.
9. Offers of food or drink should be politely turned down.
10. If you begin to feel unsafe/uncomfortable because of the behaviour of anyone in the household, the visit should be ended immediately.

After the visit

11. Equipment used during the visit, for example phones, laptops and books, should be sanitised.
12. Hands should be washed/sanitised on departure.
13. Any PPE used should be disposed of according to employer instructions.