

Coronavirus (COVID-19): reopening and operation of Outdoor Education Centres (OEC) and reintroducing visits by schools

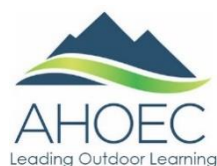
Guidance to support the safe reopening and operation of OEC for visits by schools

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This document was commissioned by the Scottish Government and developed by the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE) in partnership with other relevant organisations.



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1. Overview

This guidance has been developed for Outdoor Education Centres (OEC), education authorities and schools to support a safe reopening and operation of OEC for day visits by schools following the emergence of COVID-19 in Scotland. It may also be applicable in planning for school overnight visits when they are permitted to resume. It has been developed in partnership with relevant stakeholders. Complimentary to this technical guidance, [“Fit for The Future- Scotland’s Outdoor Education Centres” SAPOE 2020](#), outlines the educational value of OEC in respect of delivering outcomes associated with Curriculum for Excellence. The aims of this guidance are to:

Provide overarching framework of expectation regarding practical approaches to a safe reopening and operation of OEC for visits by schools;

Promote broad national consistency whilst ensuring appropriate local flexibility for OEC providers, education authorities, schools and staff to adapt and adopt approaches that best suit their needs and ensure the safety of staff, pupils and their families; and

Provide confidence and reassurance to education authorities, schools and other service users in reconnecting with OEC to book/confirm future visits and undertake those visits.

The guidance has been developed by a sub-group of The Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE). The group featured representation from SAPOE, the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres - Scotland (AHOEC), the Youth Link Scotland Outdoor Group, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government. Consultation was conducted with school and outdoor education staff and the guidance has also been informed by the scientific and public health advice available at the time of writing.

1.1 Relevant and linked guidance

This guidance sits within the context of schools reopening in August 2020 following the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures at the end of the 2019-20 academic year. It offers practical advice to allow school groups to return to OEC safely and effectively during the initial period of education recovery. It will therefore not be kept under review throughout the 2020/21 academic year or as scientific and public health advice evolves. However, aspects of this guidance may remain relevant throughout the 2020/21 academic year and schools, education authorities and OEC may wish to continue to consider its applicability as other national and local COVID-19 guidance continues to evolve.

The control measures in OEC need to be understood in parallel with changing school and care systems. Recommended precautions could be relaxed in the context of wider changes and levels of adherence as the prevalence and incidence of COVID-19 in Scotland reduce. Conversely, measures may need to be strengthened or reintroduced if there is evidence of a resurgence, or in the light of localised outbreaks. Where other relevant new legislation, guidance, science or risk tolerance has implications for this advice, it must also be taken into account.

This guidance should be read and applied in conjunction with employer guidance and the latest national guidance including those listed in Appendix 1.

Much of this linked guidance covers how to work safely in different types of workplace and operations and there will be some read-across. Education authorities’ guidance will provide local advice for their schools. OEC will need to work with visiting schools and education authorities to ensure local requirements are

met. It is anticipated this guidance will inform education authority expectations and lead to standardisation for OEC operators and visitors.

Nothing in this guidance affects the legal obligations of OEC providers, education authorities and schools with regard to health and safety and public health. OEC providers, education authorities and schools must continue to adhere to all such duties when implementing this guidance. Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, they must have regard to the advice relating to coronavirus from of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland. In the event of any conflict between any applicable legislation (including health and safety legislation) and this guidance, the applicable legislation must prevail.

1.2 Definition of OEC

For the purpose of this guidance, an OEC is defined as an establishment whose primary purpose, activity and delivery time is to provide Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to schools. These OEC and their onsite and offsite operations are providing education in partnership with schools, with visiting teachers and other school staff/volunteers and pupils in attendance. They are considered as educational settings. An OEC can be owned and/or operated by local authorities or third parties.

1.3 Advice from the Scotland's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues

[The Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues](#) (the Sub-Group) is an expert sub-group which gives detailed consideration of how public health advice can be applied to operational implementation in regard to education and children's issues.

The Sub-Group considered a number of issues which influenced [the Scottish Government's guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020](#). Many of the conclusions drawn by the Sub-Group (and endorsed in the Scottish Government guidance) will be applicable in the context of visits to OEC.

Sub-Group advice on the reopening of schools

The Sub-Group concluded that subject to continued suppression of the virus and to surveillance and mitigations being in place - the balance of the evidence suggests that no distancing should be required between children in primary schools. The evidence is less clear for secondary schools but at the time of writing, the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group supports the same approach being taken in secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks and the effectiveness of mitigations.

In addition, no physical distancing is required between pupils in primary and secondary schools. Two metre distancing should remain in place wherever possible between adults, and between adults and pupils who are not from the same household. Where adults cannot keep two metre distance, are interacting face-to-face and for about 15 minutes or more, face coverings should be worn.

On school transport dedicated services should be regarded as an extension of the school estate, with physical distancing measures between pupils therefore unnecessary for as long as infection rates in Scotland remain low.

There should be an increased emphasis on hand hygiene and surface cleaning. For example, hand washing and/or sanitising should be required for everyone on every entry to the OEC.

As close as possible to zero tolerance of symptoms should be in place, and strict compliance with the Test and Protect system.

In both primary and secondary settings, the preference should be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces and, as much as possible, to keep pupils within the same groups for the duration of the school day.

Sharing of equipment/utensils/toys/books should be minimised; and smaller groups and more outdoor activities put in place.

Movement between schools - of pupils, and of temporary/ supply/peripatetic staff should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Sub-Group advice on schools visits

The Sub-Group has also considered specific issues associated with school visits and this has influenced the recent publication - [Scottish Government Advice for Schools: Educational Visits and Trips – Autumn Term 2020](#).

The Sub-Group has advised that overall, the risks of virus transmission on a school visit which includes an overnight stay away from place of normal residence are greater than the potential benefits to children and young people.

Visits which include overnight stays should be introduced in an incremental manner. Planning for such visits should not commence until later in the school year, when there will be greater understanding about the virus and viral transmission. Actions in different settings will have developed further in response to that learning.

Decisions to reinstate school visits including an overnight stay will be dependent on there being low levels of Covid-19 infection in the population and on systems being in place for close monitoring, rapid testing and tracing of suspected cases.

Flexibility will be necessary within local areas based on data about local prevalence and community transmission.

Subsequently, the Scottish Government advises that neither foreign or domestic residential school visits go ahead in the 2020 autumn term. Domestic school day visits are considered appropriate if properly risk assessed.

This advice therefore only includes practical considerations for day visits to OEC.

2. Context

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures in Scotland has meant that schools visits and excursions have been unable to take place between March and August 2020. This includes visits to OEC.

The Scottish Government recognises the impact this has had on young people's lives, school confidence, the financial viability of OEC and their staff and has therefore commissioned two part guidance to support OEC recovery and renewal.

Complimentary to this technical guidance, ["Fit for The Future- Scotland's Outdoor Education Centres"](#) outlines the educational value of OEC in delivering outcomes associated with Curriculum for Excellence and restates Scottish Government's commitment to OEC experiences.

This Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific guidance supplements existing general national guidance for offsite visits: [Going Out There](#) the Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Off-site Visits. Education authorities have their specific local employer guidance for offsite visits, which should now include COVID-19 guidance for their schools. OEC may have to consider this information when undertaking their recovery and renewal planning.

3. How to use this guidance

OEC, education authorities and schools should exercise their expert judgement to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their staff and pupils, taking into account local circumstances. Recovery and renewal planning should consider this guidance in the local context and in adequate detail to achieve a safe reopening and operation of visits for schools.

Thereafter, review risk assessments and adapt standard operating procedures to minimise the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus in line with the nationally accepted education risk tolerances. These should be implemented consistently and robustly across the OEC's operation, including both facilities and educational procedures and staff.

In developing these recovery plans, standard operating procedures and risk assessments there should be collaboration with all stakeholders:

- All OEC staff.
- Education authorities, key staff who manage and approve OEC school visits (SAPOE).
- School leadership teams, teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Parents and carers.
- Pupils.
- Local landowners.
- Suppliers of services and goods.
- Local emergency services.

OEC operating procedures and risk assessments could be made available to education authorities and schools to support their offsite visit planning and approval procedures. However other methods of communicating this information should also be considered to help ensure that schools and education authorities are well informed in regard to operating procedures at an OEC. Schools are rarely competent to judge the adequacy of risk management of technical elements of OEC operation - adventure, transport, catering, accommodation, etc. Schools contract on trust that an OEC operator complies with legislation. Appropriately communicating what an OEC requires of visitors may instil more confidence in the revised arrangements than a large pdf technical risk assessment. Feedback processes about the implementation of safety measures in individual centres should be clear.

As the recovery from Coronavirus (COVID-19) evolves and the monitoring of infection rates continues, localised lockdowns and travel restrictions may prevent some school visits. OEC, education authorities and schools should consider this scenario, along with a return to a national lockdown, in their contingency planning.

Education authorities should apply this guidance to update their schools offsite visits guidance.

4. Scope of Guidance

This guidance is intended for the reopening and operation of Scottish OEC for visits by Scottish education authority schools. It may also be used by grant aided schools and independent schools to support their recovery and renewal efforts. It covers OEC onsite and offsite activity.

Some OEC also provide services to non-Scottish school groups. Whilst this guidance may be applicable to some of these activities, it is not intended as such.

5. Voluntary self-assessment assurance

To aid recovery, avoid duplication and support informed decision making by education authorities, Scottish OEC that can demonstrate through self-assessment that they have met COVID-19 education/care setting standards of compliance outlined in this guidance (Appendix 2) may choose to declare this. Being a self-assessment process the OEC/operator, as the employer is responsible for ensuring it adheres to these standards.

Individual education authorities should decide if and how they use the self-assessment of standards as part of their approval and monitoring processes and procedures.

OEC may already participate in schemes such as Visit Scotland's 'Good to Go'. These certainly have merit both for OEC compliance and prospective visitor's assurance, however we caution that prospective visitors confirm that any such assurance scheme is intended for Scottish school visits and achieves the standards of this guidance.

6. Operation considerations and practical approaches

The complexities of implementing these considerations and practical approaches in different OEC is not underestimated. The impacts of different approaches on staffing requirements, the challenges inherent in reducing interactions between schools and other key issues all require careful consideration to ensure successful implementation. However, Scottish Government advice states that school day visits may recommence in the 2020/21 autumn term if appropriately risk assessed. OEC ensuring that the practical approaches set out below are adhered to will make these risk assessments easier for schools and education authorities and ultimately improve the confidence of visiting school groups.

7. General considerations and practical approaches

7.1.1 Determining capacity

OEC should determine their capacity early in their recovery and renewal planning based on this guidance and other relevant advice and local circumstances such as buildings and outdoor space capacity and layout including toilet, washing and sleeping facilities; availability and accessibility to offsite venues/resources; predicted staff capacity and deployment; status of local suppliers of goods and services; and feedback from local emergency services and communities. Capacity may evolve as guidance and local circumstances change.

7.1.2 Roles, Responsibilities and Routines

Outdoor education and visiting school staff and pupils should be actively engaged in agreeing and establishing new practices and routines and understanding their role and responsibilities.

OEC and visiting schools should agree clear roles and responsibilities for the duration of the visit. Staff should consider how they will support pupils in undertaking a safe visit. Pupils should understand their role and responsibilities and any routines. This should be adjusted for different school groups and individuals' needs and abilities. Some pupils with additional support needs may require reasonable adjustments and support in understanding key responsibilities.

Public health measures, including good hygiene, should become a core learning outcome during a visit.

7.1.3 Pre-visit planning and visiting school induction and orientation

OEC and visiting school staff should undertake appropriate pre-visit planning to reduce and minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. This may include:

Pre-visit guidance for visiting school staff.

Pre-visit resources for pupils. Some OEC may choose to utilise 360 photography and film to allow remote familiarisation prior to occupation.

Preliminary planning visits by school staff to OEC may be an option in some limited cases although general needs should normally be met remotely. Significant caution is required with preliminary visits so not to increase the risk of interaction and therefore the transmission of the virus.

Exchanging key information for visiting staff and pupils, including contact information.

On arrival, visiting school staff and pupils should be inducted to the outdoor centre including its buildings, outdoor areas, equipment, routines and their roles and responsibilities. Visiting school staff and pupils should be familiar with the layout of the buildings and grounds and be able to orientate themselves around the site. Induction and orientation should be built into the visit programme. This should not be rushed and visiting school staff and pupils should have the opportunity to ask questions. Routines and requirements should be reinforced throughout the programme with regular opportunities for feedback between the OEC staff and visiting school staff.

Clear signage and colour coding on walls and floors could be implemented to help with wayfinding, along with taping off specific areas. Maps could be displayed detailing entry/exit points and circulation patterns. Appropriate visuals will be particularly important for younger pupils and for some pupils with additional support needs. These will need to be clear and child friendly to enable them to be understood by as many pupils as possible. These could include signs in braille (with appropriate arrangements made for hygiene) or signs that display meaningful symbols. Any signage that involves direct interaction from pupils will need to be cleaned regularly.

Learning activities for visiting staff and pupils aimed to develop familiarity.

7.1.4 Contact details

It is necessary for the OEC to liaise with the visiting school to ensure accessibility to contact information for visiting school staff and pupils. The OEC should also have an up to date record of its own staff.

OEC may need to update their privacy notice. It is important to ensure that data is collected and handled in line with data protection laws. Centres may want to refer to the Scottish Government's general [privacy notice](#), which has been developed for the hospitality and tourism sector.

7.2 Physical Distancing

Physical distancing applies to OEC and visiting school staff, pupils, external contractors, delivery people or any other visitors. It is essential that all these groups are taken into consideration. Physical distancing measures fall into two broad categories: increasing separation and decreasing interaction.

Subject to continued suppression of the virus, and to surveillance and mitigations being in place, no distancing should be required between pupils from the **same school** class or year group visiting an OEC. These pupils should be considered as one group/‘bubble’ and depending on numbers and local circumstances may be split into sub-groups for the duration of the visit.

For OEC who have assessed and approved the capacity and arrangements to cater for more than one school group, two metre distancing should remain in place between (i) pupils from different groups/‘bubbles’ within a single school e.g. different classes in a year group or different year groups and (ii) pupils from different schools.

Two metre distancing should remain in place wherever possible between adults, and between adults and pupils who are not from the same household.

Large gatherings and crowded spaces should be avoided.

Physical distancing should be considered in all relevant areas, including indoor and outdoor spaces, and those not used for learning and teaching, e.g. pupils’ cloakrooms, changing rooms, entrance halls, previously shared areas, staff rooms, kitchens and facilities maintenance areas. This should be included within risk assessments and appropriate staff involved.

The implementation of physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning and the specific needs of individuals and different school groups. For instance, how physical distancing is implemented for P5s, pupils with complex needs or disabilities and for pupils in the senior phase will be different.

7.2.1 Face coverings

Face coverings are not required for most pupils (those clinically advised to wear a covering are an exception).

OEC and visiting staff also do not need to wear face coverings. However, where staff are unavoidably in enclosed spaces, where physical distancing is more difficult and where there is a risk of close contact with others, face coverings should be worn. Anyone (whether pupil or adult) wishing to wear face protection should be enabled to do so. As the wearing of face coverings becomes more commonplace in Scotland, it is possible that more people may choose to wear a face covering in the school and OEC setting. The wearing of face coverings during activities will need to be risk assessed to determine how this may affect the safety of the session. If an OEC considers there to be an unacceptable increase in risk, then mitigating measures should be considered and implemented. This should normally be identified at the pre-activity planning stage and included in risk assessments.

7.2.2 Practical approaches to physical distancing – use of indoor spaces

OEC and visiting schools should consider the following practical approaches to ensuring the effective implementation of physical distancing strategies for physical distancing requirements.

Layout of rooms. Consideration may be given to how to create zones within shared rooms to maintain physical distancing.

Careful consideration should be given to the removal of unnecessary items in rooms to maximise capacity and decrease the number of items requiring cleaning.

Storage of these items should be considered at a local/individual setting level.

Repurposing rooms/areas to increase capacity. Very large indoor spaces may be repurposed to accommodate multiple purposes.

Temporary screens may be used to divide the space to provide appropriate separation between persons.

Floor markers may be considered to ensure relevant persons queue 2m apart from each other.

All staff rooms, bases and offices should be reconfigured to ensure the physical distancing rule of 2m is maintained.

Ensure there are adequate handwashing and toilet facilities accessible to all adults. Note there may be an increased demand due to the increased frequency of hand washing.

7.2.3 Practical approaches to physical distancing – use of outdoor spaces

Evidence suggests that outdoor environments can limit transmission, as well as more easily allowing for appropriate physical distancing between adults and pupils, and adults and other adults. OEC should consider providing even more activity, including briefings at the start and end of the day, outdoors. Safety in all weathers and security issues would require to be considered in each location. Additional shelter may be required.

Select appropriate activity locations so adults and pupils can space out and maintain physical distancing.

Modify the activity programme to avoid activities that can only operate in confined spaces.

Modify individual activities to consider the location, task and individual needs.

Increase shelter provision and size so that adults and pupils can space out and maintain physical distancing.

7.2.4 Decreasing interaction

In addition to spatial solutions to maintain physical distancing, the spread of the virus can be minimised through reducing the number and frequency of interactions between different separated school groups from a single school or across different schools. Consider appropriate approaches to minimising interactions between school groups and staff, including at social and dining times.

Outdoor education staff movements. To minimise the need for large numbers of pupil transits, it may be beneficial to keep groups of pupils in one location and have staff move to them. Reducing the amount of pupil circulation minimises contact with surfaces such as door handles which can help reduce virus spread.

One-way systems. Managing pupil circulation by adopting one-way systems within corridors and stairs may help avoid bottlenecks and ease travel around the OEC.

External circulation. As part of an amended circulation strategy, it may be beneficial to encourage the use of outdoor areas to move between parts of the building. This would reduce the density of use of the internal areas and also provide some movement and fresh air. Outdoor one-way systems may also avoid bottlenecks in external locations that are narrow, particularly in areas that may involve queuing. Appropriate solutions would be specific to each location.

Soft changeovers. Regardless of the number of transitions in a day, the density of use of circulation space may be reduced by having soft changeovers. Consideration may be given to flexibility on session

start/finish times and avoids the intensity of flow which some OEC may experience i.e. all sub-groups start and finish at the same time. It also provides a calm and managed experience which better prepares staff and pupils for the next session.

Signage/communication. Appropriate signage or verbal communication about the system adopted should be implemented. This will should be included during induction and orientation activity and reinforced throughout the visit.

Timetabling dedicated zones. Creative timetabling has the potential to reduce interaction and thereby the transmission of infection. Some approaches that OEC may consider include the following:

- Avoid the use of shared indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities between different separated school groups within a single school or across different schools. This should include toilet and washing facilities. Allocate dedicated rooms to different groups/schools and consider the access and exit arrangements to minimise interactions. Allocate different outdoor areas/zones, which can be timetabled. Clear signage and good communication will ensure interactions are minimised.
- Groups being offsite throughout the programme to ensure a more even spread of offsite and onsite provision e.g. avoid all the groups being onsite on one afternoon.
- Avoid bottlenecks at different outdoor offsite venues. This may involve reviewing offsite location and finding new sites. The safety of sessions must never be compromised by changing locations and using less suitable sites. Local negotiations with landlords may be required.
- Minimising transitions e.g. extending activity times and reducing the number of different activities in one day. This needs to be carefully balanced between the value of minimising interaction, other safety considerations and the educational value of the experience.

Dining times and locations Adequate and appropriate supervision should be planned. Arrangements in each setting may depend on whether the dining hall is used as an additional learning or meeting space (additional cleaning would then be required):

Staggering break and meal times for different groups. Include cleaning in-between groups.

Pre-packed cold food at lunchtimes may allow more flexibility to use indoor locations other than the dining hall and outside. Food should be delivered to an allocated space rather than pupils and staff lining up at a central location. Robust hygiene arrangements should be adhered to.

Limiting the number of staff using staffrooms and bases at any one time. Numbers will naturally be less than usual if staggered lunch/break times are implemented.

Timetable social times and allocate indoor and outdoor spaces to minimise interaction. Good signage and communication will minimise risks.

Allocation of OEC staff. Assign one multi-activity instructor to one sub-group or within a group for the duration of the visit significantly reduces interactions across separated school groups. The safety of activity sessions should never be compromised, staff must be competent to supervise an activity. Adjustments may need to be made to the range of activities available or to individual activity.

Interactions between instructors assigned to differed separated groups should be minimised whenever possible. This may for example include separate safety-briefings at the start and end of each day.

7.2.5 Evacuation

If the layout of facilities is changed, and/or circulation routes or entry/exit points are altered, consideration should be given to evacuation procedures (e.g. in the event of a fire or other incident). Creating longer

and/or more complex evacuation routes should be avoided. Muster points should also be considered to maximise appropriate separation and minimise interaction as far as practically possible. This should be included as part of the fire risk assessment for the OEC. Evacuation arrangements for pupils with complex needs or disabilities should be reviewed in light of any changes.

7.2.6 Arrival and departure

Staggered arrival and departure times, good circulation, clear signage and good communication including appropriate pre-visit information and liaison should minimise risks. Large gatherings of people should be avoided and appropriate physical distancing maintained.

7.2.7 Toileting provision

This should involve allocating specific facilities to certain groups for the duration of the visit. There should be clear signage and good communication to visiting school staff and pupils. If some sharing of facilities cannot be avoided, then this should be risk assessed and robust mitigating measures implemented. This may include timetabling and robust cleaning in-between use.

7.2.8 OEC staff facilities

Outdoor education staff should be consulted in organising appropriate facilities and provision. Dedicated washing and toilet facilities for centre staff should be provided with clear signage. Visiting staff and pupils should know to avoid these facilities. Two metre physical distancing should be maintained in toileting facilities and good personal hygiene followed. If the sharing of washing facilities such as showers cannot be avoided, this should be risk assessed and robust mitigating measures implemented. This may include timetabling and robust cleaning in-between use.

7.3 Hygiene, Health and Safety

7.3.1 Health and Safety Check

If the OEC has been closed for many weeks or if parts of the building have been out of use for a long period, the centre should undertake a health and safety check of the building and outdoor areas concerned and deep cleaning prior to reopening where necessary.

OEC may consider using guidance from The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE): [Emerging From Lockdown Safely Re-Occupying Buildings](#) via [SportScotland](#).

7.3.2 Cleaning and disinfecting

A priority emphasis should be on surface cleaning. All cleaning and disinfecting should be carried out in accordance with [Health Protection Scotland COVID 19 guidance for non-healthcare settings](#). This includes guidance the environmental decontamination (cleaning and disinfection) after a possible case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Consideration should be given to the cleaning schedules and procedures to be adopted using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses. This may require a review of OEC staffing to ensure additional cleaning hours are available.

OEC should ensure regular (at least twice daily) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces (e.g. telephones, keyboards, door handles, desks and tables).

Ensure that where possible movement of individuals between work stations is minimised. Where work spaces are shared make sure there is cleaning between use and ensure there are adequate disposal facilities (e.g. avoid hot desks and instead each individual has a designated desk).

Wedging doors open, where appropriate, to reduce touchpoints. This does not apply to fire doors.

Careful consideration should be given to removing any soft furnishings/toys that are hard to clean.

Surfaces in dining halls should be wiped down and disinfected in between each sitting. Standard procedures can be used for cleaning cutlery and crockery.

Staff should be allocated or use their own cup/cutlery and ensure these are cleaned straight after use. Any crockery and cutlery in shared kitchen areas should be cleaned with warm general-purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use.

Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and appropriate physical distancing is achieved as much as possible. Guidance has been published on the [safe use of toilets](#). This may be included in risk assessment work.

Timetabled cleaning of any shared staff washing facilities including bathrooms and showers. Clear signage should be used to ensure cleaning is undertaken before the next user.

Work vehicles cleaned between different passengers or shifts as appropriate.

Other key areas and resources cleaned including central staff areas, indoor fixed activity equipment cleaned, outdoor fixed play and activity equipment and shared activity equipment (when sets of equipment cannot be allocated to school groups).

Changeovers After the OEC is vacated it should be cleaned and disinfected, ensuring regular detergent cleaning schedules and procedures are in place using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses and where a suspected case has vacated premises follow the guidance in Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings](#). The linen and waste should be managed as per the guidance in Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings](#). If OEC staff are not present or on call, for example at night, visiting school staff should be provided with adequate guidance and instructions to assist in effective infection prevention and control measures.

7.3.3 Personal hygiene

Hand washing/sanitising should be required for **everyone** on arrival to the OEC. This includes the centre staff entering the site per day or per shift. Good signage will remind arrivals and communicate the appropriate technique. Encourage all staff, pupils, volunteers, contractors and other visitors to maintain personal hygiene throughout the day,

Teach and reinforce pupils good hand hygiene technique and emphasise the importance of putting it into practice. A video by Food Standards Scotland shows pupils how to carry out effective hand washing <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/education-resources/happy-hands>

Frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, particularly when entering/leaving the building and before/after eating.

Encouraging pupils/staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose.

Using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins, that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.

Adequate facilities should be available for hand hygiene, including handwashing facilities that are adequately stocked or alcohol-based hand rub at key areas (e.g. entry and exit points).

Consideration should be given to the installation of outdoor hand basins or hand sanitisers at entry/exit points, to allow all building users to wash hands as they enter/leave the building at transition times. Help should be given to those pupils who struggle to wash their hands independently.

Bathrooms should be fully supplied for handwashing and drying.

7.3.4 Ventilation

Where applicable, ventilation systems should be checked or adjusted to ensure they do not automatically reduce/increase ventilation levels due to differing occupancy levels. The opening of doors and windows should be encouraged to increase natural ventilation and also to reduce contact with door handles. A ventilated space should be available for pupils and staff who become symptomatic to wait in until they can be collected or safely get home.

Consider using guidance from The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE): [CIBSE COVID-19 Ventilation Guidance](#) via [SportScotland](#).

7.3.5 Adherence to Test and Protect

Familiarise themselves with the [Test and Protect \(Test, Trace, Isolate and Support\) strategy](#) that local health boards and Public Health Scotland have implemented. There should be a strict compliance with the Test and Protect system. Visiting staff do not need to take pupils' temperatures every morning.

7.3.6 Stay at home guidance

All staff and pupils should be supported to follow up to date health protection advice on isolation if they or someone in their household exhibits Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or if they have been identified by NHS contact tracers as a close contact of someone with the disease.

Staff and pupils who develop symptoms consistent with Coronavirus (COVID-19) must stay at home, self-isolate, and contact the NHS for advice on testing. Those who do test positive for Coronavirus (COVID-19) will be asked to continue to self-isolate for 10 days and their close contacts, identified through contact tracing, will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days. Visiting staff or pupils who test positive or are identified as close contacts prior to the visit and self-isolation dates fall within the visit date; these persons should not travel. This may have a significant impact on the feasibility of the visit.

Plan as much as possible to minimise the operational impact of individual staff or groups of staff being required to self-isolate.

7.3.7 People who become symptomatic onsite

OEC and visiting school staff must know what to do if someone becomes symptomatic whilst at the centre. This scenario should be part of workforce training. Staff and pupils should understand the symptoms to look for and should report any concerns about COVID-19 symptoms. There should be as close as possible to zero tolerance of symptoms put into place. Information on symptoms are available via the [NHS Choices](#) website.

A ventilated space should be available for pupils/staff who become symptomatic to wait in until they can be collected or safely get home. The OEC and visiting school should liaise immediately with the NHS Test and Protect Team and the school's education authority for further advice. Discussion may be required with the local Health Protection Team and the centre's local authority to plan the next steps. Visiting schools should comply with their education authority's procedure for informing appropriate persons and parents.

Contact details for local public health teams can be found in Appendix 1 of the Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings](#).

7.3.8 Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where appropriate

All OEC should follow existing advice on the use of personal protective equipment in educational facilities.

The use of PPE by staff within education facilities should be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual pupil, such as personal care where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids. Schools and education authorities already have set risk assessment processes for the use of PPE with pupils. Following any risk assessment (individual or organisational), where the need for PPE has been identified it should be readily available and provided and staff should be trained on its use.

Risk assessments should already exist for pupils with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments should be updated for a visit to an OEC.

Face coverings are not considered to be PPE.

7.3.9 Minimising sharing of resources

Resources shared between, rather than within, groups (such as board games, magazines and books, snacks etc.) should be restricted. OEC should consider allocating groups sets of equipment to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus. Sets should then be cleaned between school groups. Soap, rinse and dry may be sufficient; some chemical based cleaners could have a detrimental effect of life span of PPE equipment such as fabric harnesses and helmet straps. In this case, the manufacturer's advice should be followed.

7.3.10 First aid

OEC and visiting schools should review their first aid needs to ensure they can provide the cover needed for persons that are present onsite and offsite and the activities that they are doing. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance covers [first aid requirements in non-healthcare settings](#) during the outbreak, as well as first aid cover and qualifications.

7.3.11 Food operations (preparation and dining)

[Food Standards Scotland advice](#) is designed to assist businesses in following government guidance on infection prevention and control measures against COVID-19. It has been produced with input from the food industry and Trade Unions and reflects the most up to date advice from Scottish and UK Government and Health Protection Scotland.

OEC staff should check this advice and the Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings](#) guidance regularly.

For any self-catering led by visiting school staff the OEC should provide adequate guidance and instructions to assist in effective infection prevention and control measures.

Based on the available information, three risks have been identified by Food Standards Scotland:

Risk from contaminated food – evidence suggests that the risk from contaminated food is very low. It is highly unlikely coronavirus can be spread through food however as with other infections good hygiene practices should be followed in food preparation.

Risk from infected food handlers – evidence suggest the main mechanism of transmission is considered to be human to human. All food workers should ensure the necessary personal and environmental controls are in place to prevent the transmission of pathogens through food, food preparation surfaces or food packaging, in line with their business' Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP).

Risk from contaminated food contact materials - evidence suggests that the risk from food contact materials is very low. Good hygienic practices should already be in place during the manufacturing stages to significantly reduce the risk of contaminating any food contact materials and articles.

It is important to follow good hygiene practice at all times when handling food, taking the following precautions to prevent the spread of infection:

Washing hands thoroughly throughout the preparation of food, in particular: after coughing or sneezing; after going to the toilet; and before eating and drinking.

Hand sanitiser gels can be used in addition to hand washing, but they only work on clean hands. They should not normally be used as a substitute to hand washing. If this is unavoidable, such as for handling packed lunches offsite, appropriate sanitiser should be used to minimise risks. Pupils and staff should not share food.

Minimise whenever possible direct hand contact with food by using tongs and utensils. Gloves can be used to minimise direct contact with food. However, gloves can become contaminated with bacteria in the same way as hands so are not a substitute for good personal hygiene and hand washing

Ensuring any crockery and cutlery in shared kitchen areas is cleaned with warm general-purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use; and

Avoiding leaving food stuffs (e.g. crisps, open sandwiches) exposed and open for communal sharing unless individually wrapped.

For the routine operation of OEC facilities, standard procedures can be used for cleaning cutlery and crockery.

To minimise interaction and infection risks visiting school groups may decide not to use offsite sit-in restaurants or equivalent.

For whole-day activity sessions packed lunches may be taken offsite OEC, visiting school staff and pupils should follow good hygiene practice at all times when handling food as detailed above.

7.4 Planned learning activities, including sport and physical activity

The [Getting Outside During COVID-19 Active Outside](#) webpages assist OEC by bringing together current national advice and outdoor organisations to help them decide where to go and what to do.

7.4.1 General Considerations for Activity Sessions

The safety of the activity should not be compromised. If by applying Coronavirus (COVID-19) measures to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus means the activity is deemed too high risk, then the OEC should modify the activity or cancel it. Modifying an activity may involve changing the task, location, timing, equipment and supervision.

Standard operating procedures and risk assessment should be reviewed, modified and implemented to reduce the risk of transmission. OEC may consider creating an overarching risk assessment to include general COVID-19 risks and controls.

Outdoor activity. The use of outdoor activity should be maximised. Scientific advice is that transmission risks are very low in outdoor settings. There are no restrictions on the length of time staff and pupils can be outside. There are no limits on the number of activities that pupils can do in a day.

Maximise adult physical distancing. Maintain two metre physical distancing between adults and adults and adults and pupils. When this is not possible, have appropriate mitigating measures in place, which should include a face covering, and ensure that time spent within 2 metres of applicable individuals is kept to an absolute minimum.

Reducing interaction. If possible allocate staff to the school group for the duration of the visit. Pupil and staff interaction across separated school groups should be avoided.

Personal hygiene. Everyone should adopt an increased emphasis on hand hygiene and surface cleaning. Regular hand washing should be required for everyone. If offsite away from hand-washing facilities, hand-sanitiser should be used regularly and especially before eating food.

Sharing of activity equipment. Sharing of equipment across schools should be avoided. Activity equipment should be allocated to schools whenever reasonably practicable. If sharing of equipment is unavoidable, a robust cleaning schedule should be put in place for cleaning between groups of pupils using it. The sharing of instructor clothing and kits should also be avoided.

Activity locations. When selecting activity onsite and offsite locations, the preference should be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces. Interaction with other school groups and members of the public should be avoided. This should involve timetabling of activity and the appropriate selection of activity locations to minimise risks.

Meeting needs. Liaise with visiting school staff to understand pupil and visiting staff needs. This will assist the instructor in make reasonable adjustments to the activity. This should be considered in advance of the activity and dynamically assessed throughout the activity.

Plan, prepare, deliver and review. Adjust activity time in order to implement essential COVID-19 specific measures including robust cleaning schedules. OEC staff should not be put under time pressure which may result in missing essential measures. Visiting school staff undertaking self-led activity should be adequately inducted and briefed about essential COVID-19 specific measures. Feedback should be reviewed regularly with adjustments made to minimise risks.

Emergency first aid treatment. OEC should review first aid procedures in line with the latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice for [first aiders](#) and in consultation with competent organisations. OEC may undertake supplementary in-house training with their staff to test, review and improve responses to different scenarios.

Consideration of others. Planning and delivery should be mindful of the potential impact activity could have on other users of offsite locations, local communities and local emergency services.

7.4.2 Activity-specific guidance

Additionally, OEC should regularly review sport national governing bodies or equivalent activity-specific advice. SportScotland has published [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and resources](#) which provides website links for sport governing bodies and [Coronavirus \(COVID 19\) & Sport FAQ](#). OEC will need to consider the updated guidance regarding physical distancing for schools when reviewing and applying sport national governing body advice alongside.

Camping experiences, including wild camping, during visits to OEC should be risk assessed and control measures applied within the context of this activity to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus.

7.5 Facilities management

Any maintenance work carried out should adhere to the principles of physical distancing and cleaning schedules and procedures, also applying to visiting contractors. Facilities management staff should consider reconfiguring layouts and marking out zones. If facilities staff cannot adhere to the principles of physical distancing, then consideration should be given to possible mitigation measures to minimise the closeness and duration of time that is spent within 2 metres, including the use of face coverings. A risk assessment should be undertaken.

If spaces are to be used in different ways from those originally designed/intended, and with less/more overall footfall, consideration should be given to the ongoing facilities management of these spaces.

7.6 Early supplier engagement and deliveries

Suppliers; undertake early engagement with suppliers to understand order windows to secure supply of goods and services which are essential to its day to day operation.

Deliveries; a risk assessment and procedures in place for deliveries to minimise person-to-person contact. Deliveries should be timed to avoid when visiting groups are onsite or if this is not possible to avoid key transition times, with methods devised to reduce the frequency of deliveries e.g. ordering larger quantities less often. Provide appropriate hand hygiene facilities at drop off points, with clear signage on access rules.

7.7 Transport

7.7.1 between the school and OEC

School transport dedicated services, such as dedicated coaches and minibuses, should be regarded as an extension of the school estate, with physical distancing measures between pupils therefore unnecessary for as long as infection rates in Scotland remain low.

The journey to and from the outdoor centre, including stops, should be risk assessed and consider the following:

Important mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Hand sanitising should be required for everyone on every entry to dedicated school transport.

Pupils and adults should be assigned seats which they use consistently throughout the journey; and that the consumption – and especially the sharing – of food and drink (including snacks) is not allowed.

Any adults travelling by dedicated school transport should conform to the requirements for public transport. Visiting schools will need to liaise with transport suppliers to ensure there is sufficient capacity and physical distancing for adults is maintained.

Some pupils with Additional Support Needs require adult carers to travel with them, often in close proximity. In general, it is advised that these adults should be very alert to symptoms, and should wear face coverings as a general rule. However, this should be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child, recognising that face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children. Any measures should be part of the pre-visit planning process.

Drivers, adults and pupils should follow general hygiene guidance throughout the journey. Where hand washing is not possible hand sanitiser should be used regularly throughout the journey, in particular during toilet and eating stops and after performing any tasks that involve touching a surface that may have been touched by someone else.

During phases 3 and 4 of Scotland's Route Map, visiting schools should avoid using public transport to travel to and from OEC.

7.7.2 OEC transport

OEC transport refers for vehicles such as minibuses which are used solely for the purpose of transporting visitors to, from or within the grounds of OEC. Where journeys in these vehicles are reserved for the exclusive use of staff and pupils from a single visiting school, they can be treated in the same way as dedicated school transport (see section 7.7.1). However, robust cleaning schedules and routines should be used to clean vehicles in-between different groups and drivers. In addition, the use of dedicated transport should be risk assessed as a matter of course and the use of the same OEC vehicle by different schools as part of the same visit is not advised.

7.8 Workforce

Initial and ongoing training is essential to build a common understanding of requirements within the new working norm and instil confidence that changes made will contribute to a safe working environment.

OEC should consider a re-opening induction process for all centre staff covering new, enhanced hygiene and physical distancing measures. This will demonstrate how an OEC has adapted their working environment to control serious COVID-19 risks. This should increase workforce and visiting schools confidence communicating that the workplace is safe while also being clear on individual employee responsibilities.

Staff should be consulted in their training needs at the start and during the recovery and renewal process. Training programmes can then be adjusted to best meet the needs of the workforce.

SportScotland has published advice [Getting Coaches Ready for sport](#) via their [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and resources](#).

Staff PPE for general working should be CE marked, allocated to staff to minimise interactions. Staff should consider wearing a new set clothing each day, cleaning of uniforms and outdoor clothing water proofs.

The simultaneous use of tertiary/casual/freelance/self-employed/sessional inter OEC transient staff working at different centres clearly presents a higher risk of transmission to and between OEC, school bubbles and staff teams. OEC should whenever reasonably practicable aim to employ these staff for bubble visit blocks of dedicated working. This will reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. However like schools, it must be assumed that temporary and supply staff may be an essential response to sudden reduced staffing due to self-isolation. OEC management staff should monitor staff capacity and have contingency plans in place. Activities should not be undertaken without adequate supervision by competent persons.

7.9 Pupils with Additional Support Needs

For pupils with Additional Support Needs, visiting schools should work in partnership with parents, lead professionals, pupils and outdoor education staff to establish what support and plans need to be put in place to meet their needs for the visit. Requirements and mitigations should be put in place to reflect individual circumstances in line with any specific clinical advice. Guidance on hygiene/ health and safety in ASN facilities, including personal care, should be followed.

7.10 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) pupils and staff

The concerns within BAME communities must be recognised and individual requests for additional protections should be supported where reasonably practicable to do so. Care should be taken to ensure that BAME staff, pupils and families are involved in decisions about additional protections.

7.11 Special considerations for people who are clinically vulnerable, persons shielding or those living with persons who are shielding

There is a need for risk assessment for staff in the categories at risk and vulnerable returning to work. A change of role may be safer, Home working should also be considered. Staff caring for those in the vulnerable and shielding categories should be identified.

7.12 Significant occurrences

OEC and visiting schools should review their significant occurrence plans, procedures and resources to incorporate COVID-19 related significant occurrences.

7.13 Communication and feedback

OEC should ensure regular, timely and clear communication with their visiting schools. This should make visiting staff feel informed and confident about their visit.

Visiting schools should communicate appropriate information to parents to facilitate their confidence in the visit and to provide suitable opportunities to answer any questions.

Centres should listen to feedback from their staff and visiting staff and pupils. This should be used to further develop practice and procedures.

7.14 Incident Reporting

OEC and visiting school staff should know procedures for reporting COVID-19 related incidents, including near misses and report to HSE under RIDDOR as required.

7.15 Insurance

In general, schools will be covered for cancelled visits (whether to OEC or otherwise) by existing insurance policies held at either school or education authority level. However, the unprecedented nature of the current pandemic has meant uncertainty around cover for cancellations that specifically result from COVID-19 related disruption.

It is advised that schools, education authorities and OEC engage in early dialogue with each other and their respective insurers to establish in which circumstances claims can be made for cancelled visits.

Further advice on insurance related to domestic school visits can be found at the website of the [Association of British Insurers](#).

Where existing insurance plans do not cover COVID-19 related cancellations and it is not reasonable to amend cover, it may be beneficial for schools, education authorities and OEC to engage in dialogue with each other to see if all parties can still be catered for in the event of a cancellation (see section 7.16). This approach would seek to maintain the educational opportunities that visits to OEC provide to pupils.

7.16 Terms and Conditions

Many OEC have already amended their terms and conditions relating to pandemics and COVID-19 in particular. Many are willing to work in partnership and be flexible with bookers to further negotiate terms and conditions if the booker requires an adjustment relating to these scenarios. Where the booker is collecting payments from participants or guardians they should make it clear with the payee that the transaction is with them as the booker and not with the provider. Parents/ Guardians should be informed of the details of their transactions and where financial risks lie as well as who their transactions are with. Bookers should ensure they understand the level of insurance their own cover provides them and every effort should be made to ensure that they have their own appropriate insurance cover. Sharing details of this cover with parents/ guardians is recommended.

7.17 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Effective monitoring, evaluation and review are important parts of a health and safety culture and will minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. OEC should have robust management systems which enable continuous improvement.

Appendix 1 Related and linked guidance

SAPOE [The Educational Value of Scotland's Outdoor Education Centres 2020](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): support for continuity in learning](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus Act 2020-educational continuity direction](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on re-opening school age childcare services](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for the community learning and development sector](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Phase 3: Scotland's route map update – 30 July 2020](#)

Scottish Government [COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus in Scotland information and guidance](#)

Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): framework for decision making](#)

Food Standards Scotland [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice.](#)

Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings.](#)

Health Protection Scotland [COVID-19 workforce education information and resources.](#)

Health Protection Scotland [Information and guidance for social, community and residential care facilities.](#)

Health Protection Scotland [advice for social or community care and residential settings staff](#)

- [Care Inspectorate coronavirus information](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive coronavirus information](#)
- [UK Boarding Schools Association COVID-19 guidance](#)
- [Scottish Council of Independent Schools](#)
- [Independent Schools Council](#)
- [National Transport Guidance portal](#)
- [Outdoor Learning Directory](#)
- [Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education](#)

Appendix 2 Voluntary standard

Assurance required by SAPOE member local authorities and their schools will likely cover this breadth and depth of provision.

- ✓ Activities – The safety of the activity will not be compromised. If by applying Coronavirus (COVID-19) measures to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus means the activity is deemed too high risk, then the outdoor education centre will modify the activity or cancel it. Modifying an activity may involve changing the task, location, timing, equipment and supervision.
- ✓ Arrival – Induction will take place, detailing new routines/ requirements for visiting school staff and pupils.
- ✓ Catering – Evidence suggests that the risk of contracting coronavirus through food is very low. All Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point procedures should be adhered to as normal.
- ✓ Evacuation – In the event of emergency evacuation all fire exits may be used and must remain accessible.
- ✓ Face coverings – Face coverings are required only when staff cannot keep 2m distance apart from other adults or pupils, for face to face interactions of 15 minutes or more, indoors or outdoors, and then only for staff. In such cases the time spent within a 2 metre distance should be kept to a minimum.
- ✓ First Aid - The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance covers [first aid requirements in non-healthcare settings](#) during the outbreak, as well as first aid cover and qualifications. This HSE guidance will help employers ensure first aiders are confident that they can help someone injured or ill at work during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It is essential that first aiders understand the requirement to provide emergency first aid should the need arise.
- ✓ Hygiene – All those working at or visiting the outdoor education centre will be encouraged to maintain personal hygiene standards to a high level including frequent handwashing with soap.
- ✓ Location – As much activity as possible will take place outdoors, including activities that have previously been undertaken in a classroom, where possible.
- ✓ Parcels/ Bubbles – Each school group will be considered a bubble and will be allocated a parcel onsite. Appropriate signage or verbal communication about the system adopted will be implemented. One way systems may be implemented. Avoid the use of shared indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities between different separated school groups within a single school or across different schools. This will include toilet and washing facilities. Allocated dedicated rooms to different groups/schools and consider the access and exit arrangements to minimise interactions. Allocated different outdoor areas/zones, which can be timetabled. Staggered break and meal times and arrangements for different groups. Include cleaning in-between groups.
- ✓ Resources – Each group is allocated its own resources and these are not shared between other groups at the same time with a gap between use of 72 hours or cleaning of resources between uses. Sharing of resources including equipment, across different bubbles, will be avoided.
- ✓ Staff – Where possible, assigning the same member/s of staff to the group for the duration of their visit. Safety must never be compromised and as such consideration should be given to the activities being offered. Minimise staff contact between different bubbles/ groups.
- ✓ Symptoms COVID-19 - All staff and pupils should follow up to date health protection advice on isolation if they or someone in their household exhibits Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or if they have been identified by NHS contact tracers as a close contact of someone with the disease. A ventilated space should be available for pupils/staff who become symptomatic to wait in until they can be collected or safely get home. Where possible centres will deploy staff such that if the

requirement to self-isolate is necessary, other team members will have had no contact with those staff and the operations are not disrupted.

- ✓ Terms and Conditions – Information for bookers will ensure they understand the level of insurance OEC cover provides them and every effort should be made to ensure that they have their own appropriate insurance cover. Sharing details and limitations of this cover and the education authorities cover with parents/ guardians is recommended.
- ✓ Training - Outdoor education centres should have a re-opening induction process for all centre staff covering new, enhanced hygiene and physical distancing measures.
- ✓ Transport - Robust cleaning schedules and routines should be used to clean vehicles in-between different groups and drivers. Where practicable it may be possible to allocate a bubble its' own vehicle.

Appendix 3

SAPOE Summary Framework – Coronavirus reopening and operation of Outdoor Education Centres and reintroducing visits by schools Aug 2020

Pre Outdoor Education Centre visit actions required				
<p>Planning must keep the participant at the fore front of the process. The outdoor education experience is a vital part of the participant’s education journey and every step should be taken to ensure a positive learning experience is undertaken while focusing in the health benefits of the outdoors and the wider benefits of outdoor learning. The outdoor learning experience should be safe and planned as far as is reasonably possible to promote reduced risk of COVID-19 transmission for all persons involved. Planning should regard the outdoor education centre, and possible parcels therein, as an extension of the school estate and all planning should be completed accordingly.</p>				
		Must	Should	May
Safety	Centre	<p>Complete a site risk assessment to identify what operational changes you need to make in your centre.</p> <p>Review of all standard operating procedures (SOPs) to identify and record what you are changing.</p> <p>Create a communication plan to inform employees and guests of changes, what you need them to do and how you expect everyone to act and behave.</p> <p>Ensure the centre is ready to open. After lockdown ensure all standard health and safety checks/ routine maintenance and inspections are all up to date before opening.</p>	<p>Assess the risk for each activity and identify steps to reduce transmission risks</p> <p>Create a staff training plan to communicate changes in activity delivery and procedures and record training through appropriate record</p> <p>Review fire risk assessment to identify where changes may affect fire procedures.</p>	<p>Due to skill fade and instructional staff not having delivered for several months it may be required to complete supplementary training for staff.</p> <p>Provide orientation guidance to guest detailing the operational changes. These could take many forms from documents, electronic files to video walk through. Consideration may be given to the age and needs of the clients being catered for.</p> <p>Engage with a scheme to self-evaluate systems and measures taken while increasing customer confidence in the steps undertaken.</p>
	School staff	<p>Ensure you are happy with the safety steps to limit COVID transmission. Look for ready to go logos and familiarise yourself with the centre’s new procedures and steps.</p> <p>Ensure you are familiar with your LA guidance regarding OEC visits and identify any changes that may have been required because of the pandemic.</p> <p>Implement a system to monitor health of participants and staff on the run up to OEC visits and withdraw them if there are any signs of COVID 19 or they have been contacted by track and trace services.</p>	<p>Make contact with the centre staff and discuss the visit and how thing may be different from previous stays.</p> <p>Gather as much information as possible to share with participants to manage expectations and prepare them for the steps in place to protect all guests.</p> <p>Encourage adaptability and resilience within participants and staff as last minute short notice changes may occur out with the centre or schools control.</p>	<p>Wish to make a pre visit to the centre. This may be reduced and fewer opportunities as centres limit interactions. Careful organisation may be needed for this.</p> <p>Share the benefits of outdoor learning and why OEC visits are important to the participant’s education and learning journeys.</p>
	Local authority	<p>Be satisfied that the OEC visit fits within current regulations and risks are managed effectively to protect all guests.</p>	<p>Encourage links between educational visits co-ordinators and approvers to OEC. Encourage effective communication to manage and address problem areas.</p>	<p>Engage with an assurance scheme to standardise practice and aid efficient government.</p>
Bookings	Centre	<p>Booking terms and conditions should be made clear from the start of any booking discussion.</p>	<p>Make steps to understand the difficulty faced by some schools to book with reduced insurance cover and possible previous unresolved losses.</p> <p>Review terms and conditions in light of the current situation and try to identify where terms and conditions could be a barrier to participation.</p>	<p>Be flexible with booking terms and conditions and be more willing to amend terms and conditions to group’s needs.</p> <p>Introduce a COVID clause in booking terms which allows more flexibility in bookings for related number drops and cancelations where COVID-19 can be identified as the cause.</p>

Appendix 3

SAPOE Summary Framework – Coronavirus reopening and operation of Outdoor Education Centres and reintroducing visits by schools Aug 2020

			Be clear when any changes to terms and conditions will end providing a clear statement that changes will be effective until a set date.	
	School staff	<p>Be familiar with the booking terms and conditions when making bookings.</p> <p>Be very clear where financial liability lies and communicate this with participants and guardians who are entering transactions with yourselves.</p> <p>Understand their insurance cover and be clear what is covered and what may not be covered in relation to COVID-19. Please be aware this may have changed from previous trip and can vary between providers. This detail should be shared with the parents and guardians.</p>	<p>Be familiar with cut off dates regarding payments and structure payment plans around these key dates. Give time to gather information before the dates and keep regular communication with centres if problems are developing or emerging.</p> <p>Should ensure parents feel knowledgeable and informed about the booking process and clear where liabilities lie.</p>	<p>May wish to give longer periods of time to pay by early bookings and longer prep time thus accommodating families who may be hardest hit by the pandemic.</p> <p>May consider methods of support to allow for equity in outdoor learning provision so those worst affected by the pandemic do not miss out in the benefits of a within the recover phases.</p>
	Local authority	Encourage clarity and communication around financial liability and insurance cover prompting positive sharing of information between all parties in the transactions.	Promote good purchasing practices while ensuring prompt payment to support suppliers who may be struggling with short term cash flow problems due long periods of inactivity.	May consider methods of support to allow for equity in outdoor learning provision so those worst affected by the pandemic do not miss out in the benefits of a within the recover phases.
Cleaning	Centre	<p>Deep clean the centre to give a strong cleanliness level as a starting point.</p> <p>Develop detailed plans and cleaning schedules focusing on areas of concern and touch points which should have increased cleaning frequency depending on through put.</p>	Identify touch points and risk mitigating measures implemented, these could be in the form of a new cleaning schedule or sanitising for those touch points.	Take step to limit risk of transmission through touch points such as propping door open (not fire doors), limiting pinch points and redirecting flow through buildings or providing and promoting use of hand sanitiser or hand washing.
	School staff	Take shared responsibility for messaging around personal hygiene and preparing pupils.	<p>Be prepared for a rota of shared facilities and limited or no access to some parts of the site due to cleaning between group uses or routine cleaning.</p> <p>Encourage as much as possible the cleanliness of items being taken on visits from the home.</p>	
	Local authority	Be satisfied that plan in place meet the standards of current guidance. Understanding should be displayed in relation to operational demands and the unique nature of the facilities and outdoor settings participants will be working within.		
Social distancing	Centre	<p>Take steps to give visiting schools confidence that they can be seen as an extension of the school estate thus limiting the requirements for young people to social distance. Group based activities must be managed in a way to mitigate risk.</p> <p>Ensure adults are able to social distance as required by current guidance.</p>	<p>Provide spaces appropriate to allow for social distancing rules.</p> <p>Acknowledge that it will not always be possible to maintain the 2 metre rule. With aspects such as critical check of harnesses or life jackets/buoyancy aids it may require entrance to this 2 meter space. Any encroachment should be limited and face coverings should be worn by both parties.</p>	<p>Monitor social distancing and address concerns with guests.</p> <p>Incorporate social distancing into teaching and programmes.</p> <p>Be aware of anxiety around social distancing and some people reluctance to be near others.</p>

Appendix 3

SAPOE Summary Framework – Coronavirus reopening and operation of Outdoor Education Centres and reintroducing visits by schools Aug 2020

		Identify capacity how social distancing can be managed to reduce interaction and duration of interactions.	Try to ensure that the same staff remain with the school group bubble – if practicable	Provide additional outside meeting spaces for groups to meet with space allocated to groups to encourage smaller numbers congregating. Display signage to show capacity limits for indoor spaces. Provide signage to promote and encourage social distancing for adults.
	School staff	Be aware of their role in promoting social distancing. Communicate with centre staff to be clear on the steps being taken on centres to manage social distancing. Must plan for social distancing for staff on transport in accordance with the current guidance. This may affect overall transport capacity and should be considered at transport booking stage.	Plan for social distancing within the staff team and ensure all staff are aware of this requirement Work with participants to ensure they are aware of their role in promoting positive social distancing Try to ensure that the same staff remain with a bubble of the same pupils	Split the staff team into smaller groups to help limit interactions between staff.
Equipment	Centre	Complete detailed equipment checks before re-opening. These checks should be recorded and added to your routine equipment maintenance records. Be aware of manufacturers guidance around cleaning of equipment particularly PPE and take note of changes in advice relating to COVID-19. Complete checks of fixed activity equipment before re-using. Check for deterioration due to inactivity and address any concerns before using.	Review equipment monitoring and cleaning schedules. Determine if current procedures are adequate to tackle the risk from COVID-19 and adjust accordingly.	
	School staff	Be aware of any changes to kit lists that may be required before visiting and communicate these to participants. There may be changes to kit list you are familiar with from previous visits.	Should effectively communicate kit list changes to participants.	
Contractors	Centre	Review contractor management plans to ensure the safety of contractors and guests. Define contractor working areas and try to separate from main guest areas.	Plan work around groups where possible. If not possible areas should be isolated for contractors to limit interactions between contractors to site staff and guests. Keep guest and staff updates on any changes to facilities management plans due to contractor activities.	

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During OEC visit actions required				
The outdoor education provider should continue to deliver a high quality outdoor learning experience to the participants while taking appropriate measures to manage the transmission risk of COVID-19				
		Must	Should	May
Safety	Centre	<p>Centres must not compromise safety to mitigate COVID-19. All Risk assessment and operating procedures should be upheld and any required changes should be noted and recorded.</p> <p>Any changes to activities outside of standard operating procedures due to COVID-19 mitigation must be appropriately risk assessed and appropriate to the learners needs without compromising safety.</p> <p>Have plans in place to deal with any suspected cases of COVID-19. Isolation areas must be available to accommodate a participant until they can be collected or sent home.</p> <p>Keep detailed records of who is on site at all times to support track and trace.</p> <p>Guests must be inducted onto the centre and made aware of action plans for COVID-19 as part of the routine welcome briefing.</p>	<p>Ensure staff qualifications and experience is level to that required for each activity.</p> <p>Appropriately risk assess any changes to activities outside of standard operating procedures due to COVID-19 mitigations. Any changes should be appropriate to the learners' needs without compromising safety.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to programme planning to help limit interactions and reduce time spent within accommodation.</p>	<p>Consider holding meetings with staff in outdoor or virtual environments.</p> <p>Consider the location of briefing and debriefing activities i.e. can they be completed outside</p> <p>Use active reviewing techniques as part of activity sessions to review the experiences and reduce reliance on classrooms spaces.</p> <p>Introduce packed lunches and full day activities by joining activity session together limiting interactions.</p> <p>Have an induction crib sheet so all areas of procedures are covered and nothing is missed as part of a briefing.</p>
	School staff	<p>Encourage anyone sent home unwell must be encouraged to be tested as soon as possible and results shared with the centre.</p> <p>Provide information requested on participants for track and trace purposes. Records will be kept and used in line with current government guidance for health protection purposes only.</p>	<p>Be aware of plans to deal with sudden need to end the visit at short notice. Awareness of local authority notification will be required for the party leader.</p>	<p>Wish to set up communication systems to get messages to guardians quickly if any problems occur.</p> <p>Wish to emphasise the importance of home contacts for all participants.</p>
Face coverings	Centre	<p>Issued all staff with face coverings and appropriate PPE as required as defined with the facility and activity risk assessments.</p> <p>Support staff members' decisions to wear face coverings or other PPE even at times where such precautions are not required.</p>	<p>Be aware of the option to use face coverings if two metre distancing is difficult to maintain. This will be necessary from time to time as outlined in activity risk assessments.</p>	
	School staff	<p>Have face coverings available at all times.</p>	<p>Ensure all participants have face coverings if they may be needed.</p>	
Activities	Centre	<p>Ensure that activities are run in line with current guidance from Scottish Government and national governing bodies of sport where applicable. Particular attention should be given to social distancing for staff and visiting adults.</p>	<p>Consider size or configuration of activity bases/venues and group sizes to allow for social distancing.</p> <p>Ensure clear briefing on the requirements of the centres action plans are part of sessions and that clarity of everyone's responsibilities and roles are standard practice for all activities.</p>	<p>Consider equipment capacity with cleaning and quarantine requirements.</p> <p>Consider impact on other users when utilising venues external to the centre.</p> <p>Consider alternative activities which may achieve the same outcomes but require less mitigation measures.</p>
	School staff	<p>Communicate with instructional staff for all activities and be clear on personal roles and responsibilities for activity management.</p>	<p>Staff should help support participants to follow instruction from centre staff and listen to all briefings for new safety information and</p>	

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			additional steps required of them as participants to help protect everyone in the facility.	
Equipment	Centre	Stick to recorded maintenance cleaning and quarantining schedules as identified within operating procedures. Avoid shared equipment use as far as reasonably practical. Where shared equipment is required ensure a risk assessment has been undertaken in which a cleaning or quarantine process has been identified.	Identify activity base/ location touch points and adopt a clean as you go process for instructors to follow with mobile cleaning kits or appropriate mitigation measures.	Rotate equipment and ensure full stock is utilised. Allocate equipment to individuals for the duration of their stay where this is possible.
	School staff	Limit the amount of equipment or materials being transferred between settings.		Wish to have electronic records
Accommodation	Centre	Develop a detailed accommodation management plan with COVID-19 transmission mitigation planning. Create detailed cleaning schedules for accommodation as part of routine management. Explain the fire evacuation procedures including COVID-19 mitigation processes to all guests.	Provide increased number of hand washing/ hand sanitation stations at key locations across the site. Use signs to promote positive hand hygiene Be aware of accommodation capacity and current guidance. Accommodation should be divided in a way that can offer the best and safest use of accommodation available. Control interaction between consistent groups of school pupils by defining areas assigned to each group.	Consider increasing space through introduction of additional outdoor covered spaces for small groups and staff to congregate and provide a safer outdoor space.
	School staff	Adapt personal evacuation plans for young people with additional needs to fit the new accommodation setting and guidelines.	Work in conjunction with centre staff to promote hand hygiene and personal responsibility for participants. Consider the impacts of single rooms use on young people who may already be struggling to engage back into group settings.	
Centre staff	Centre	Put in place detailed workforce planning to help with the smooth running of the visit.	As much as practically possible keep staff with the same group. Technical skills and qualification requirements may mean this is not always possible but changes of staffing should be kept to a minimum. Promote 'zero tolerance' approach to illness with processes in place for self-isolation and promote testing of staff. Consider introducing systems or rosters for shared staff changing and shower areas.	Differentiate between live in and live out staff within procedures. Where possible homeworking or partial homeworking may be possible for some staff.
	School staff	Support staff in the management of groups and administering COVID-19 mitigation steps.		
Logistics	Centre	Develop systems for management of deliveries and pickups.	Set up a delivery point and where possible reduce the number of delivery drivers entering the centre.	

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		Ensure detailed records of all visitors and personnel are recorded and kept to aid track and trace if required. (When deliveries are not contactless.)	Provide clear communication to drivers highlighting systems in place and try as much as possible to have contactless deliveries set up.	
First aid	Centre staff	Ensure that first aid provision remains in place through the COVID-19 period.	Follow HSE guidance on first aid in non-health care settings. Be provided with necessary PPE required to administer first aid and aware of the obligation to provide emergency aid if the need arises.	
	School staff		Use COVID-19 first aid principles if administering any first aid.	Wish to direct first aid concerns to centre staff or designated trained first aiders with COVID awareness
Catering	Centre	Adhere to all HACCP procedures as normal. Assess the risk of COVID-19 in the food storage, preparation, service and eating areas.	Promote strong staff hand hygiene through signage Should consider queuing systems and operation of these with current social distancing guidance. Should consider the capacity of dining rooms and systems to maintain capacity regulation. Avoid self service areas. Consider processes for deliveries and receiving produce safely.	Adopt a cohort approach to working and limit interactions. Control access to dining spaces working within clear limits and strict timings for sittings if required. Separate visiting staff and centre staff sittings where social distancing will still be required. Consider dividing spaces with partitions and allocating to groups. Centres with vending machines should include these within the catering risk assessment process and train staff filling vending machines on COVID-19 mitigation steps.
	School staff	Support centre staff upholding regulations around distancing in the dining areas. Support the monitoring of local measures.		Assign/rota staff to have responsibility for the dining areas through meal times.
Transport	Centre	Review arrivals and departures processes for group arrivals. Consider the amount of transport required and how this may fit within current guidance. Manage the safety of transport during the visit, through risk assessment.	Consider processes to limit interaction between group during arrival and departure processes. Communicate any alterations to group in enough time to pass to coach companies or those dropping of guests. Communicate transport requirements to staff and clients. Have a clear cleaning process for vehicles between drivers. Consider emergency vehicle use and how this could be managed under current guidance.	Consider staggered arrivals and departures. Consider clear communications with coach drivers. Programme with the aim where possible to limiting the requirements of transport. Assign vehicles to groups for their stay and limit movement between vehicles if practicable.

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		Post OEC visit actions required		
		All involved in an OEC visit process must be aware of their roles and responsibilities do not stop once the visit is completed.		
		Must	Should	May
Cleaning	Centre	Conduct detailed cleaning between groups. Centres should use cleaning schedules and check lists to ensure areas are not missed. Have a cleaning protocol for areas where participants have stayed and COVID-19 has been identified. These should follow current guidance on cleaning such areas.	Train staff on different levels of cleaning and ensure that staff are aware of when each approach should be used.	Consider capacity and developing ability to quarantine areas if needed.
	School staff	Promptly clean all group kit returning to schools.	Try and limit materials/ equipment transferring from centre to school. Should encourage participants to thoroughly clean all belongings when returning from visits.	
Reviewing	Centre	Review programmes, risk assessments and operating procedures more frequently than normal to reflect the changing and adapting situation.	Complete reviews in line with changes in the phased route map to recovery and other significant changes to legislation.	Require more frequent reviews depending on clients, programmes and activity locations.
	School staff	Understand the shared responsibility to review health and safety measures.	Review the experience reflecting on COVID-19 and feedback to centres positive aspects and areas that may be improved.	Wish to complete a meeting with centre management to discuss their experience. Wish to collect feedback for the participants about their experience and suggestions to improve COVID-19 mitigation measures.
Monitoring	Centre	Ensure all staff continue to monitor health after programmes and take responsibility for identifying any signs of concern.	Report any occurrences of COVID-19 as a notifiable disease to HSE.	Wish to introduce random temperature sampling of staff or guest if consenting.
	School staff	Staff must continue to monitor health of all participants after the visit and contact the centre if there are any concerns or positive test within the visiting groups. Communicate participant's responsibilities to report any signs of being unwell and seek advice on testing as soon as possible.	Monitor staff as well as pupils.	

This document was commissioned by the Scottish Government and developed by the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE) in partnership with other relevant organisations.