



On Thursday 20th August the Hazards Campaign held a zoom conference concentrating on How schools can ensure the Health and Safety of staff and pupils and therefore the health of its community during the pandemic, entitled School Health is Community Health. Speakers included Jon Richards Unison National Secretary with responsibility for schools, Ruth Winters EIS organiser, Dawn Taylor NEU NEC member and Wayne Bates NASUWT National Organiser with responsibility for health and safety. During the evening the chat box was kept open for attendees to post links and questions and comments, this has been collated into different topics and is detailed below. If anyone has any concerns or questions about the contents of the chat box please email mail@gmhzards.org.uk. The link to the youtube film of the event is: https://youtu.be/E4HqBW_Prjw

Chat box contributions:

Topic/Issue	Comment/Link
Can Schools Reopen Safely This Fall?	In the US, Pam Tau Lee has done a document that may be useful, which is at https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yKizolePfkmeRGzoovTTpcvUCaUi-Kbte_UAeKKRHY0/edit#slide=id.g901440de51_6_0 . Similar issues there in some cases.
Shielding /Individual RA	I am a teaching assistant and was shielding because I have COPD. I went into work for two weeks before we finished for summer but had to have a risk assessment first. I have now been told that theirs is a whole school risk assessment and not a personal one for me. I am quite worried about going back. Can you give me any advice please? AS someone at extra risk you should have a specific individual risk assessment under Covid Guidance but also under equalities law too Talk to Union and insist!

Unison are about to produce some new advice on Shielding staff/clinically extremely vulnerable staff - that will give guidance on individual risk assessment and a letter to send to the head

Multiple jobs

I would like to know what can be done about support staff with multiple jobs, some of the cleaning/catering staff at my school have second jobs in pubs or cleaning Covid-19 wards at the hospital. These members of staff burst bubbles, so could potentially transmit the virus to the whole school.

Unison have raised this with the Department for education and they have been pretty weak on this. You will also need to have an individual risk assessment which links to the risk assessments of other employers

we are being asked to spray the children's desks for them to wipe them down before break and lunch.

what advice would you give to teachers who have been asked to do classroom cleaning

Women's Voices for the Earth info on safer less toxic cleaning for homes and schools <https://www.womensvoices.org/infographic-safer-cleaning-disinfecting-at-home-in-the-times-of-coronavirus/>

Cleaning

Also, when it comes to cleaning and disinfecting, quite concerned about the use of toxic products, rather than remembering that soap and water disable the virus. Disinfecting isn't needed nearly as much as public health folks prescribe, especially with toxic stuff. Working with Canadian and US folks on this. Have done a fact sheet that's at <http://mflohc.mb.ca/covid-19/safer-cleaning/>. Another about disinfectants coming out soon from the New Jersey Education Association. Happy to help figure out the equivalent products in the UK.

If cleaning is not in your contract do not do it. Speak to your Union Office first and try to get collective agreement with colleagues about cleaning.

In terms of cleaning - soap is effective, but in terms of other things, there is a published peer review paper that clearly states that the only other effective things are: 1% bleach, 70% alcohol, 0.5% hydrogen peroxide. This excludes many off the shelves products. [https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701\(20\)30046-3/fulltext](https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701(20)30046-3/fulltext)

All cleaning materials and methods must go through proper COSHH Regs Assessments. Soap and water works well as the virus is contained in a fatty sheath.

Bleach is to be avoided as much as possible since it's corrosive and is an asthmagen. Hydrogen peroxide-based disinfectants work well (provided they don't include peroxyacetic acid, which produces something that causes/triggers asthma).

Other "active ingredients" that work are citric acid, l-lactic acid, ethanol and isopropanol. See Informed Green Solutions specializes in school cleaning and disinfection, emphasizing less toxic products and practices. See their materials at <https://www.informedgreensolutions.org/covid-19-information>.

https://www.turi.org/Our_Work/Cleaning_Laboratory/COVID-19_Safely_Clean_Disinfect/Safer_Cleaning_and_Disinfection_for_Schools or go to [turi.org](https://www.turi.org) and search for school and disinfect. Also checked IGS, and <https://www.informedgreensolutions.org/covid-19-information> works. Again you can go to the basic URL and see their COVID resources

Toxics Use Reduction Institute https://www.turi.org/Our_Work/Cleaning_Laboratory/COVID-19_Safely_Clean_Disinfect/Safer_Cleaning_and_Disinfection_for_Schools?fbclid=IwAR0RAaXA7KUcycUaFE3v mpNv11HutAzvTgLL0U8tw_W7dQQ1AmzMqJfTas

Edinburgh council are using Electro-static fogging & winter cleaning programme as follow up. We could not hire 200 extra agency cleaners. FM staff are cleaning regular touch points twice daily. Primary school children receive a packed lunch in their classroom, teachers are responsible for cleaning desks at start/finish of day. UNISON have demanded all R/As are fit for all teaching & FM staff within school. BAME concerns included in R/A. There is a lack of social distancing in special schools

Why not just clean them with soap and water, and a microfibre cloth, which helps remove viruses too (aside from the soap disabling the virus)?

Anti-bacterial stuff will do NOTHING for a virus. Someone's not paying attention or thinking clearly.

We have been asked to volunteer to clean during the day and so take training for it on our inset day. Cleaning areas during change over of classes where it is impossible for our cleaning staff to get there.

what type of soap should be used?

Just regular no-fragrance soap or all-purpose cleaner that removes grease (without nasty ingredients).

The NEU says that cleaning staff should be doing tables etc <https://neu.org.uk/advice/coronavirus-keeping-yourself-safe>

Before Covid I used to clean my tables, but it is not safe to do it now, I am with NEU

Cleaner clean, and they should not use any chemicals or cleaning process unless you see a COSHH assessment.. It seem see Women's Voices for the Earth paper and other experts, above that deposits on surfaces are less of a transmission risk than previously thought and in schools hand washing for kids more effective. Soapy water is best to clean surfaces. Sprays should be avoided, more likely to damage staff and children's respiratory system and create aerosols which may increase spread of COVID

SLT have employed a cleaner to be in school during the day but they will not be able to do tables twice a day

Any soapy liquid will work.

Yes we use soap and water, the children do help to wipe down tables and equipment, they are then cleaned again by the cleaners twice a day after the children have left. Teaching children cleaning routines, so they take responsibility.

not so essential to clean everything only those things multiply touched and handwashing most effective

Just be sure kids aren't using any disinfectants. Not good for them.

Watch out for schools spending money on foggers, misting devices, ion devices, especially. There's little evidence about how safe and effective they are, and people forget that cleaning must be done BEFORE any surface is disinfected. Besides why do you need to spray disinfectant all over the place on surfaces that aren't touched or touched very often. Electrostatic machines may be helpful in some circumstances, but still need to protect those using them, clean beforehand, etc. I love the term "hygiene theatre" in this article <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/scourge-hygiene-theater/614599/>.

why 17/18 year olds in y13 still have to be going in no social distancing no masks? one size fits all for this vast range of ages is shocking.

Masks/Face coverings

my school is 11-18, 1200 ish students, 150ish staff. we have a "no masks policy"

is DfE likely to change advice on face coverings next week? there are still many schools 'banning' face coverings because of the DfE's position of 'not recommending' them

I doubt the DfE will make changes to their advice -Unison have asked them to do so.

Will the Hazards campaign and Unions call for the ability of teachers to wear masks, specifically those with activated carbon, in order to protect ourselves? I feel that is the last real protection we will have as individuals

Remember face covering do not protect the wearer, they protect others.

it depends on type of face covering

That is issue you and union must be complaining about and I know it's a common and serious problem.

Face masks still a barrier and better than nothing though, if we are happy to wear, we should have the right to do so

Face covering that are NOT proper PPE, filtering out micron sized particles cannot be said to protect the wearer

There may be a change on face coverings but it is important to make these points as part of collective risk assessment process and if there are risks that cannot be controlled, as a last resort staff will need PPE, proper respiratory filtering mask, NOT just cloth face coverings. Children may need to wear face coverings to protect staff.. A Primary in Bletchley has introduced face coverings for kids,

face coverings do offer some benefit to the wearer <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-face-mask-symptoms-protect-severe-mild-immune-monica-gandhi-a9662226.html>

Yup face coverings are a barrier but they prevent mostly exhaled air getting out.. can be leaky round edges. If everyone wear properly then mutual benefit.

Lots of claims made for face coverings. Don't rely on them. If you need protection, then you need PPE as a worker.

In the summer term my bubble was 12 children. In the Autumn Term the bubbles will have 90 children in them due to staffing/space at lunch time and during breaks.... a challenge to say the least.

In Scotland are students / teacher / staff wearing masks in school at all? Is it based on local statistics?

As above, any PPE at all?

We can wear face coverings in my school if we wish. Most staff in the summer term chose not to wear them.

My school is leaving it up to individual staff as to the wearing face coverings

Be very very clear that face coverings that are NOT PPE do not provide real protection for staff

before we broke up for summer I was called in to the office and asked if I was ok and why was I wearing PPE all the time. they said I was making other staff feel more anxious. I was made to feel bad for wearing it. after going home upset I returned the next day and informed SLT they had no right telling me I make others anxious. They should be supporting me and tell others it is my right to feel safe.

where can we find a definition of good ventilation? are there any rooms that should not be used at all (eg those without openable windows)?

<https://theconversation.com/how-to-use-ventilation-and-air-filtration-to-prevent-the-spread-of-coronavirus-indoors-143732?fbclid=IwAR3RJDvIrRxEFZ2N0ZGhWBO7AqxjnNuuSrUMFGIsJlt1IDvWvulBCfy8u7Y>

Re ventilation - check that any areas have access to fresh air - I've had a problem with a room with no fresh air supply & 'air conditioning' which actually only circulated air already in the room.

I'm a NEU H&S rep and during the first week of the holiday I was on-site with SLT & LA H&s officer and remedial work to said area is now taking place.

<https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-and-hvac-systems>

What about ensuring adequate ventilation in nurseries when doors cannot be wedged open due to children 'escaping'?

Ventilation

On Ventilation we must all be pressuring schools/employers and Govt to so far more on this as we all know that one of mechanisms of transmission is by tiny infected aerosols which can spread a long way and need to be removed from the air.

HSE changed their guidance last week regarding ventilation which conflicts with the REHVA guidance & PCS have challenged HSE on this.

HSE has been AWOL throughout this and is appalling on ventilation Better to trust European REHVA. PCS good to challenge

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has anyone thought of increase of people exiting the profession? I have asthma and i am to go back full time no masks 30 kids in class age 11-18. I am terrified and I am seriously considering leaving - I can afford it at the moment

	For ventilation, you might also check the US ASHRAE recommendations, to back up other good ones. https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources
NEU response to examination situation	For those who want to support our response to the examination situation https://neu.org.uk/assessment/fair-grade-2021
Transparency of cases in schools	If a school is known not to be transparent and, it has been reported that there are positive cases in the school, how do proceed forward if the schools denies such information. Smaller children transmit at much lower rate than over 10s
Transmission	We have been told we must teach from the front - not at all sure how that will work in practise. We asked for a desk with a screen in each room so we can bring pupils to it for support - HT says stay at the front?
School Uniforms	What have schools in Scotland done and will schools in the rest of the UK do about school uniforms? I cannot believe that it is advisable during a pandemic to wear the same clothes all week. And it is definitely not within the budget of most families to buy more than one blazer for their children. Washing every night will also be impossible in many households. Scotland has a far lower overall infection rate was 3 cases in a million when schools went back.. In England outside hotspot areas, its well over 10 cases in a million Children are still wearing uniforms in Scotland Good points on clothing of kids, serious issues and of course class/.poverty issues... Sabine, it's recommended that uniforms are washed daily. uniform blazers are not usually washed daily, children are encouraged to catch sneezes in the crook of their elbows! why aren't schools relaxing uniform rules? Difficult if you only have one uniform.... let the children wear their own clothes I work in a primary in a deprived area and some children come back after holidays in the same jumper, still with stains and stickers on from the previous half term. I heard from a doctor that airing clothes can also be effective if washing is difficult. research of the permanence of the virus on textiles still has undetermined results. So it could be minutes or hours or days, it's not known and may depend specific textiles.

You're right in a way. Sunlight will disable the virus. Remember that the tests on how long the virus lasts on different surfaces, including clothes, is done with really high concentrations, to understand the worst circumstances. And the virus' viability or ability to infect changes over time, with a bigger decline at the start, from what I read the other day.

absolutely it's not always easy to have a new or freshly washed uniform every day. That's where local knowledge/ common sense need to come into play. Not strictly enforcing uniform code, primary children wearing casual clothes on their P.E. day etc

Risk Assessment

not happy with the Scottish Governments Risk Assessment being based on age. Pregnant women are low risk category.

Yes we are aware of the flaws I the Scottish Risk Assessment tool and are raising these at the moment

Testing

We can do a weekly test through booking a test. And I thought that would be a good way forward for teaching staff.

We must not underestimate the trauma of it all

V good points on Secondary Trauma Wayne, and need for support for staff. The most disadvantaged children are more likely to have experienced bereavements.

But the duty of Care is from the local authority in London, not the school?

This must all be dealt with in the Risk Assessment and the Covid Safe plan and shared with staff and questioned.

Trauma

Yes we are all doing different things. We have been given the responsibility to ensure all staff, children and the community are safe in September when we return to wider opening. Work together as union groups to secure the health and safety measure you want in your workplace in our children's schools.

Most Primary Schools are adopting a well-being curriculum in September.

Understanding and dealing with the traumatic effects of the pandemic on your students <https://neu.org.uk/online-cpd/understanding-and-dealing-traumatic-effects-pandemic-your-students>

School management

As I said above, we have all children in (450) returning on the same day AND we only have 5 minutes between each staggered start and end of day for each 2 form year group. I don't see how the parents wont be in bottlenecks as they arrive/leave.

Has there been any serious consideration from Local Authorities to reduce the time in school for teachers, support staff and pupils?

parents social distancing	Good point about how parents social distancing will be managed
Recovery plan NEU	The NEU has a recovery plan for education https://neu.org.uk/coronavirus-neu-national-recovery-plan-education
Transport to school	My children will be on school buses, already overcrowded. We're over four miles from the school and are encouraged to walk/cycle. I am not allowing my children to cross the busy bypass that is used as a racing track.
	I will be using public transport.
	We don't have any public transport from our house to the school. I have no choice
	Many people have to use public transport, its very hard not to. Extra risk for staff and children, All has to be taken into account
	My 14 year old son travels to school on a rural school bus that members of the public can also get on & although they have to wear a face covering there is no social distancing
	Any views on whole school staff meetings. We have 30 teachers - all asked to attend meeting on first day inset at 9am. I am quite nervous about this as I will not have been in a room with any other adults before then and will be faced with a room of 30!
Staff meetings	ask why staff cannot attend on Zoom / meets. Clearly we have been doing that for months so it worked!
	frankly I would refuse to attend
	New head - wants to meet all the staff
	In Scotland these have been advised to be done through TEAMS
	Yes they shouldn't happen unless they can be done following the social distancing guidance.....they can do online meetings in the School, safe
	That sounds bonkers, Wendy. Why can't it be done remotely onsite?
	New head can meet staff in Teams/ equivalent or small groups. Absolutely no need to meet everyone face-to-face in one go, so it shouldn't be happening.
	Don't just accept insistence about being told to attend meeting - can it be done on zoom/team online or exactly how can it be done safely in rom large enough to be 2m apart with good ventilation, Gathering of adults in school most risky.
	Meet in school hall apparently

And therefore the high risk must be avoided, eliminated by on line meeting.

Talk to colleagues, work together.

Demand your rights of the social distancing rules

All of our meetings are carried out over Skype now

RESIST! Challenge. Demand!!

Early Years in Scotland are up to cohorts of 25/30 children now. Prior to all children back in August, it was bubbles of 8.

RA for
parents

Can risk assessments of schools not be requested under GDPR for parents?

Social
distancing

I work in Fife. They are up to 32 because they work in 8's! The SG guidance is 25/30

How will distancing be enforced for individuals in schools where they say you can't distance.

question to Wayne: what counts as "consultation"? my school tends to say "here's the doc, let us know" and then ignore issues raised.

same in our school

Union must be involved, safety reps consulted

or even, staff doesn't raise issues due to fear / knowing it will be ignored

Part of a H&S reps functions is to be consulted on all these issues.

I am the H&S rep - I'm definitely raising my voice but again - "consultation" doesn't mean they have to take us into consideration after hearing us out?

It's the law

Safety reps

if you've got a TU H&S rep in the workplace then RA should be done with rep and the consulted on.

Use your Rep - especially if you have a H&S rep - to collectivise your issues around the RA. Get more than one rep too

not doable if other staff doesn't wish to engage.....!

We are both HS reps sadly - I fight every step but the head just says I have last word...

they have to give reasons as to why they won't accept the safety reps concerns or suggestions. We can always raise grievances (collective if possible)

See your Safety Reps and Safety C/te regs on your rights and it is written into COVID Guidance, but depends on collective organisation and strength

exactly - you end up being singled out as other staff quickly drop support

I have the same issue with my HT
also record everything as we may need to take legal action

The SRSCR say that consultation has to be meaningful. I would try and ensure the union's views are recorded in any risk assessment and reasons given if they are ignored.

Hit him with your brown book

You can get a collective letter which will only be submitted once the majority of members have signed about the concerns

Done too! She refused to talk to me and I appealed now inspecting the school next week ... let the fight continues!

Unfortunately, job security is low and colleagues are scared to stand up.

I find that documenting every issue I have with the H&S measures in place in the form of an email to the manager responsible tends to make them consider it rather more closely.

Support for
disadvantaged
children

More support for those most disadvantaged children, and that means more support for teachers.

ICT

The iPads arrived the penultimate day of term when children weren't in school.