

Returning to school

Use of open spaces by schools during a phased-return

Every school has some open space available.

- Yard
- Playground
- Field
- Carpark

All of these could be used for learning in order to maintain suitable distancing during a phased return to school.

Over time this may extend, or need to extend, to include the areas and spaces easily accessed by walking from the school site.

For all of these spaces, as for those inside the school building, 'standard operating procedures', based on assessments of reasonable risk, will need to be agreed. This may already be developed if the school has a Local Learning Area (LLA) policy. (A model LLA policy is available on Evolve or from NYEVAS)

- www.visits.northyorks.gov.uk
- educationalvisits@northyorks.gov.uk

These changes to procedures can be split into 2 areas:

- 1 Logistics/Health & Safety
- 2 Educational

Logistics/Health & Safety

- Which groups are to be located inside/outside?
- How are these groupings to be decided or developed?
 - ◆ Will the leaning offer be equivalent for all pupils?
- The ability to maintain safe distancing
 - ◆ How will this be "best managed"?
 - ◆ Will groups need to be separated/social distancing maintained/limited use of equipment?
- Handwashing and sanitiser
 - ◆ Is there regular access to sanitiser and/or handwashing (soap & water)?
 - ◆ Can this be provided in the learning location?
 - ◆ If this involves re-entry to buildings, how is this to be managed?

- Toilet facilities
 - ◆ Can toilet use maintain social distancing: e.g. only two using the toilets at one time?
 - ◆ Does this require supervision? How will this be managed?
- The weather
 - ◆ Postponement or re-location may not be an option in a phased return setting, unlike that in a more normal visit or activity. Is there a “dry/warm” option?
 - ◆ Many school areas will be open: does a shade/cool area need to be designated?
 - ◆ Does the school need to be able to adapt activities and timings to take account of the weather forecast?
- Clothing and equipment
 - ◆ Will pupils have access to suitable clothing (waterproofs etc.) to allow all weather use? This will be needed for every session at school, how will families be made aware of this? Will school need to provide suitable clothing for some or all pupils?
 - ◆ Will extras need to be held ready?
 - ◆ Will extra cleaning of equipment be needed? Will extra equipment be needed?
- Fire alarms & other emergency procedures
 - ◆ It will be vital to know the locations of all learners if schools are needing to use their outside space (or further afield).
 - ◆ Alarm raising and evacuation procedures may require development to ensure staff & pupils are aware of changes.

Working in the local area around the school

- Moving to and around the area
 - ◆ Can routes be chosen to minimise contact with members of the public?
 - ◆ Managing road crossings
 - ◆ Smaller groups than normal will be needed to move around whilst maintaining distancing, but alternative crossing procedures may be needed to avoid contact with others, and will require careful staffing consideration and briefing.
 - ◆ Can shared playing fields be used safely away from members of the public who may also be accessing this in accordance with government guidelines?
- Emergency uplift of staff and/or pupils
 - ◆ Consideration will be needed to ensure a suitable procedure for safe evacuation.

Educational

Setting routines

- Developing a sense of space
 - ◆ As the concept of maintaining a safe distance can be difficult to conceptualise, especially for younger pupils, it can be useful to reinforce systems used in other areas. For example, Primary PE will often use: “Find a space where you cannot touch another person.”
 - ◆ Knotted rope can be used as an easy spacing device. A 50m (climbing) rope with knots at 2m intervals is simple to construct and can be used for producing a spaced circle for group work, direct teaching etc.
 - ◆ Floor markings in chalk/tape for queuing and safe play.
- Regular briefing and reinforcing of principles
 - ◆ All staff and pupils need to be carefully and fully briefed, with the principles of distancing, hygiene etc. focussed upon as needed.

Type of learning

- Overall, there are distinct options to consider:
 - ◆ Same learning in another location
 - ◆ Learning developed to take advantage/make best use of the location
 - ◆ Stand-alone activities

Recording learning

- Consider how pupils can record their learning, bearing in mind that weather may make ‘traditional’ methods difficult. The following are some options:
 - ◆ Chalk or Pencil
 - ◆ Clipboards & covers
 - ◆ Recording for audio/video/images

Same learning in another location

- Is outdoor space being used as additional space only, or as extra classroom space during a phased return with distancing?
- What subject areas could be utilised in this way?
- Could other recording methods be utilised to increase sensory input?
- How are tasks to be set? How might staff used to whiteboards and technology be supported if needing to teach outside their normal setting?

Learning developed to take advantage/make best use of the location

- Moving learning to another location can be planned to incorporate activities and utilise space that may not be available otherwise.
 - ◆ Can activities be developed that engage multiple senses?
 - ◆ Does the extra space enable “make it large” activities?
 - Build a shanty town
 - Living graphs
 - Timelines
- Can the extra space enable pupils to share more easily, for example using a knotted rope-circle?
- Do pupils need the time and space to engage in ‘quiet’ individual work?
- Would reading aloud or drama be better set in another location than the classroom?

Stand-alone activities

- These often include team-building type activities which may be of particular use for maintaining re-establishment of wellbeing during a phased return.
- The value of these types of activities needs to be carefully considered as they will normally involve close proximity and the sharing of equipment. A small number of these activities could be carefully managed with safe distancing.
 - ◆ Learning a new skill (juggling/origami)
 - ◆ Toxic Waste (circle based): moving an object from the middle of a circle without touching it
 - ◆ Ball or water run: needing 2m lengths of guttering, pupils construct a ball or water run as either a challenge, or as part of history (Romans) or science

Useful resources

- NYEVAS
 - ◆ North Yorkshire Educational Visits Advisory Service - educationalvists@northyorks.gov.uk
- CLOtC
 - ◆ Council for Learning Outside the Classroom - www.lotc.org.uk
- OEAP National Guidance
 - ◆ Outdoor Education Advisers Panel National Guidance of best practice - <https://oeapng.info/>
- “Dirty Teaching” Juliet Robertson (Independent Thinking Press)