

Feedback from the Health and Safety Executive spot checks and inspections at schools in England and Wales

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) spot checks and inspections carried out between September and December 2020 at primary and secondary schools in England and Wales confirmed that the majority had COVID-secure measures in place.

HSE inspectors identified some areas of concern common to a number of schools which included social distancing in staff rooms, kitchens and canteens, cleaning regimes and ventilation.

Other issues that they advised on included:

- generic risk assessments used, sometimes lacking specific detail about the school
- lack of effective systems for regular monitoring and review of risk assessments
- fire doors being propped open to aid ventilation
- inappropriate rooms being used for isolating suspected cases
- arrangements for managing external visitors or contractors

Additionally, HSE inspectors noted innovative ways that schools promoted good practice. These included:

- use of classroom seating plans to help with self-isolation measures
- a click-and-collect app to purchase food from the canteen to reduce queues and avoid crowding
- brightly coloured floor markings in school playgrounds to encourage two metre social distancing during drop-off and collection times

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- a year 7 science project on handwashing and UV light used to promote effective hand hygiene
 - a video walk through for pupils and parents explaining COVID-secure arrangements