

COVID-19 Guidance for new and expectant mothers in Educational Settings

Risk information

Managers are responsible for ensuring that this guidance is followed when undertaking a risk assessment for a pregnant employee. This document supplements the existing new and expectant mothers assessment process for your school, where the school follow NCC arrangements these will be outlined in the following:

- New and expectant mothers compliance code P640
- New and expectant mothers guide to assessing risks G640

Public Health England has taken the precautionary approach to include pregnant women in the clinically vulnerable group (previously referred to as an underlying health condition).

It is known from other respiratory infections (e.g. influenza, SARS) that pregnant woman who contract significant respiratory infections in the third trimester (after 28 weeks) are more likely to become seriously unwell; there is a possibility that this could also be the case with COVID-19 therefore, a risk assessment is required. This guidance provides information to assist with assessment both up to 28 weeks and after 28 weeks gestation.

Risk assessments must be undertaken in partnership with the pregnant employee to identify suitable modifications and alterations to work activities and patterns. People in the clinically vulnerable group have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing. This should be taken into account in the risk assessment process.

This guidance refers to COVID-19 Secure requirements. Where an employee works in a school setting, managers must ensure that a COVID-19 risk assessment has been completed and all control measures are implemented in addition to undertaking a specific assessment.

Managers can access further advice and support on undertaking an assessment through contacting HRenquiry@educatorsolutions.org.uk

Specific considerations that should be included in your risk assessment are provided below.

Members of staff who are under 28 weeks gestation

Pregnant women can continue to work where their risk assessment confirms the following:

Working in educational settings

Consideration should be given to social distancing measures and hygiene controls to ensure they are stringently applied.

Please note: the staff member may choose to take on a role that does not allow for this distance if they prefer to, but if they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, the setting must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

Education staff who carry out home visits

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- That they do not work with a symptomatic person, isolating household or area of premises that is self-isolating such as a children's or residential care home, through ensuring that appropriate planning arrangements are in place.
- Where the visit is to a setting e.g. a residential care home, it is confirmed as being COVID-19 secure; stringently following universal hygiene measures, cleaning and social distancing requirements.
- The member of staff will stop work, as soon as possible where they establish that they are working with someone who has symptoms (no matter how mild) or in an isolating household/setting.
- They will consistently work with the same colleague(s) when undertaking visits, where possible.
- Travel that is required for work is undertaken in a separate car (unless sharing with a member of their own household).
- All other work activities are carried out from their home or educational setting.
- PPE guidance for home visits is followed

Members of staff who are after 28 weeks gestation

Arrangements for pregnant women who work in educational settings from 28 weeks gestation should ensure that they work in settings where:

- The nature of their role enables 2 metre social distancing to be applied, and it is not foreseeable that close contact will occur (consider all work activities)
- People in the work environment can follow respiratory and hand hygiene requirements
- They will consistently work with the same colleague(s) and pupils, avoiding working in extended groups, work meetings with anyone outside of their consistent group will only be carried out in person where there is no available alternative.
- Levels of personal protection are increased, for example, increased hand hygiene is performed.
- The resources and equipment used is reviewed, shared play equipment is not handled unless it has been disinfected and individual issue of equipment is considered where possible.
- Consideration is given to increasing levels of cleaning and disinfection associated with the role.
- Separate work spaces are provided for breaks, lunch etc where possible.

Education staff who carry out home visits

Social distancing must be stringently followed after 28 weeks gestation, this cannot be assured when visiting children therefore pregnant members of staff must not undertake this work after 28 weeks gestation.

Pregnant staff with underlying health conditions (at any gestation)

For pregnant women who also have underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease at any gestation, a more precautionary approach is required. Women in this category should work from home where possible.

If the member of staff is unable to work from home due to the nature of their work or home circumstances the manager should seek advice from their Occupational health provider on the appropriate measures to take.

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General

The manager should work with the person that the assessment is for in order to make an assessment together, based on personal circumstances and the work being carried out. Where suitable control measures cannot be put in place please follow your organisations existing approach to minimising risk, for organisations that utilise NCC this is outlined in the New and expectant mothers compliance code P640