



## **MEMBERS UPDATE**

The “hands, face, space” message is the simplest way to remember the measures you can take to help protect yourself from Covid-19. What should the “hands, face, space” message mean in school though?



### **HANDS**

- ✓ Have you got access to hand sanitiser?
- ✓ Have you got access to hot water and soap to wash your hands regularly?
- ✓ Is regular and proper handwashing being encouraged and enforced with the children?
- ✓ Is PPE such as gloves being provided for tasks involving skin to skin contact?



### **FACE**

- ✓ Are face coverings allowed?
- ✓ Are face coverings being used in communal spaces by pupils in years 7 and above and by staff? (High and Very High Covid-19 alert areas)
- ✓ Are PPE face masks being provided for high risk contact where social distancing is not possible?

### **SPACE**



- ✓ Is there social distancing between adults?
- ✓ Is ventilation adequate e.g. windows being kept open and being maintained despite the change in weather conditions?
- ✓ Do you have socially distanced facilities, away from the classroom where you can have your breaks and lunch?
- ✓ Are bubbles small and is the integrity of the bubble respected?
- ✓ Is your school being cleaned thoroughly and frequently to ensure good hygiene standards are maintained?

If the answer to any of the above questions is ‘no’ then you are potentially being placed at risk and GMB would urge you to discuss the matter with your workplace rep, local branch or regional organiser.

We knew at the start of the term that there would be new and different issues to those of the summer term, most notably the increased pupil numbers and the weather. The colder, wetter weather will bring challenges with fewer opportunities for outdoor learning and breaks and there will be no doubt be difficulties in balancing good ventilation with maintaining temperature regulation. This is possible though and you must ensure your work environment is both well ventilated and a suitable temperature - do not accept being told it is either or.





### **CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE (CEV) ADVICE**

As protection from shielding was removed on 1<sup>st</sup> August, those who are considered to be CEV to COVID-19 were expected to return to work - subject to risk assessment and control measures being put in place. Government advice for CEV employees states ***“You should continue to work from home where possible. If you cannot work from home, you can still attend your workplace as your workplace should be COVID-secure. Your employer is required to take steps to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace and should be able to explain to you the measures they have put in place to keep you safe at work.”***

As London has now been classified as an area of high alert, Government advice states ***“At local COVID alert level: high, all people are advised to minimise travel. In addition, we advise clinically extremely vulnerable people to avoid travel where possible except for going to work, school, or for essential shopping. If you need to travel, walk or cycle if you can. If this is not possible, travelling in a private car with your own household or bubble is generally lower risk than public transport because you are likely to come into contact with fewer people.”***

Your employer should consider how you travel to work and if you use public transport, should accommodate you travelling outside of peak busy times. Individual risk assessments should be updated and if the alert level changes from high to very high the advice will change to you being strongly advised to work from home, because the rate of transmission of the virus is very high. It may be that more restrictive formal shielding measures for the clinically extremely vulnerable could be introduced in very high alert areas, if the Chief Medical Officer recommended such a course of action. If this were to happen, the government would write to you to inform you that you are advised to shield.

### **THE USE OF FACE MASKS/ COVERINGS**

DfE Guidance is clear on the importance of face coverings being worn correctly and state clear instructions should be provided to staff, children and young people on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings as failure to do so could inadvertently increase the risks of transmission. Safe wearing of face coverings requires cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on – and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully. **REMEMBER**- only a PPE mask will protect YOU, face coverings protect everyone else.

### **BUBBLES**

GMB has always been concerned at the Governments’ failure to provide guidance on maximum bubble size and acceptance of crossover working between bubbles. Since September, large numbers of children have had to isolate because of the size of the bubble they have been placed in. Smaller bubble sizes would result in fewer people needing to isolate, in the case of a positive test, and smaller bubble sizes would reduce risk to staff. If your school has had to send home entire bubbles, which comprised several classes or an entire year group, these bubble sizes should be reviewed as a bubble is a control measure which means its purpose is to reduce risk to all.

