

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Please note that answers to these questions are only accurate at the time of writing. Government guidance is constantly updated and it is important that [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) is regularly checked.



It is still the case that from Monday 1st June the decision to open an individual school lies with the head teacher in consultation with their governing body, and for some, in consultation with the Local Director of Public Health.

Below is afPE's response to a range of frequently asked questions. It is important to note that your employer will make the final decision about the applicability of afPE's interpretation, so it is crucial that you check with them.

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Children staying in bubbles is clear. What about adults - can a coach teach in different bubbles? If not this makes it very difficult to return and we need clear advice on this.

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Any advice on ‘bubbles’ will initially come from Government. However, each employer will interpret this and instruct you on how staff should work to remain as safe as practicable in your own/each setting. Some schools are deciding that one member of staff will remain with one group. If this is the stance of your employer, it is essential that you follow this.

The use of external coaches will be an individual school decision made by the head teacher and Governing Body through a risk assessment process.

For example, you should always consider the following aspects:

- does the coach only work in your school, or a number of schools?
- does the coach work with other groups in the evenings?

These are some risks which need to be considered before a judgement is made.

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Will we not have examples of the types of activity that we could teach which fall within the guidelines?

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In reality, no you won't. Most activities can still be taught if adaptations are made which meet the rules. The activities may not be as exciting and engaging/compelling as we would expect in ‘normal’ times, but there is no reason to stop them completely and we must keep a positive learning focus in challenging times.

Currently there is no list of activities you can/cannot do. It is very important that physical education is delivered effectively in line with other curriculum areas. Simply providing a box of equipment for each ‘bubble’ is not physical education.

Creative thinking is essential in order to ensure gymnastics, dance, games, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities can still be taught in some form. Swim England is producing guidance imminently.

Creative thinking is a real strength in PE teachers so we are not unduly worried about this. Some Local Authorities are producing risk assessments alongside units of work with suggestions for activities.

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Do you have any guidance for the number of children on an Astro pitch or a tennis court or football pitch for example please?

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The Government guidance is the starting point and then your own school risk assessment will identify if any number presented as a maximum needs to be further reduced in order to suit your own context. Your risk assessment should help you to come to your own conclusion about maximum group sizes. It will depend on the size of the teaching area and any area used must be risk assessed to ensure that social distancing guidance can be adhered to.

For example, using rubber spots, individual mats, skipping ropes, playground chalk or hoops are ways to delineate the space and ensure that social distancing is maintained. Another possible example may be: Set up an area for 3 bubbles of up to 5 children each, i.e. netball court or grids. Set a spot for each child within the area (ensure social distance).

“

What kind of teaching methodology is better to use? Is it possible to develop the cooperative approach?

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A cooperative approach is a sound academic and social learning approach but we are in unprecedented times and therefore your professional judgement and employers' guidance are key. Social distancing may mean that working together and co-operation (fundamental parts of high-quality PE) are not always possible. We should accept that things may look somewhat different but creative approaches which stay within the rules are encouraged to help lessons remain engaging and challenging.



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Any extra practical thoughts for teaching special needs pupils?

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Exactly the same principles apply. Risk assessment will identify what amendments may be required to meet any employer expectation and Government guidance, irrespective of the context.

You will already be used to working with young people with SEND; where children require closer contact than 2 metres please follow Government guidance on PPE in educational settings.

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Is there guidance on once equipment has been used how it should be cleaned? How long before it can then be used by another child?

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Try to keep the use of equipment to a minimum. Where it is used, it is preferable if your students are given their own equipment and use only this during the lesson. Where any equipment is shared, for example when throwing a ball back to a peer, it is important that the equipment is kept as clean as possible by ensuring it is cleaned before and after each lesson using the cleaning agents provided by your school. In addition, students should wash their hands before and after lessons. Regularly cleaning equipment and following the hand washing regime is the fundamental guiding principle.



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Is afPE aware of any fresh guidance from PWTAG about the use of school swimming pools

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Swim England is currently working on guidance regarding swimming pools. The following is taken from their website when answering this: “All swimming pools are to remain closed until at least early July. If a private residential swimming pool (indoor or outdoor) is used before this date by a ‘paying’ customer, it would be classed as a ‘commercial’ swimming pool and the pool owner would not be following the regulations. The same would apply for a hydro pool.”

Click [HERE](#) to view the Swim England/Institute of Swimming Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs.

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Our school fields are offsite and to participate in outdoor activities we have to transport 60 students (2 classes) via coach. Facilities that we have on site are very small (fitness suite and gym) and have little ventilation. Is there any guidance on what to do when transporting students to go to PE lessons? I anticipate that this won't affect our school until September rather than in June.

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See afPE's June 2020 Health and Safety Update for a detailed response to this question. Click [HERE](#) to login to the members' area. The document is filed under the 'Monthly Health & Safety Updates' section.



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I've been led to believe that in EYFS we are almost to accept social distancing will be impossible. So could they share equipment? As you say, they should not touch another pupils equipment if it rolls away?

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You are right to point out that social distancing may prove difficult with such a young age group so it important not to stress if 'rules' get broken. If there is accidental sharing of equipment hand, nose and mouth hygiene protocols are critical, you know your children best. Small groups supervised by sufficient staff should support some degree of social distancing.

Concentrating on fundamental skills such as leaping, galloping, skipping, jumping etc. should mean that a very limited range of equipment is needed, thus reducing some of the chances of accidental sharing.

Another fundamental skill which must be continually emphasised and consolidated is hygiene - frequent hand washing and not touching their faces are very important.

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Staff are being asked to have a small group to reduce opportunity to pass on the virus, but as a PE teacher I will be asked to teach all groups at separate times -but I will then mix with many more children than the other staff - is this ok?

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It is important to note that your employer's decision is final. They will decide on which staff are associated with which group/bubble and how long this will remain in place. Coaches, peripatetic staff and supply staff, who usually move from school to school will find that their working practices will be affected. Each school may have a different approach so the decision about whether or not you can work with different classes, or in one school then another, may depend on the schools you are working with. It is very early days so this may change over the next few months as more students go back to school.

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Could I ask for help and guidance as to what the afPE recommendations might be for teaching PE at university for group size, as my argument might be that 15 University students would be a lot tighter than 15 children/young children. What are your thoughts?

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You are correct about the size of the students (and their potential pace and power) having an impact. The guidance has been written for school settings so you should undertake a risk assessment keeping in mind the guidance on social distancing and no contact. Once you have done this you may decide that groups should be smaller.

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Just to confirm is it a no to the students wearing face masks and gloves in PE?

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At this moment in time this is not a requirement in Government guidance so the current answer is they do not have to (please remember to check [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) daily).

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I think you said around the maximum being up to 15 but I'm sure it will depend on space and employer's decision?

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Correct, your own risk assessment may reduce this number if social distancing cannot be maintained. Currently the number permissible in schools will be decided by Government and the school will then use this maximum number to see what additional risks need to be considered before reaching their own decision.

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Perhaps afPE could be the trailblazer in terms of creating a stand alone policy for PE with best practice recommendations. This issue is undoubtedly beyond the confines of typical H&S

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It is very difficult to produce a standard policy because each employer is responsible for this and for producing their own context specific risk assessments. If we felt we could do this we would but it could mislead you into thinking ‘one size fits all’. As mentioned, the most important thing is to listen to your employer who will be applying the Government guidance. Where possible it would be very useful to be party to the decisions being made about PESSPA risk assessments so that the views of those in the field are taken into account.

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I am a Head of PE in charge of Secondary Netball League. How will I know when to start this again? NGB or Dept for Education?

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The NGB will give you guidance on what is happening in your sport. Their guidance will be developed (and updated) as Government guidance changes. Each employer will also make a decision when they want to return to inter school sport.

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What’s your advice on school fixtures please?

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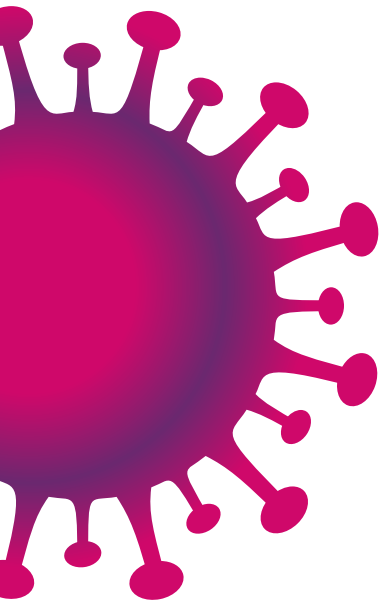
Extra-curricular activity or clubs may continue in some controlled format but as contact games are currently not permissible it is unlikely that school fixtures will be possible (in their recognised form) until the Government guidance changes. It may be possible to hold virtual events at each school and compare results; for example by timing some athletic performances at each school.

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As a PE teacher going into different schools, I can see the schools ignorant in the logistics of maintaining a safe environment in PE (particularly primaries). How do I approach the SLT on guidance?

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The guidance afPE has produced may help you in your discussions but each school may have implemented things in a different way so it is important that you speak to each school about expectations rather than assuming there is a standard response.



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