

First Aid Policy Appendix – COVID-19

Advice for Schools - First Aid During COVID 19 (April 2020)

Introduction:

This guidance is provided to help schools and other educational settings who still have direct contact with pupils on their premises, to consider practical, safe working arrangements for first aid cover in the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guidance may change regularly and therefore under the circumstances, it is advisable to keep checking the COVID – 19 web-page for the most up to date information:

<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-crisis-conversations/>

First Aiders on Site:

As a school all staff were First Aid trained in September 2019 and therefore all certificates currently remain in date, ensuring that there is always a trained first aider on site. All staff follow guidelines and work in line with the school First Aid Policy.

Should the situation arise that certificates became outdated and/or staff were unavailable for work then schools should try to rota in first aid cover, being aware of any specific needs of staff and pupils and those at higher risk. First aid cover to be considered will include those with a full First Aid at Work Certificate, and those that have Basic First Aid and Emergency First Aid qualifications, for example; staff having undertaken Emergency First Aid (6 hour course) could provide first aid cover as long as they are confident and competent to do so for the ages on site. It is important to ensure that staff available to provide first aid are competent and confident to deal with any foreseeable incident.

In the unlikely event that a rota system could not be put in place then the HSE states that first aiders can be shared between schools, however it needs to be ensured that the first aiders have sufficient knowledge, experience and availability to cover the first aid needs of the establishment(s).

For further information see link below to the First Aid Guidelines:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/>

It is likely, with less people coming into school, that requirements for first aid cover will be reduced. It is advised that with reduced cover, that higher risk activities should be avoided.

Schools should review their risk assessments in consideration of changing circumstances, including changes in numbers of staff and pupils on site from day to day.

First Aid Qualifications:

Should this situation continue more long term and therefore in the event of first aid certificates expiring (on or after 16 March 2020) staff will not be able to access requalification, in their normal way, as a direct result of COVID-19. In this instance the validity of certificates can be extended temporarily by up to 3 months.

This applies to:

- First Aid at Work (FAW)
- Requalification
- Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)
- Paediatric First Aid

An e-learning revision course will be made available on line in May 2020 for those with first aid qualifications who would benefit from revision.

Paediatric First Aider:

For those not trained in paediatric first aid, the most important thing is to act quickly to ensure the child gets the treatment they need in a critical situation.

The importance of calling an ambulance and taking immediate action in an emergency such as breathing difficulties, choking, cardiac arrest or excessive bleeding cannot be stressed enough, to avoid the emergency becoming critical.

Where rescue breaths are required, it is recommended that this is still performed for children. Although there is an increased risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus, either to the first aider or the child/infant, the risk is small compared to the risk of not taking this action, which could lead to the death of the child.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) normally requires at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate to always be on the premises and available when children are present. However, with the wider risks around COVID -19 reducing numbers of staff, children and first aiders, it is likely that schools will be able to maintain a safe environment with a lower than usual level of first aid cover.

As a reasonably practicable measure during the pandemic, where qualified first aiders are willing to treat paediatric aged children, they need to be confident and aware of the difference between adult and paediatric techniques. Some guidance can be found on the following link:

<https://www.resus.org.uk/resuscitation-guidelines/>

Mouth to mouth resuscitation for an adult who needs CPR:

Due to the increased risk of COVID-19 infection during CPR, the Resuscitation Council UK offers the following advice:

- Recognise cardiac arrest by looking for the absence of signs of life and the absence of normal breathing. Do not listen or feel for breathing by placing your ear and cheek close to the casualty's mouth. If you are in any doubt about confirming cardiac arrest, the default position is to start chest compressions until help arrives.
- Make sure an ambulance is on its way. If COVID 19 is suspected, tell them when you call 999.
- If there is a perceived risk of infection, first aiders should place a cloth/towel over the casualty's mouth and nose and attempt compression only CPR and early defibrillation until the ambulance arrives. Put hands together in the middle of the chest and push hard and fast.

- Early use of a defibrillator significantly increases the person's chances of survival and does not increase risk of infection. Defibrillator located in PE cupboard outside of hall, clearly labelled and signposted.
- If the first aider has access to personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g. FFP3 face mask, disposable gloves, eye protection), these should be worn.
- After performing compression-only CPR, all first aiders should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water; alcohol-based hand gel is a convenient alternative. They should seek advice from the NHS 111 Coronavirus Advice Service or their medical adviser if concerned.

Maintain social distancing when providing first aid:

- It is always good practice to wear gloves when administering first aid. These are provided in first aid kits.
- If the first aider has access to personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g. face mask, disposable gloves, eye protection), these should be worn.
- With minor injuries you may be able to instruct a pupil in what to do, or pass them the items that they need and stand at a distance if it is age appropriate to do so. KS2 pupils to administer own first aid, as directed by a trained first aider, standing at a safe social distance, ideally 2m. Younger KS1 and EYFS pupils may need more support, even with minor injuries and therefore first aid will be administered in the usual manner, ensuring gloves are worn at all times as well as wearing any PPE that is available to staff. Ensure parents/carers are aware of this situation prior to pupils returning to school, in order to avoid any misunderstanding. Parents/Carers can also help to prepare their children of this changing situation so as to avoid any uncertainty or upset to the children that may be caused by additional protection being worn.
- Always maintain good hand hygiene after administering first aid by washing your hands.
- If first aid such as CPR is required and you suspect the individual has symptoms of Coronavirus, the Resuscitation Council UK guidance advises that you do not administer rescue breaths, use chest compressions only. It is recognised that some first aiders will still chose to administer rescue breaths or instinctively respond in this way. This is a personal choice.

Informing Parents/Carers after injury:

- As is usual practice and in line with our current First Aid Policy parents should continue to receive information about any accidents that have occurred in school. Any accidents should be logged in the usual way, using the log books located around school.
- Due to COVID-19 paper 'injury' notes will not be used during this period and therefore staff will need to find alternative ways of informing parents, ie telephone calls, text messages, email, or face to face whilst maintaining social distance, if a particularly minor ailment. The manner in which information is shared will be dependent upon the nature and severity of the injury.

Emergency medical care:

Assess the casualty and, if necessary, as is usual practice dial 999 for an ambulance. If a person isn't breathing normally, call an ambulance and start cardiac compression straight away if you can.

References and Useful Links:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/legislation.htm>

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