

COVID-19 Recovery Committee

**12th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Thursday
25 November**

Baseline health protection measures in schools

Introduction

The Committee will take evidence on baseline health protection measures in schools from: the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES); the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS); School Leaders Scotland (SLS) and National Parent Forum Scotland.

There are currently measures in place in schools in Scotland aiming to limit the spread of COVID-19 between pupils and school staff. This briefing provides a summary of mitigation measures in schools and the current guidance in place and a summary of points relevant to schools in the Scottish Government's recently updated COVID-19 Strategic Framework. It also contains relevant research and data throughout.

Baseline mitigations currently in place in schools

Guidance and mitigations currently in place

The [Scottish Government's Guidance on Reducing the Risks in Schools](#) is updated regularly and was last updated on 1 October. Guidance is based on advice from the [Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues](#) and input from stakeholders, including through the [Covid-19 Education Recovery Group](#). While Scottish Government decisions are informed by advice from the Advisory Sub-Group and other expert groups, the final decision rests with Scottish Ministers. Separate guidance is available for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and the childcare sector.

The [latest advice from the Advisory Sub-Group](#) in October recommended the following changes should be made to existing mitigations: lifting restrictions on face coverings in classrooms for secondary school pupils; allowing assemblies and gatherings of learners and staff to take place if necessary, with face coverings in some circumstances; the resumption of in-person parents' evenings as required; removal of one-way systems, staggered break and lunch times and staggered pick up and drop off times.

However, these changes have not yet been implemented. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) subsequently provided advice to the Scottish Government advocating a more cautious approach. [On 19 October 2021, it was announced that current measures would remain in place.](#) The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills was quoted in a [news release](#) as saying:

“In recent weeks we have seen the previous sharp decline in COVID-19 case numbers starting to level off, and that is why we have decided to adopt a cautious approach and maintain safety mitigations in school for the time-being. Progress with vaccinating 12-15 year olds has been remarkable and is already over 40%. However, this was only rolled out a few weeks ago and allowing further time will mean that that encouraging figure rises even higher.”

Mitigations currently in place in Scottish schools include:

- Encouraging [uptake of vaccinations](#) among eligible groups.
- [Use of face coverings](#) by adults and secondary school pupils in class and when moving around school buildings.
- [Ensuring adequate ventilation in schools](#) (whilst also maintaining a minimum temperature of 17°C).
- Physical distancing in [primary](#), [secondary schools](#) and for [adults](#).
- [Staggered drop off and pick up times](#), with parents wearing face coverings and not entering buildings.
- [Staggered break times and lunch times](#).
- [Use of PPE](#) where staff are in contact with a child or young person with symptoms of COVID-19.
- [Use of asymptomatic, symptomatic and close contact testing](#).
- [Arrangements for managing outbreaks](#).
- [Updated arrangements for those previously on the shielding list](#), stating the CMO has advised they can now follow the same advice as the rest of the population. Employers must carry out risk assessments for these members of staff.

[Following core public health measures, carrying out risk assessments](#) and ensuring [enhanced hygiene and cleaning](#) are also identified by the guidance as measures schools and ELC settings should implement.

There is limited scientific evidence available on the effectiveness of public health measures, and [the British Medical Journal \(BMJ\) has stated](#) the “lack of good research is a pandemic tragedy”.

Most recently, [the BMJ published research on 18 November 2021](#) on the effectiveness of public health measures in reducing incidence, transmission and mortality from COVID-19. Researchers at Monash University and the University of Edinburgh carried out a systematic review of over 30 studies and meta-analysis of 8 studies from around the world looking at the effectiveness of public health measures. The results suggested that personal protective measures including handwashing, mask wearing and physical distancing are associated with reductions in the incidence of COVID-19. It also concluded that future research was needed to understand the effectiveness of public health measures following the roll out of COVID-19 vaccinations.

While the results of the research findings seem encouraging, [a BMJ editorial also published 18 November](#) urged caution due to the difficulty in monitoring impact of individual public health measures and a lack of data based on randomised controlled trials.

“Combined, these studies suggested relative reductions in incidence of 25% (relative risk 0.75, 95% confidence interval 0.59 to 0.95) for physical distancing, 53% (0.47, 0.29 to 0.75) for mask wearing, and 53% (0.47, 0.19 to 1.12) for handwashing. The handwashing finding is somewhat surprising, and at odds with evidence that the predominant route of transmission is through inhalation rather than fomites.” – [BMJ editorial](#)

The editorial went on to state that the 53% reduction associated with handwashing might be a “marker for several protective behaviours such as avoiding crowds, distancing, and mask wearing”. The editorial notes that findings on mask wearing contained only one randomised controlled trial and did not include a larger cluster randomised trial of mask wearing in Bangladesh villages. The BMJ editorial concludes:

“What can we take from this new review? It might be reasonable to conclude that a bundle of [Public Health and Social Measures] is modestly effective but that individual components cannot be reliability assessed owing to lack of adjustment for confounders or use of randomised or factorial trials.” – [BMJ editorial](#)

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) carried out a Covid Conversation on Thursday 19 August 2021. Four MSYPs took part in this and were encouraged to consult with young people prior to the session. A summary of the issues raised during the Covid Conversation were included in SYP’s submission to the Committee ahead of this meeting and are referred to throughout the sections below. *It should be noted that the SYP’s findings represent a small number of young people, and there may*

therefore be young people with differing views that are not reflected in the SYP paper.

Key baseline health protection measures currently in place in schools are explored in more depth in the sections below.

Vaccinations

In Scotland, vaccine policy is set by the Scottish Ministers on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The JCVI advise the UK Government and all the devolved administrations. This means for example, that in practice, all children will receive the same vaccines at the same stages. In September, the [Joint Committee on Vaccination \(JCVI\) provided advice on vaccination of 12-15 year olds](#). This concluded:

“The margin of benefit, based primarily on a health perspective, is considered too small to support advice on a universal programme of vaccination of otherwise healthy 12-15 year old children at this time.” – [JCVI advice](#)

However, the JCVI also suggested the government may want to seek views on the wider societal and educational impacts from the CMOs of the four UK nations. [On 14 September 2021, Scottish Ministers accepted advice](#) from the four UK CMOs to proceed with vaccination of 12-15 year olds with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. From 20 September 2021 the roll out of first doses began. As at 18 November 2021, [Public Health Scotland data](#) showed 57.1% of 12 -15 year olds in Scotland have had a first dose.

Children under 12 are not currently eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination in the UK. Professor Devi Sridhar, a Professor of Global Public Health who sits on the Scottish Government’s [COVID-19 Advisory Group](#) and the [Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues](#), has publicly called for the UK to follow the lead of countries including the USA and begin vaccination of children age 5-12.

On 11 November 2021, Professor Sridhar Tweeted:

“As country after country starts the rollout of vaccines for kids 5-11, the U.K. doesn’t even give parents the option to make a choice for their own kids & family situation. I’m sure we will get there but prob months after everyone else. And when kids have already been infected.” – [Prof Devi Sridhar, Twitter](#)

The risks of unvaccinated children contracting COVID-19 which then leads to long COVID were briefly touched on during the Committee’s [meeting on 4 November 2021](#). Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP has since written to the Committee on this topic, highlighting a [summary report from the COVID-19 Scientific Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues](#), which included a section on long COVID. This report stated that children and young people were more likely to experience mild or asymptomatic infection and while the prevalence of long COVID increased with age the report found:

“Children and young people can experience symptoms associated with long-COVID including fatigue, followed by dyspnoea and difficulties concentrating. However, the evidence base is incomplete and rapidly developing. The JCVI statement on COVID-19 vaccination of children and young people aged 12-17 years confirms the low risk of prolonged symptoms in this age group, stating:

“Concerns have been raised regarding post-acute COVID-19 syndrome (long COVID) in children. Emerging large-scale epidemiological studies indicate that this risk is very low in children, especially in comparison with adults, and similar to the sequelae of other respiratory viral infections in children.”

The sub-group will continue to review the evidence on acute and prolonged health effects of COVID-19, and will update advice if required in light of new findings.” - [COVID-19 Scientific Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues](#)

The [current guidance for schools](#) states that all staff who have not received both doses of the vaccine should be encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible, and following the guidelines on the gap between doses.

The SYP’s Covid Conversation found some young people felt it was unfair that those who had been double vaccinated can now leave isolation with a negative PCR test, as the majority of young people had not had the opportunity to have a second dose of the vaccine.

Members may wish to explore with the panel:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Are there any current concerns around vaccination rates in schools?2. What is being done to encourage those eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine who have not been vaccinated to get a jag?3. What assessment do you make of the fact under 12s remain ineligible for the vaccine? To what extent does this pose a risk to schools? |
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Face coverings

In terms of face coverings in schools, the [current guidance states](#) face coverings should be worn (except where an individual is exempt):

- At all times when adults in primary schools are moving around the school building, including areas such as staff rooms and toilets and also the canteen (except when eating).
- At all times for staff and pupils in secondary schools (including special schools and independent and grant aided schools); and
- in line with the arrangements for public transport, where individuals aged 12 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport.

Face coverings should also be worn by adults where they cannot physically distance from other adults or children. Exceptions include those who are exempt and those working with a child whose wellbeing could be impacted by the wearing of face coverings.

Details of how the Scottish Government came to the current position on masks and a range of papers can be found in this response to [an FOI published in August 2021](#). This outlined that decisions on face coverings had been informed by advice from the Scottish Government's Covid-19 Advisory Group, the Covid-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The Scottish Government published a paper on the [Experiences of vulnerable children, young people, and parents during the Covid-19 pandemic](#) based on qualitative research with these groups. The paper has a section on Face Coverings (p19), which found that generally there was acceptance of wearing face coverings, and concern when others were not. Some reported discomfort and would prefer not to wear masks all day in school.

In [written evidence to the Education, Children and Young People Committee](#) submitted in November 2021, the Educational Institute for Scotland (EIS) stated that some young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN):

“...struggled with mask-wearing protocols and being unable to see teachers' faces as they wore masks in accordance with guidance.”

The SYP found MSYPs taking part in the Covid Conversation were generally happy to wear a face covering, saying they had grown used to doing this. However, some young people pointed out accessibility issues relating to face coverings: for example, one young person noted their autism made it difficult to get used to change at first and that clear masks for deaf people steamed up and were not effective. Hot weather and wearing glasses were also highlighted as challenges for those wearing face coverings. Some secondary school pupils felt they shouldn't have to wear face coverings when sitting in class, only when moving around the classroom or school. Differing rules on face coverings between schools, hospitality venues and events were highlighted as a source of frustration for some.

Members may wish to explore with the panel:

- 4. What feedback have you received about the requirement to wear face coverings in schools and is there demonstrable evidence this is having an impact on pupils and pupil behaviour?**
- 5. What assessment has been made by school leaders/teachers/parents/carers of the Scottish Government's decision not to lift restrictions in schools following the October break?**

6. **What should be the Scottish Government’s key considerations when taking the decision whether to keep face covering restrictions in place in schools?**
7. **What are the risks of removing requirements around face coverings in schools?**

Ventilation

At its [meeting on 4 November 2021](#) the Committee heard from experts on ventilation: Dr Hywel Davies, of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers; Dr Shaun Fitzgerald, University of Cambridge; Professor Catherine Noakes, professor of environmental engineering for buildings at the University of Leeds; and Professor Tim Sharpe, who is the head of architecture at the University of Strathclyde. Professor Sharpe pointed out that:

“Our principal concern is about the spaces that might be more affected by ventilation, which are spaces that are occupied for long periods of time by relatively high numbers of people.” - [Official Report, 4 November 2021](#)

The panel also highlighted the value of carbon dioxide monitors.

[Also at the Committee’s 4 November 2021](#) meeting, Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP responded to a question from a member of the public stating concerns about school ventilation and the measures being taken to protect younger age groups from COVID-19 and long COVID. The Deputy First Minister noted that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills had written to the Education, Children and Young People Committee on this issue (see ‘Progress on monitoring CO2 levels in school’ section of this briefing). He said that local authorities had been required to “undertake extensive assessments of ventilation interventions”, adding:

“Much of the emphasis has been on two things: first, on ensuring that we have all the necessary and appropriate data on the assessments that have been made; and secondly, on ensuring that changes can be made to the school estate to enable appropriate ventilation arrangements to be put in place. The Government has, of course, funded the approaches that are being taken by local authorities.

We have to consider a whole range of different measures. The member of the public who raised the question is concerned about the wellbeing of children in schools. That concern is shared by ministers—hence the decision that ministers took, which has not been universally supported, to maintain use of face coverings by pupils in certain circumstances. That has been an important protection to maintain in trying to suppress spread of the virus within the school estate. Ventilation is another aspect of the baseline measures that we can all take to tackle the situation.” - [Official Report, 4 November 2021](#)

The Scottish Government’s [COVID-19 Guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) sets out guidelines on ventilation in schools. This is informed by advice from the Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children’s Issues. Current guidance has been in place since 15 September 2021; initially it was expected to be in place up until the

October school holidays but it has been extended beyond that following the Chief Medical Officer's decision to keep it in place.

[Guidance on ventilation](#) is intended for relevant local authority teams, rather than individual school headteachers. Local authorities are expected to provide advice to schools on the approach to ventilation, and schools are asked to ensure risk assessments are updated regularly.

Scientific advice states ventilation is an important factor in aerosol transmission of COVID-19. The guidance states that the need for a supply of fresh air to minimise risk of virus transmission must be balanced with the need to maintain comfortable temperatures in indoor spaces for reasons including health and wellbeing.

Building design and weather conditions, particularly in the winter months, are identified as challenges as it may be less practical to keep windows and doors open due to draughts.

The guidance states schools "should as a minimum ensure that adequate levels of ventilation and appropriate temperatures are maintained".

Pre-existing regulations on ventilation and heating are relevant to the guidance:

- The [School Premises \(General Requirements and Standards\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 1967](#) set out that every part of the school building should be "provided with means of adequate ventilation" (Regulation 22 (1)), and classrooms should have two air changes per hour with a temperature of 17°C (Regulation 23 (1)). There are differing minimum requirements in place depending on the area of the school.
- The [Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#) sets out that workplaces should be "ventilated by a sufficient quality of air" (Regulation 6(1)) and workplace temperature should be "reasonable" (Regulation 7(1)).

The Scottish Government guidance identifies measures for increasing ventilation such as keeping external doors and windows open where possible, opening doors and windows during periods when a room is unused, the use of mechanical ventilation where safe to do so, and additional mitigations such as face coverings for activities such as singing and drama where it might be more difficult to maintain adequate ventilation.

Local authorities must ensure all schools and childcare facilities have access to CO2 monitoring, either through mobile or fixed devices, in order to identify where action to improve ventilation is needed. Local authorities should advise on specification, installation and effective use. This guidance should be implemented in consultation with staff and trade unions to ensure clarity. Initial monitoring of progress on this was completed by the start of the October break – further detail on this can be found in the following section.

Progress on monitoring CO2 levels in schools

As the Scottish Government's guidance sets out, all schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) facilities must have access to CO2 monitors. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP [told Parliament on 3 August 2021](#):

"The new guidance that is published today makes it clear that all schools and day-care services for children must have access to CO2 monitoring, through fixed or mobile devices, which should be used to assess the quality of ventilation in schools and childcare settings, so that necessary improvements can be identified. Those assessments will be on-going over the coming weeks; we expect them to be completed—and necessary improvements identified—by the October half-term.

The First Minister stated that £10 million of funding would be made available to local authorities to support improvements to ventilation:

"I confirm today that we are making available to local authorities an additional £10 million to support that work. Ventilation is one of the most important ways in which the risk of Covid transmission can be reduced, so improving it will be vital, now and in the future, to ensure that schools and childcare centres are as safe as possible."

A [Written Answer on 7 September](#) stated each local authority would receive an "equitable share of the funding on the understanding that it is used for its intended purpose". Covering the costs of CO2 monitors and expert staff. Funding would be distributed to schools via local authorities. £90 million of previously allocated COVID logistics funding could also be spent on measures to improve ventilation.

The [Cabinet Secretary then wrote to the Education, Children and Young People Committee on 29 October 2021](#) to update on progress of CO2 assessments. This set out that £7 million capital funding (a one-off November payment) had been made available to local authorities for the purchase and installation of CO2 monitors and could also be used to reimburse the cost of devices previously bought. £3 million of revenue funding (provided in March) can be used to fund additional staff, training or consultant resource requirements. A full breakdown of local authority funding allocations is available in the [table at the foot of the Cabinet Secretary's letter](#).

Information provided to the Scottish Government as at 15 October 2021 found that by the start of the October break local authorities had completed initial CO2 monitoring of:

- 85% of primary schools;
- 83% of secondary schools;
- 75% of ASN school spaces and;
- 72% of local authority ELC spaces.

The Scottish Government letter stated this gave an overall figure of 79% of all learning, teaching and play spaces in Scotland as at 15 October 2021. This is approx. 41,000 out of approx. 52,000 spaces. Approx. 22,000 CO2 monitors had been purchased, deployed or ordered. Supply issues with CO2 monitors, availability of contractors to install devices and time to re-calibrate devices as were stated as reasons why some local authorities were unable to complete assessments.

By 29 October 2021, local authorities had completed initial monitoring of 83% of all learning, teaching and play spaces in Scotland; the Scottish Government expected assessments to be 100% complete by 12 November 2021. Local authorities have been asked to provide information on total funding spent on ventilation measures by the end of November 2021.

The letter stated local authorities had reported “only limited instances of remedial action being required” to improve ventilation following installation of CO2 monitors. Repairs to windows, relocation to spaces with appropriate ventilation, use of fan systems in areas without other ventilation, and mobile fans assisting air flow were reported as measures that had been taken. Initial feedback on CO2 monitors has found they are helpful to schools in finding the balance between adequate ventilation and room temperature. Progress on CO2 monitoring will continue to be monitored, and discussions on longer term actions and next steps.

Members may wish to explore with the panel:

- 8. To what extent is regular monitoring of CO2 in classrooms still taking place following the initial monitoring exercise?**
- 9. What has been the feedback from schools and/or parents and carers on how feasible ventilation measures have been to implement?**
- 10. Now that we are in the winter months, what steps are being taken to establish whether natural ventilation measures such as opening doors and windows are being maintained?**
- 11. What are the concerns around maintaining appropriate ventilation and temperatures in schools over the winter months?**
- 12. The Cabinet Secretary’s letter states CO2 monitors have been useful in helping to identify areas where improved ventilation is required. To what extent would your organisation agree with this observation?**
- 13. What further support do local authorities and schools require to ensure classrooms and schools are well ventilated?**

Physical distancing

The [Scottish Government guidance sets out](#) requirements for physical distancing of at least 1 meter in primary schools apply to adults who are not from the same household. Schools have had 2-meter physical distancing in place for adults for some time, and the latest guidance states this is expected to be retained in practice. There is no requirement for children to physically distance.

[There is no requirement for physical distancing between secondary school pupils](#), however school staff and adults in school should continue to physically distance by at least 1-meter. As in primary schools, it is expected 2-meter distancing will be retained.

Schools should also consider using measures including: discouraging social contact, adjusting class space where necessary, seat young people facing forward rather than face to face where possible and encouraging young people to avoid crowding together.

Specified contact groups (also referred to previously as ‘bubbles’) are no longer required.

Young people told SYP’s Covid Conversation that self-isolation can have a big impact on those in abusive households, and a big impact on mental health. In addition, partially sighted young people highlighted difficulty with keeping to social distancing as it can be difficult to know how far away other people are and guide dogs are not trained to assist with social distancing.

Members may wish to explore with the panel:

14. To what extent are the current guidelines on physical distancing being adhered to and do they remain appropriate?

15. What assistance for children and young people with disabilities is provided to help them physically distance?

Keeping schools open in the winter months

The Scottish Government has made keeping schools open a top priority since pupils returned after the winter lockdown at the start of this year.

In August, the First Minister was quoted in the TES stating:

“I want to keep all aspects of life we have managed to get back to normal, back to normal. I want people to observe basic precautions and mitigations, but right at the top of that list of things I do not want to see go backwards is the ability of children to be in school. All of us have a duty to try to limit the spread of the virus in other ways so we keep children at school.” – [TES, 24 August 2021](#)

In a [COVID-19 statement updating Parliament on 16 November 2021](#), the First Minister highlighted steps taken to improve ventilation in schools, describing ventilation measures as a “valuable long term investment”.

However, with COVID-19 cases across Scotland rising there may be some local impacts on schools this winter. For example, school closures [have impacted Highland Council in recent weeks](#) and the Chair of Highland Council’s Education Committee John Finlayson told the BBC on 10 November 2021:

"In small rural schools just one or two teachers having Covid can close the school...It's an ever-changing picture we have to keep meeting the situations as they arise, and congratulate our staff in how they cope with what is a very difficult situation and it's probably going to be more difficult as winter comes on." – [BBC Scotland, 10 November 2021](#)

The Scottish Government published an [updated COVID-19 Strategic Framework on 16 November 2021](#). This states:

"We expect this winter to be difficult and, in particular, we are preparing for a more challenging influenza season. We have learned over the course of the pandemic that effective, early intervention – often earlier than might seem obvious at first sight – is needed to prevent harm and reduce the need for stronger intervention later. Consequently we will be ready to respond with proportionate measures should that become appropriate. We also need to recognise that COVID-19 will remain with us in the long term, though in time it will cease to be a public health emergency." – [Scottish Government Strategic Framework Update](#)

It also highlights the combination of lifting Level 0 restrictions together with the return of schools likely contributed to rising COVID-19 case numbers in August 2021.

In relation to schools, the Framework Update states:

- Emphasis will continue to be placed on compliance with existing mitigations (ventilation, face coverings etc) to drive down transmission and targeted messaging around flu, coughs and colds. [The Framework Update does not mention further removal of restrictions in schools, such as those proposed [by the Advisory Sub-Group](#) in October.]
- Expanding eligibility for seasonal flu vaccinations to include secondary school children and education staff will see over 4.4 million people receive their flu vaccine – 1 million more than in 2020.
- Measures in schools are kept under close review, taking advice from the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and others.
- Self-isolation and contact tracing arrangements were changed in August. Under the [new rules](#), any adult or child developing symptoms of COVID-19 or testing positive using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) should self-isolate and book a PCR test. The updated rules are as follows:
 - Those under 18 years and 4 months can leave isolation if the PCR test is negative, but should isolate for 10 days if it is positive.
 - Those over 18 years and 4 months should isolate and book a PCR test and continue to isolate for 10 days unless fully vaccinated and the PCR test is negative.

- Household member under 5 years do not need to isolate and are not required to take a PCR test. If they do take a PCR test and it is positive they do need to isolate for 10 days.
- Household members of anyone with symptoms/a positive LFD test must also isolate and book a PCR test, following the rules outlined above.
- Contact tracing arrangements were also changed so that only close contacts of positive cases identified in schools will be contacted and advised to self-isolate and take a PCR test. Low risk contacts will be identified by schools, who will send a letter – often referred to as a ‘Warn and Inform’ letter - out to low risk contacts advising of a positive case. Low risk contacts do not need to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms or have a positive LFD.
- The most recent data for November has COVID-19-related pupil absence rates at about 2% each days, with around 70% of these absent through self-isolation. The [Framework Update also states](#): “Public Health Scotland (PHS) analysis indicates that, of close contacts in school settings identified during the last academic year, just 5% of pupils later tested positive within 14 days of contact. This 5% includes community as well as in-school transmission. We also know that 62% of positive pupil cases had no close contacts that tested positive within 14 days.” (p35)

Members may wish to explore with the panel:

16. What is your assessment of the Scottish Government’s current plans during the winter months?

17. What further support and/or guidance would be helpful for local authorities, schools and parents and carers?

18. What will be the likely local and national impact of COVID-19 on schools this winter and how can local authorities, schools, parents and carers best prepare for this?

19. What contingency plans are currently in place at national and local level for schools if faced with another significant wave of COVID-19 this winter?

**Lynne Currie, Senior Researcher (Education and Children’s Social Work),
SPICe Research
22 November 2021**

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