

Our COVID-19 Guidelines for Safe Working

At Science Oxford, we recognise that, as an external visitor, we are a potential vector for the transmission of diseases such as COVID-19 to and from schools. As schools re-open from September, we aim to follow any government guidelines, individual school guidelines and scientific advice to keep our staff, your staff and your students and their families safe.

Government guidelines are clear that schools need to carefully consider how visitors might attend. As such, we have put together the following, matching the government guidelines at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell

Science Oxford will never send staff suspected of infection with COVID-19 to a school. If staff were to develop novel symptoms during the school day and suspect that they may have developed COVID-19, they will immediately report to a member of school staff and leave the school as quickly and safely as possible, minimising any further contact.

If there is a confirmed significant outbreak in your school, or a spike in your local area causing a school closure, then we would need to cancel any pre-arranged visit. If you are aware of either of these situations, you must contact us as soon as possible.

Science Oxford will not charge a school for any activities cancelled for these reasons.

2. Clean hands more thoroughly than usual

Science Oxford staff will always securely carry an alcohol-based hand gel to ensure they can clean their hands whenever appropriate, such as when passing equipment to or collecting equipment from your pupils, even when there is no convenient access to other hand-washing facilities.

Children should always arrive at activities having washed their hands in line with your standard school procedures. If there has been any use of equipment in an activity, they should wash their hands after leaving the activity.

3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene

We will promote and model the 'catch it', 'bin it', 'kill it' approach amongst our staff and with all children and adults with whom we work.

4. Introduce enhanced cleaning

Many Science Oxford activities require the use of equipment that is shared and re-used between groups. All our activities have been reviewed and revised in this regard. In cases where equipment is still necessary, Science Oxford will ensure that where possible, equipment will be isolated and stored for a minimum of 72 hours between uses. Where this is not possible, the equipment will be thoroughly cleaned between uses.

These restrictions will mean that some activities are not possible, some will only be possible with smaller groups, some will only be able to be run at most once during a visit, and some will require a longer reset period. Often our timetabling will therefore result in slightly fewer activities than we have previously been able to offer.

If we are re-using locations within your school for different groups, then we will also need to clean work surfaces between groups.

5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing

As potential visitors to many schools, we must ensure that our staff maintain social distancing, from your children and your staff. This is going to be particularly difficult! We will:

- not greet with a handshake;
- avoid using your staff room;
- maintain a 2m distance from staff and children;
- follow your guidance on setting up workspaces;
- provide sufficient equipment for children in line with your equipment sharing policy;
- discuss all of this in advance with you!

In some cases, these restrictions may require us to have smaller group sizes than we normally would. Some activities we have previously offered will prove to be impossible to provide, and others will require greater setup time and complexity. Shows in your hall might need to be limited to just one class if it is impossible to ensure social distancing between bubbles, and workshops might need to be limited to half a class in some cases. Where activities take place will also need to be considered carefully – larger spaces such as your hall will be easier to maintain social distancing, and so unless you have particularly large classrooms, we will request use of your hall or other larger space. We will want to carefully consider all of this in advance, so we will need to stay in contact before our visit.

6. Where necessary wear appropriate PPE

Science Oxford staff will carry masks and will wear one if your school procedures promote their use, but, as per current Public Health England advice, will not in general wear them during activities. They will typically wear a mask on arrival at school, and while moving around school if clear social distancing is not easily possible.

Response to any infection

7. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace Program

In line with government guidance, any Science Oxford staff suspected of infection will self-isolate for 7 days and arrange to have a test. Science Oxford staff with symptomatic members of their household will self-isolate for 14 days.

We will report to the NHS Test and Trace Program and include details of schools visited if necessary.

8. Manage confirmed cases

Our understanding is that the NHS health protection team will contact anyone they deem necessary through the NHS Test and Trace Program. We will report to the Test and Trace Program if necessary and assume that schools will do the same.

9. Contain any outbreak

Please contact us as soon as possible if your health protection team have given you any advice regarding visitors.

We will also ensure we contact any schools directly if we suspect a case and would appreciate it if you could contact us proactively to ensure we can react as quickly as possible.

This is a working document. These guidelines will be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary in line with any updated government and scientific advice.

Above all, we will work with you throughout the booking, planning and delivery of any of our workshops and shows to ensure adherence both our own guidelines as described above and to your school's guidelines and policies. We have reviewed and updated our risk assessments in the light of COVID-19 for every activity we offer. Risk assessments can be downloaded from our website or provided on request.