

## **Arrangements for In-service Activity**

### **In-service activities**

In-service activities are an important part of teachers' work as they can support professional development and collegiate working. It is important that in-service activity continues to take place during the pandemic, with priorities for such activity agreed locally.

### **Current Scottish Government Guidance on Working from Home**

With infection levels still high in spite of the roll-out of the vaccination programme, the Scottish Government encourages home-working, where possible. This view has also been expressed publicly by Professor Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director. Current Scottish Government Guidance states<sup>1</sup>:

*"For now, we ask that businesses still support employees to work from home, where possible and in consultation with employees."*

### **Working in communal spaces**

Schools have several workspaces where teachers meet during the pupil day or on in-service days which are defined as communal spaces under the Scottish Government Guidelines.

Communal workplaces including schools and other education and childcare settings have a physical distancing minimum requirement of 1m, between adults and between adults and pupils, with 2m recommended. There is also a requirement for adults to wear a face-mask in communal areas (in Secondary, also in classrooms when teaching pupils).

Scottish Government Guidance<sup>2</sup> also states:

*"All staff rooms, canteens, bases and offices should be reconfigured to ensure the physical distancing rule is able to be maintained. Where there is not sufficient space to support distancing, for example in staff rooms, offices or work areas, risk assessments should be carried out, and consideration should be given to measures such as limiting the number of adults in any one space at any one time, staggering staff breaks, creating additional staff work or welfare areas, use of rotas to manage access to spaces, and the use of face coverings etc."*

*Learning from outbreaks across a range of sectors suggests that lapses in adherence to physical distancing can occur when staff take breaks from work and mix with colleagues outside or in staff rooms and other social areas. Staff should*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/pages/working-arrangements/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-learning-and-childcare-services/pages/physical-distancing-between-adults/>

*be reminded that the requirement to physically distance applies at all times, including during breaks and before and after sessions.”*

### **Local negotiation on in-service day arrangements**

During in-service days, as the pupils are not at school, the EIS believes that Local Authorities and schools should engage with teachers’ unions to agree on appropriate in-service activities and arrangements that take account of health and safety requirements and of agreed priorities for recovery.

It is the EIS position that during in-service days the default should be home-working for teachers with virtual meetings where practicalities require it.

Where agreed specific tasks require in-person attendance in school, these should be arranged with appropriate risk assessments having been carried out and thereafter appropriate safety protocols in place. Teachers’ in-person attendance under these circumstances, in the interests of limiting transmission of infection, should only be required for the duration of time necessary to carry out the task, with teachers working from home during any remaining time before or after the agreed school-based activity.

### **Action for Representatives**

The EIS advises representatives to engage with their school/Local Authority to reach agreement in relation to such in-service arrangements in the current context of the pandemic and continuing risk of infection.