



GUIDANCE ON THE RE-OPENING OF
DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENTS

AUGUST 20, 2020

Advice for workshop use from September 2020– Support for school leaders returning post COVID Lockdown

We are living and working in uncertain and challenging times. By the time secondary students start to return to design and technology department workshops this September, many workshops will have been in a closed state for five months or longer. In this time, the facilities may have laid idle or alternatively could have been set up as a production environment for PPE to assist clinical workers in their hour of need.

School leaders and governors will be considering how to safely open up all facilities to students wherever possible. This document has been produced recognising that many schools will have the expertise in place to carry out safety audits of their facilities, machines and equipment but may benefit from an expert external perspective.

This guidance has been produced with close reference to the CLEAPSS guidance issued last week. Our intention is to take a practical view of the guidance issued and consider what actions might be necessary in order to enable workshops to be safely opened for student use. It should be pointed out that each workshop environment will pose a unique set of risks dependant upon the space available, entry/exit points, ventilation, tool and machine availability etc. This makes generic guidance difficult.

This document is to be used alongside the appropriate CLEAPSS guidance; it is in no way intended to replace this guidance.

Before lessons:

- Depending upon the school and its layout and also the size and style of the buildings and corridors, the following are aspects that you should be considering.
 - The teaching and support staff in design and technology should endeavour to pre-organise each lesson so that the books, paper, equipment etc. are laid out and available at each workplace. Advice would be to limit the amount of travel in lessons to the minimum possible. (Ideally limit the distribution of equipment / materials by getting students to use their own tablets / computers / equipment where possible).
 - The wiping or cleaning of preparation surfaces in a food room prior to a class arriving.
 - The staff should always be in the classrooms prior to the students arriving – early meet and greet policy - school will already have rules to enable students to traverse from room to room via corridors generally with the use of a one-way system.
 - The students should be instructed to enter the design and technology workshop (if the staff member is there) and **NOT** wait in the corridors. Doing this will help to avoid possible bottlenecks or the blocking of vital school corridors.
 - Schools that insist on students lining up outside the workshop will have to carefully consider the 2m rule and students' ability to distance appropriately in corridors. If it is possible to use external areas to line students up this would be far more advantageous than in a corridor (possibly using a fire door to enter)? Remember a large workshop is only 10m or 12m long so that would only allow six students maximum to line up in a corridor before the line interfered with the next rooms space.
 - Markers at 2m intervals could be applied to the floor to support the students, akin to those found in supermarkets etc. This could be achieved through the use of floor tape.
 - On entry to the classroom, there should be a first in last out policy. The first student to arrive should be expected to sit at the furthest point from the entry door and then the next person and so on until the last person to enter the room is positioned closest to the door. On leaving the lesson, the opposite will occur. It is important to stress that the teacher should already be in the room and in a place where movement is possible but not interfering with travel areas of the students.
 - If the department has technical support, the technician could be appointed to follow the last student into the room at a safe distance to indicate to the teacher that all students are safely in the room.

- It would be good practise to advise that the teacher has a workshop student working/zone plan for the classroom. For this, we recommend that teachers produce an A3 plan demonstrating the position of each workstation, the direction of movement around a room if needed and any other essential information. It should be displayed both inside and outside the room – smaller versions could be produced for the students for inclusion in personal planners etc. It is **NOT** recommended that the teacher does a named seating plan as if for any reason learner 1 is late arriving, the student may not be able to get to their station/area safely as other learners have already entered the room.

Curriculum change

Getting students back into the workshop and safely completing practical tasks will present issues and will not be easy but we refute any claim that it is not possible. Being able to model, prototype and explore material properties is a key aspect of our subject and one that cannot and should not be overlooked. Subject leaders may have to ask which year groups most require workshop access, especially in the first term, and which could work safely elsewhere with curriculum content changes.

Any curriculum changes made to facilitate safe working need to be considered as part of a 'bigger picture' with practical aspects perhaps not possible now being caught up at a later date. It may also be possible to cover the same concepts using alternative practise and virtual content (e.g. using videos to demonstrate machine use, material properties etc).

All curriculum change made due to COVID restrictions should be carefully documented and should be explained to senior leaders and Ofsted if applicable.

Personal Protection:

- Depending upon the school and its COVID-19 Policy, this section may vary slightly.
- Check PPE levels in all working areas as many schools selflessly donated goggles etc. to frontline care workers and may not have thought to replenish working areas appropriately.
- Department leaders should be aware that full PPE should be worn as appropriate to protect the safe working of each student. If a standard safety item is not available within the room, then that work should not take place until appropriate PPE is made available.
- Design and technology departments may wish to introduce a 24/7 PPE policy. This is very simple and mirrors many operating industrial processes, where the worker (in our case the student) wears the essential elements of PPE for the full duration of the lesson and not just for set activities.
- On entry into the workshop required PPE should be provided in advance to each student's workstation.
 - It is advised that at the end of each lesson, students should place their used goggles into a bucket of fresh water where a Milton sterilising tablet can be inserted as the students leave the room. The next group would enter the classroom and use an additional set of goggles and so the process would repeat. The goggles should stay in the sterilising solution for a minimum of 20 minutes. Goggles should be allowed to air dry between usage.
 - Alternatively, the school could supply each student with their own pair of EN166 rated goggles, and these will then only be used by that student. (This is clearly a more expensive option).
 - Aprons should be worn when appropriate (leather aprons for heat treatment, for example). Students should either bring their own aprons or aprons will need to be washed between each use.
- The school should provide the department with adequate supplies of hand sanitiser that could be used as and when required (preferably foot-activated).
- The school should provide the design and technology department with surface wipes or surface spray and disposable blue protective paper towels to clean surfaces, tools and machinery between lessons.
- The students and staff could wear PPE for all or some parts of the lesson. (Remember FFP3 is required for wood dust). Each school will have their own user guide for the use and type of face masks that the students and staff can wear and when these masks must be worn, work within these guidelines but always ensure

that no mask endangers the user when they are on a machine (i.e. loose fitting scarfs or when creating excessive fine wood dust).

- All respiratory masks issued by the school for wood dust purposes should be FFP3 in grade, these must never be shared and should be disposable. Masks should be disposed of to a rubbish bag that can then be sealed and disposed of at the end of each lesson.
- All students should be instructed to wash their hands at the start and end of every lesson.
- It is not obligatory for everyone to wear gloves in a workshop and, in fact, this is actively discouraged. They can be worn, but under the strict understanding they should be of nitrile, latex or latex-free disposable style. Also, if this type of glove is worn, they should be tight-fitting not loose. No working or rigger or other types of glove should be permitted. Refer to the school's policy on this. Gloves should be disposed of to a rubbish bag that can then be sealed and disposed of at the end of each lesson. It is far more effective to wash hands regularly than to wear gloves.
- All design and technology staff (and students) must have their own PPE and should not share them with students or other staff.

Technical support:

- All the technical duties that we usually hope and expect the technician to do will still be required. In addition, technicians will need to carry out additional preparation and cleaning between lessons, this will take time, and senior leaders must allow for this when scheduling lessons.
- Prior to lessons starting the technician can support the teacher in the setting up of the lesson materials.
- Technicians can supervise the sterilisation of PPE and the preparation of the sterilising solution.
- Advanced preparation of materials, woods plastics, card, fabric etc.
- Ensuring the students all enter into a workshop where the teacher is waiting and managing overflow, (see before the lesson section).
- Ensure that the technician prep room is left for the technician to use at all times. Teaching staff are to be advised to stay out of the technician's area wherever possible.
- There should be a dedicated PPE supply of extra gloves, masks and goggles for the technical support staff which is solely for their use due to the possible increased level of risk that they may encounter.

We recognise that not all schools are fortunate to have technician support. Where this is not available school leaders will have to work with subject leaders to carefully consider timetabling, allowing sufficient time for cleaning between practical lessons and for lesson preparation.

Group sizes:

- Heads of department should work alongside senior leaders to calculate the most appropriate number of students for the room size based on pupil age/ability, room complexity/layout, staff ability/experience/support available, subject matter/process/project but at all times adhering to prescribed social distancing requirements
 - You may need to consider if benches are moved within the workshop (or even removed from the workshop) to generate more space and more mobility within.
 - We would generally recommend the BS4163 pages 12/13 (BB81) as a guide, but now every individual room should be reassessed.
 - Remember that if a machine is being used, it may isolate a bench
 - Static or non-practical lessons will enable more students to be in the room at once. It is impossible to state a figure for students allowed into the room based on square meterage as each workshop will be different depending upon the layout of the room and the amount of machinery and equipment in that room. Guidance must therefore be set on strict adherence to the 2-metre rule where possible, where this is not feasible students must be at least 1 metre apart at all times with students not directly facing each other wherever possible.

- In a food technology room, it is recommended that there is one student to a cooker and in general, this will also match with sinks, so no student is required to share these facilities. Please note that the social distancing rule must again be the benchmark here and many rooms will not accommodate one student per cooker as the spaces will overlap, cookers are often back-to-back, so students will be less than 1-metre apart when using hobs which is not acceptable.

Managing the workshop:

- Remember, this is a stressful time for all, so be patient with the students and smile, try not to create situations that may cause confrontation. Remember, stress can cause extreme reactions in students. We must do everything possible to make each student feel safe and secure.
- Regardless of the discipline or specialism that the room is set out for, the management of social distancing is paramount.
- For practical work to safely take place, the teacher planning the lesson must have worked out the most efficient way to manage the class in advance. Lesson planning must be shared with all staff in the department and the technician/support staff so at no point is any user of the room unaware of how to proceed under normal circumstances and in an emergency situation.
- If a student or students require to move to and from a machine or a series of machines, draw up a movement policy that all can adhere to. Hand up to move, verbal communication then move, whatever the procedure, make it so all can easily understand the rules and comply.
- In food rooms, the use of cool boxes and mini desktop fridges could be used as temporary cool space and therefore save students moving around the room to a fridge/freezer during a practical.
- Lots of pre-lesson preparation will be required, and effective communication between the teacher and technician as well as the technician and the head of department will be essential.
- There may be a need to isolate or remove machinery from a room. An example of this would be where a school has 3 power fret saws on a bench; by putting 'do not use' sign on two or one in the middle depending upon the distance would enable distance control.
- Our advice is to create a toolbox/tray for each student station, don't use the regular cupboards or wall racks. Or lay the required tools and equipment out at the start of each lesson.

Other things to consider:

- First aid or an accident in the workshop.
 - Trained first aiders in the school must be aware of the actions they can and can't take under threat of COVID-19 and how to deal with different situations. They should refer to the school COVID-19 policy for advice on this as well as the government/NHS advice services.
 - All D&T departments should be aware of who the first aider is for each room and how to safely call for assistance if required.
 - If an accident does occur, it is vital that it is dealt with promptly and efficiently and that teachers have given thought to how to manage other students not directly involved.
- If an incident happens in a workshop or food room, it may be more appropriate/safer for all students to leave the room using the first in, last out policy and to return to the room when the situation has been resolved.
- If a fire bell goes off, standard rules should apply but with the addition of the first in last out policy and with students following any one-way system in place. Students should calmly evacuate the space while ensuring that appropriate social distancing is maintained.

The Design and Technology Association's ***RDTHSC Advice Service for COVID19*** is now available.

The Design and Technology Association (D&TA) has been supporting design and technology, engineering, design and related departments since 1988. The Association has a large number of Registered Design and Technology Health and Safety Consultants (RDTHSC) based across the UK. These vastly experienced health and safety experts are self-employed but work with and on behalf of the Association nationally delivering machine and tool training to pre-determined and established standards.

The Association recognises that school leaders are working in unprecedented times and are having to make a wide range of difficult decisions on an ongoing basis as further information and guidance is issued from the government. Our overriding objective is to support all schools to audit the safe return and delivery of a design and technology curriculum within their school.

All training courses delivered by the Design and Technology Association accredited RDTHSCs (with the exception of welding) are now available again. In addition to our standard list of courses we have added a departmental COVID-19 audit (£195 +VAT + expenses) where an accredited trainer will visit the school/establishment, not to carry out accredited machine training (unless arranged at the same time) but instead, to carry out a thorough check of the workshop, machines and tooling (guided by a pre-agreed checklist) and to provide the school's leadership with a document detailing all items checked and any additional work that might be required to reopen the facilities for safe student use.

To aid this process, it would be advantageous if the person responsible for the site or the department in question was present either for the duration of the visit or as a minimum, for feedback at the visit's end. The consultant will provide the school/establishment with a completed audit form, but verbal communication of any additional works noted would be hugely beneficial.

This audit will leave the school leadership with a conversation and document to work from. If this is of interest to you, please call the Association on 01789 470007 or email info@data.org.uk