



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Occupational Health & Safety - GREEN ALERT Covid-19 - Study reveals inadequate ventilation in primary classrooms!

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Applicable to all Headteachers/Teachers & Learning Support Staff

Some 40% of primary school classrooms do not have an adequate ventilation rate to combat the spread of COVID-19, a study has found.

Research concluded that the area and volume of classrooms needs to be increased for students to remain at an “acceptable distance” from one another, while it also recommended user-friendly and safe windows designed at two different levels to allow both teachers and pupils to open and close them.

The research found problems with ventilation in classrooms were largely due teachers and pupils failing to open doors and windows regularly enough. It said this was linked to the different thresholds for temperature between adults and children – with adults essentially feeling colder than children.

The research suggests that a classroom with high potential for natural ventilation does not necessarily provide adequate indoor air quality as that relies on teachers and pupils opening windows and doors.

The research also shows that around 15% of children are overheated during cold seasons as well as warm seasons and recommends increasing ventilation rates to help maintain air quality and a comfortable room temperature.

The supervisor of the research project said: “Teachers are mainly in charge of controlling the environment in classrooms and they open windows according to their own thermal threshold, which

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Occupational Health & Safety - GREEN ALERT

is higher than children's. As most UK school classrooms are naturally ventilated, teachers should be informed about these differences and the consequence of their behaviour and be encouraged to open windows to reduce the risk of spreading covid."

"Well-designed naturally ventilated schools that are operated effectively by school occupants can increase ventilation rates and reduce the risk of spreading covid."

Key actions required for Headteachers:

1. Ensure you are familiar with the latest [guidance from the HSE regarding ventilation](#) in the workplace to mitigate against the risk of Covid-19
2. Ensure recommendations from the guidance have been implemented
3. Monitor compliance with the recommendations/school's control measures by other staff, taking action where non-compliance is identified
4. Relax dress codes during winter months

Key actions required for Teachers/Learning Support Staff:

1. Consider removing excess clutter/furniture from the classroom to allow for better airflow/ventilation
2. Ensure you have adequate ventilation within your classroom. If you only have windows/doors ideally these should be cracked open (opposing sides/ends is best) whenever the classroom is occupied. Opening higher level windows helps avoiding drafts.

Should you require any further information or support in implementing the requirements of this alert please contact your [Health & Safety Team](#)

| Traffic light key | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Red alerts | Mandatory - where immediate action may be required |
| Amber alerts | Mandatory - with a timescale for action that may be required. |
| Green alerts | Information only |