

Practical Science – September 2020

CLEAPSS have yet to publish their advice regarding practical work in fully reopened schools. However, based on the information provided for the current situation (partial opening) we can draw various conclusions and offer an outline plan. It is important to understand that this may well change in light of further published information. The plan below is designed to ensure that pupils can still experience the enjoyment and learning opportunities of practical science whilst operating in a way that will relieve the concerns of pupils, parents, teaching staff and technical staff.

Based on the current advice we can identify the following points :

Safety glasses

Current advice

Sterilise after every use

September approach

We will continue to follow this advice. Glasses are sterilised in a cold Milton solution, which takes 20 minutes. They need to be left to dry. Additional safety glasses have been ordered and there will be sufficient for two sets per room, allowing one set to be in use whilst another is being prepared.

Hand-washing

Current advice

Non-flammable (i.e. non-alcohol based) hand sanitiser should be used in labs where Bunsen burners will be used.

September approach

We have located a source of non-alcohol based hand sanitiser and dispensers will be placed in each lab. The material also has the benefit of a residual effect and if used at the start of a practical lesson should provide protection throughout the lesson and beyond.

Sharing of Equipment / Working in groups

Current advice

Work individually (based on the 2m social distancing provision)

September approach

The move to "bubbles" means that the 2m issue is removed. However, the school will inform parents that pupils will **not** be sharing equipment in science lessons during the first half-term. Solutions to this will be :

- Set up seating plans with pupils in each pair designated as either A or B. One lesson, pupil A will perform the experiment and handle the equipment (with pupil B being an advisor / observer). The next time there is a practical lesson (i.e. a different task), pupil B will actively handle equipment with A observing. This has the advantage of allowing pupils to gain close-up experience of practical work and to be actively involved on a frequent basis.
- For required practicals, you may wish to order to equipment for two separate lessons and have half the group doing practical work whilst the other half does theory work. This allows all pupils to experience the practicals but has the disadvantage of creating extra work for technicians and requires significant changes to lesson plans.
(OFQUAL are currently considering what the practical requirements will be for next year)

Cleaning of Equipment after Use

Current advice

No special cleaning requirements (other than safety glasses)

September advice

We await advice from CLEAPSS. However, it may be prudent to clean items that will be in longer-term hand contact (e.g. tongs) in the same way as the safety glasses.

Movement around Labs

Current advice

Avoid movement.

September advice

The main reason for this advice was the difficulty of maintaining the 2m separation. However, we will look at storage of equipment to see whether changes can be made that reduce the amount of movement required in practical lessons.