



## One minute guide to...

### VENTILATION

#### Why is ventilation important?

Alongside handwashing and cleaning, good ventilation is one of the best ways to reduce the spread of infections, such as respiratory infections including COVID-19 in indoor spaces (such as classrooms) because it reduces the amount of virus in the air helping protect workers and their families.

As respiratory infections travel through the air, the virus can build up in poorly ventilated areas which increases the risk of infection. It is also a legal requirement that employers must make sure there's an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace.

#### How to keep indoor spaces well ventilated?

- **Monitor air quality:**

Use carbon dioxide monitors as a proxy measure for how well-ventilated a room is.

Readings regularly over 1,500 parts per million is an indicator of poor ventilation. If you don't have a carbon dioxide monitor, rooms that feel 'hot and stuffy' or are 'smelly' are likely to be poorly ventilated.

- **Increase natural ventilation:**

- Windows do not always need to be wide open. Smaller window gaps can give as good ventilation on chilly days as a wide-open window on a warmer or still/calm day.
- Opening more than one window, or a window and a door (keep fire doors closed), can help create more of a through flow, especially if they are on different sides of the room.
- When it is cold outdoors, opening high level windows only can help to minimise cold drafts. Using trickle vents instead of opening windows can also help to maintain a comfortable temperature.
- When the weather, noise, or pollution makes it difficult to open windows all the time, opening them for short bursts during breaks between lessons can still provide ventilation.

- **Ensure mechanical ventilation (where fitted) is working effectively:** Refer to the manufacturer's guidance and follow HSE [advice](#)

#### Further Information:

Professor Cath Noakes talks about CO2 monitors and ventilation in schools: [Ventilation and CO2 monitoring for schools - YouTube](#)

Other guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ventilation-to-reduce-the-spread-of-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19>

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Working for Cumberland Council and  
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