Top Tips

for managing ventilation

Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Here are some tips for managing ventilation in the classroom…

1. **Make sure you know how to use any mechanical ventilation, CO2 monitors or air cleaning units in your classroom** and ask school leaders if you are not sure how something should be operated. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced detailed guidance on ventilation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. **Make sure air movement is unrestricted.** Make sure that air movement (from windows, doors or vents) is not blocked by non-slated blinds, curtains or furniture. Arrange your room so that you can reach and open windows as far as safely possible: do not override window restrictors if in use, and make sure that window openings do not increase the risk of falling from a height.

3. **Colder and windier weather can increase air flow.** Colder and windier weather can increase air flow so you don't need to open windows and doors as far. In cold weather, high level windows can also be opened first, before low level windows. The cooler air from the windows will fall and mix with the warmer air as it rises, meaning the room stays warmer for longer.

4. **Set mechanical ventilation to fresh air.** If your setting has a mechanical ventilation system, make sure it is set to maximise fresh air and minimise recirculation and if applicable, ensure filters are regularly maintained.

5. **Open windows or doors – even for 10 minutes can help.** Opening more than one window, or a window and a door, can increase ventilation. This is most effective when the openings are on opposite sides of the room, or on different walls. Windows might not need to be opened fully all times when CO2 readings indicate good ventilation. Even opening windows for 10 minutes an hour can help reduce the risk from virus in the air – and where possible this can happen when the room is empty. You can let fresh air into classrooms between each lesson by fully opening windows and doors when the space isn't being used. HSE has further guidance on balancing good ventilation with maintaining thermal comfort.

6. **Assess ventilation.** Use CO2 monitors to help you to assess ventilation and identify poorly ventilated spaces across your estate. CO2 monitors can confirm where additional measures are needed, and when any additional action is working. For more information, see guidance from HSE.

7. **Report issues.** Make sure there's an easy way for staff to report issues with ventilation.

8. **If ventilation is poor, assess how it can be improved through remedial works before considering air cleaning units.** Air cleaning units do not improve ventilation and will not reduce CO2 readings, but they can be a short-term solution to reduce airborne contaminants in a poorly ventilated space, including viruses like COVID-19.

KNOW YOUR CO2 READINGS

800ppm or less	**Ventilation is good**.
800-1500ppm	An **early indication to take action**: adjust the ventilation by opening windows or doors more widely. Over time the CO2 monitor can help you learn what works well.
Over 1500ppm	If your CO2 monitor is frequently over 1500ppm for 20 minutes or more, this is a sign that **ventilation needs to be improved**. If your actions cannot easily improve the ventilation in your classroom you should report this to school leaders.

For more information, see the DfE's guidance on CO2 monitors and air cleaning units.
For more tips on keeping classrooms warm, see The Education Hub

Department for Education

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