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Education and childcare during coronavirus

Department for Education

Guidance

Protective measures for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

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About this guidance

As the Prime Minister confirmed in his announcement on 23 June, providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children can operate over the summer holiday, with safety measures in place. Providers are now able to open for both outside and indoor provision provided that they follow the protective measures set out by government, such as those outlined in this guidance.

We recognise the important role out-of-school settings (OOSS) play in providing enriching activities, giving children the opportunity to socialise with others outside their household and promoting their wellbeing. We also recognise the importance of these settings in providing additional childcare options to parents and carers, particularly those with younger children, who may need to return to or continue to work during the school holidays.

We are aware many providers are already considering what protective measures to put in place to allow them to reopen more widely and as safely as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This document sets out national guidance to support their planning and advises on practical steps they can take to minimise the risk to children, staff and parents who attend their settings by reducing the risk of infection and transmission of the virus. Providers should also consider any local restrictions in their local area and have regard to any specific guidance in place covering local lockdowns.

The scientific evidence suggests that there is a moderate to high degree of confidence that the susceptibility to clinical disease of younger children (up to age 11 to 13) is lower than for adults. However, it remains important that protective measures as outlined in this guidance are put in place to help reduce the risk of transmission.

For older children, there is not enough evidence yet to determine whether susceptibility to clinical disease is different to adults. Children and young people aged over 13 are still able to use out-of-school settings, but where older children are likely to attend, providers should still consider how to minimise any risk of infection and transmission of the virus. Providers should manage this risk by putting in place the protective measures as outlined in this guidance, for example, encouraging all children attending their setting to walk or cycle to the setting or get dropped off by a member of their household in a private vehicle rather than taking public transport.

We have also released accompanying guidance for parents and carers to support them to understand how they can reduce the risk of transmission of the virus, if they choose to send their children to out-of-school settings over the summer.

How to use this guidance

Providers who open should implement this guidance from the end of summer term, when state schools in their local area have closed. Until then, while schools are open in a provider's local area, they should follow the same protective measures as schools to limit different groups of children mixing. This means that if a setting opens before the end of the 2020 summer term, they should ensure they are:

- only caring for children from the eligible groups (children in early years, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6) and priority groups (children of critical workers and vulnerable children)
- only caring for children from one school or early years provider
- working closely with the school or early years providers that their children attend, to ensure that, as far as possible, children are kept in the same small consistent groups that they are in throughout the day, and otherwise maintain social distance

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for organisations or individuals who provide community activities, tuition, holiday clubs or after-school clubs for children (up to age 18), as well as their staff and volunteers. This guidance will be relevant for those providers which fall within the government's definition of an out-of-school setting (OOSS), as well as those providers caring for children over the age of 5 and registered with Ofsted on either the compulsory or voluntary childcare register. Providers caring for children under the age of 5 should refer to the guidance for Early Years and Childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Many providers will be offering a range of services and activities to young people (including those up to the age of 25). Providers of youth services and activities should also refer to the National Youth Agency's guidance for Managing Youth Sector Spaces and Activities during COVID-19, as well as their accompanying tools and resources to support safe service provision.

OOSS are organisations or individuals that provide tuition, training, instruction or activities to children in England without their parents' or carers' supervision, but are not:

- schools[1]
- colleges[2]
- 16-19 academies[3]
- providers caring for children that are registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency[4]

OOSS generally provide tuition, training, instruction or activities outside normal school hours (such as evenings, weekends, school holidays), although some OOSS are run part-time during school hours to help meet the needs of those who are typically educated at home. OOSS should not, however, be operating full-time (preventing a child attending a lawfully operating school). They may, for example, include tuition or learning centres, extracurricular clubs, supplementary schools, uniformed youth organisations, religious settings offering instruction in their own faith, and summer clubs . OOSS can occur in many kinds of venue, from a person's home to much larger and more formal places such as community and youth centres, sports clubs, and places of worship. Fees may or may not be charged, and some settings may operate on a commercial basis.

It is important that providers understand and follow current government guidelines on protective measures to prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Specific protective measures guidance has been released for different types of premises, for example places of worship and outdoor spaces. This guidance signposts to these, and more than one may be applicable to your provision. It is also important to note that some premises may only be able to open for certain limited purposes. You should check the latest government guidelines on which businesses and venues can open and for which purposes. Providers operating out of these premises should work with all the relevant parties (for example, the owner or voluntary management committee) to identify, agree on and distribute responsibility for protective measures to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). See Carrying out a risk assessment for more information.

Home education

Parents (including guardians and foster carers) who have chosen to home educate their own child are not OOSS providers for the purpose of this guidance. Any group activities undertaken by home educators involving their own children but taking place outside of their own household should be carried out in line with current government guidance, such as Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in other people's homes.

Carrying out a risk assessment

There are important actions that providers should take during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, to help prevent the transmission of the virus. Before restarting your provision, it is important that you carry out or refresh your existing risk assessment in line with the HSE guidance, identifying protective measures (such as those listed in the guidance on Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)). Where premises may have been closed for several weeks, there are increased risks related to safety concerns around water hygiene as well as building and occupancy safety. You should ensure that all health and safety compliance checks, including a fire risk assessment, have been undertaken before opening by checking with the owner of the premises. If you are the owner of the premises which you operate your provision out of, you may find it useful to refer to the guidance on Managing school premises during the coronavirus outbreak, which outlines the type of checks you should undertake before reopening.

In most cases, risk assessments and preparation for reopening of OOSS should be carried out by a senior member of staff. However, you should also work with other relevant parties when carrying out your risk assessment, such as your staff members, the owner of the premises where your provision is being held (for example, if renting a school hall or community hall, the owners or voluntary management committee) and/or your local authority, to identify the risks, to determine protective measures to put in place and to establish who is responsible for implementing each protective measure.

We also strongly recommend that all OOSS providers consult advice set out by the Health and Safety Executive on coronavirus (COVID-19), including:

- First aid at work
- First aid cover and qualifications during the coronavirus outbreak

If you have fewer than 5 employees or volunteers, you do not have to write down your health and safety policy, but it might help if you do. You should share any significant findings of the risk assessment with your staff and on your website, if you have one. You should, as a minimum, be able to explain to parents and carers the reasonable steps you have taken to reduce the health and safety risks in your setting, and outline the protective measures you have in place. Where parents and carers will also need to be aware of protective measures that have been put in place by the owner of the premises that you are operating your provision out of, for example, you should outline these to them or direct them to the relevant website.

Indoor provision

OOSS will have different risks depending on the type of activity or provision they offer. If your provision is classroom-based, you should find the Department for Education's Planning guide for primary schools or Guidance for secondary school provision helpful in determining how to carry out a risk assessment, depending on the age of the children you cater for.

Outdoor provision

If your setting operates outdoors, you should also refer to DCMS's Guidance on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation.

In-home provision

If you normally offer provision in your own home or another home, for example if you are a private tutor, you should refer to the government guidance on Working safely during coronavirus in other people's homes. You should still continue to work from home wherever services can be provided this way and you should minimise switching between work environments wherever possible.

Considering group sizes

Decisions on group sizes for your setting should be based on:

- the current government guidance on social distancing
- the ability of the children in attendance to maintain social distancing
- the age of the children in attendance
- nature of your activity or provision (for example, static, classroom set-up rather than an activity that requires a range of movement)
- the size or layout of your premises

To reduce the risk of transmission within a setting, providers should aim to minimise the number of different people each child comes into contact with. As such, providers should seek to maintain small, consistent groups of no more than 15 children and at least one staff member.

This means that at the first session children should be assigned to a particular class or group and should then stay in those consistent groups for future sessions. So, for example on consecutive days or if attending one day per week, from the start of the summer until the end of the summer.

As far as it is possible, groups should also not be mixing within the setting itself.

Potential challenges to achieving consistent groups may include:

- children attending based on varying booking patterns
- the ongoing receipt of additional bookings throughout the summer period due to work and shift patterns
- the emergence of safeguarding or welfare concerns
- variance in the ages of children attending
- the 'drop in' nature of some services and activities, for example support groups for vulnerable young people

To overcome such challenges, providers must use their best judgement in creating and frequently reviewing groups in order to minimise the amount of 'mixing' (for example, the number of different people each child comes into contact with); and should also ensure they are keeping up-to-date records of the children attending their settings, including the specific groups and members of staff they have been assigned to. Dependent on the factors listed above, you may need to have groups of less than 15 children. As always, any decisions should be taken with full consideration of any ongoing welfare needs or safeguarding concerns.

If you are operating provision for multiple small groups of children throughout the day, you should allow sufficient changeover time between different groups to allow for cleaning to take place and to prevent children and parents or carers waiting in large groups.

For the time being, holiday providers should not be offering overnight or residential provision for children. The Government will keep this position under review and continue to be guided by the best scientific and medical advice to ensure that the right decisions are taken at the right time.

If you are unable to follow the protective measures in this guidance, you should only operate your provision outside and follow the government guidelines on the phased return of sport and recreation in England, which allow up to six people from different households to meet outdoors. In doing so, providers should ensure, as far as possible, children practise social distancing in line with the government's current guidance and that they keep children in groups of no more than 6, including staff members.

From 20 July, early years settings will no longer be required to keep children in small, consistent groups within settings. This is based on the scientific advice around the small size of early years settings, attendance being more consistent than in some holiday provision, and the risk levels relating to the youngest children. Settings should still consider how to minimise mixing. Therefore, if you are only caring for children under the age of 5 you should refer to the guidance for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak instead of this guidance.

If you are caring for children both over the age of five and under the age of five, then you could apply the measures outlined in the early years guidance to the children under the age of five, and this guidance to the children over the age of five, if it is possible to do so. However, if you have mixed age groups together you will need to, as far as possible, keep all children irrespective of age in small consistent groups of no more than 15 with at least one staff member, or with more staff members to meet relevant ratio requirements.

If you are operating provision for multiple small groups of children throughout the day, you should allow sufficient changeover time between different classes to allow for cleaning to take place and to prevent children and parents or carers waiting in large groups.

You should not offer overnight or residential provision to children for the time-being.

Effective infection protection and control

Many out-of-school settings operate in places that are normally open to the members of the public, such as community and youth centres and places of worship. Therefore, as well as keeping children in small, consistent groups and ensuring that, as far as possible, the children, parents and staff that attend your setting follow the current government guidelines on social distancing, you should ensure that you have effective infection protection and control measures in place in your specific setting to reduce the risk of transmission.

These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does or have been advised by NHS Test & Trace to self-isolate, do not attend your setting
- cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often than usual using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as layout) and timetables (such as allowing for sufficient changeover time to clean the area between different classes or groups of children and ensuring areas do not become overcrowded)

Where possible all spaces should also be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units.

Providers should note that there may be an additional risk of infection in environments where you or others are singing, chanting, shouting or conversing loudly. This applies even if others are at a distance to you. You should consider this added risk in environments that require children or adults to raise their voice to communicate with anyone outside their household and consider how to reduce the risk by avoiding particular activities in your setting, such as group singing activities for example.

Providers should also be aware that at this time they should not be permitting live performances, including drama, comedy and music, to take place in front of a live audience.

Indoor provision

As the risk of transmission is considerably lower outdoors, providers who normally run sessions indoors should consider whether they are able to do so safely outside.

However, where this may not be possible, providers who offer classroom-based provision should refer to the guidance for schools for more advice on practical steps that can be taken to implement the control measures outlined above, such as ensuring desks are spaced as far apart as possible.

Providers who offer indoor sports activities for children should refer to the guidance on Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) for providers of grassroots sports and gym / leisure facilities. As announced on the 9 July, indoor gyms, sports courts and fitness and dance studios will be able to open from 25 July. They cannot be used for holiday clubs and activities for children until that point.

Providers that normally operate from public places, such as these, may wish to refer to the guidance on the closure of certain businesses and venues in England, to ensure the premises they are intending to use will be legally able to open for the purpose of running provision for children.

If you operate your OOSS in a shared space which is currently legally able to open such as a community centre, you should also discuss infection protection and control measures with the owner of the space. For instance, you should discuss with the owner what measures are in place to clean the space between different groups of people using it and be clear on who is responsible for taking action if, for example, the timetable changes to more groups using the setting more frequently or government advice on cleaning changes.

The owners of these shared spaces must continue to meet all existing health and safety obligations with regard to ensuring that their premises are safe for providers to hire and to operate from. It is also the responsibility of the OOSS providers that operate from these shared spaces to ensure that they are implementing the protective measures as set out in this guidance. Providers may therefore wish to have regard to relevant guidance for operators of shared spaces, such as the guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities and the guidance for places of worship.

Outdoor provision

Even though the risk of transmission is considered to be lower outdoors, it is still important that providers who offer outdoor activities for children put in place the hierarchy of controls outlined above. The guidance for providers of outdoor facilities on the phased return of sport and recreation advises on specific protective measures that should be put in place to run safer outdoor provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, including:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, or who have been advised by NHS Test & Trace to self-isolate do not attend your setting
- keeping facilities and equipment clean - touch points (e.g. handrails and gates) should be particular areas of focus for increased cleaning
- using signs, posters and regular reminders to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into your arm rather than your hand
- providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection
- providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations
- using disposable paper towels in handwashing facilities, where possible
- minimising use of portable toilets
- setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved

In-home provision

If you typically run provision in other people's homes - for example if you are a private tutor - you may find it helpful refer to the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in other people's homes. We acknowledge that this is a complex environment, however you should still as far as possible implement protective measures including:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does or who have been advised by NHS Test & Trace to self-isolate, follow guidance to stay at home
- increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning
- following current government guidelines on social distancing
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by following the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- communicating with parents and carers before visiting the household to discuss how the session will be carried out in a way that minimises risk

If you run provision out of your own home, you should also consider whether a specific, well-ventilated room could be designated for this.

How should you manage toilet usage?

It is not necessary for each class or group to use a separate toilet. However, you should consider how you can limit the number of children using the toilet at any one time and, where possible, you should avoid different groups using the same facilities at the same time. Importantly, you should promote good hand hygiene and encourage all children to wash their hands thoroughly, with soap and running water for 20 seconds, after using toilet facilities.

As with all frequently used surfaces, toilets should be cleaned thoroughly using standard products such as detergent and bleach. The frequency of cleaning required will depend on usage but is advised to be more frequently than might have been previously considered appropriate. In most cases we expect cleaning of toilet facilities to take place at least twice a day, and in particular between use by different classes and groups.

Please see COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance for advice on cleaning facilities when they have been used by someone suspected of having coronavirus (COVID-19).

Reviewing staff availability

As part of your risk assessment, you should consider appropriate staff:child ratios for your setting. You should have no more than 15 children per small consistent group and should have at least one staff member per group, though dependent on the circumstances of your provision you may need to have groups of less than 15 children. More detail on group sizes is outlined in the section "Considering group sizes".

Before deciding on whether to open your setting, you should consult your staff members to ensure that they are available to work.

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals, including OOSS staff, should follow the latest government advice on shielding in order to keep themselves safe. From Saturday 1 August the guidance will be relaxed so clinically extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield. Those who need to work and cannot do so from home will be advised to return to work as long as their workplace is coronavirus (COVID-19) secure. Read COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable for more information.

Clinically vulnerable individuals may also be at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions as set out in the Staying at home and away from others (social distancing guidance)) have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing. If any clinically vulnerable individuals, including those that are clinically extremely vulnerable, cannot work from home, they should be offered an individual discussion with their manager to ensure the safest available on-site roles.

When working out staff ratios you should consider how many staff you have available to work in your setting, as well as:

- Do you have at least one person with first aid training available to work in your setting?
- Do you have at least one person with up-to-date Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training available to work in your setting? You may want to consider a deputy DSL to cover in the event of the DSL being unwell or otherwise unavailable.
- Do you have a caretaker and / or cleaning staff available to work in your setting?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then you should find a solution to this before going further. If you are seeking a suitable person to temporarily cover these roles, it is important that you carry out the appropriate pre-employment checks to assess their suitability to work with children before allowing them to take up their post, such as taking up references and the appropriate level of criminal records checks (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks), including a 'children's barred list' check where relevant for the role.

In terms of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, a person is engaging in regulated activity if they frequently teach, train, instruct, supervise or care for children. If an individual is barred by the DBS, but is engaging in this activity, including in out-of-school settings, they would be committing a criminal offence.

An unsupervised person undertaking these activities on a regular basis would also be eligible for an enhanced DBS check with barred list information, as part of this process. To understand which kind of check is right for your staff, DBS provides an eligibility tool which tells you which roles or activities could be eligible for a basic, standard or enhanced DBS check.

You should ensure that new staff members and volunteers understand and implement the protective measures you have identified while carrying out a risk assessment to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), such as those outlined in the section "Effective Infection Protection and Control".

Who can attend your out-of-school setting?

If your setting opens before the end of the 2020 summer term, while schools are still open in your local area, you should ensure that you are:

- only caring for children from the eligible groups (children in early years, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6) and priority groups (children of critical workers and vulnerable children)
- only caring for children from one school or early years provider
- working closely with the school or early years providers that their children attend, to ensure that, as far as possible, children are kept in the same small consistent groups that they are in throughout the day, and otherwise maintain social distance

When state schools in your local area have closed for the summer term, children of all ages may attend out-of-school settings. However, as mentioned above you should be aware of additional risks that may relate to older children, such as use of public transport and mixing outside of settings. You should consider this as part of your risk assessment.

Attending OOSS can have a positive impact on the wellbeing of children and young people. However, it is crucial that we ensure we are minimising the risks to the nation's health. It is for this reason that parents and carers are being encouraged to limit the number of settings their children attend as far as possible, and ideally to ensure their children attend the same setting consistently.

Providers are encouraged to consider measures they can put in place to reduce the extent to which children are mixing with others, by ensuring that children who attend your setting are assigned to a particular class or group when they return and stay in those consistent groups for future sessions, as far as it is possible. You should also discourage attendance from children who live outside the local area. Ideally, children who attend your setting should live within walking or cycling distance.

As education settings welcome back more of their pupils, children in the priority groups (i.e. vulnerable children and the children of critical workers) and eligible groups (i.e. early years, reception, years 1 and 6) are being encouraged to resume full-time attendance at their usual school or early years setting. OOSS should not be used as a replacement for school or early years attendance.

Additionally, parents and carers of children who are clinically vulnerable or extremely vulnerable or live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable should refer to current Public Health England's Guidance on Shielding and Protecting People who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable from COVID-19.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The majority of staff in OOSS will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases:

- children, young people and learners whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way
- PPE should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from any child, young person or other learner displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

The Department for Education has published guidance on Safe Working in Education, Childcare and Children's Social Care Settings, including the use of Personal Protective Equipment which may be helpful for OOSS providers to refer to in order to understand when PPE should be used.

Providers should use their local supply chains to obtain the very limited amounts of PPE required. Providers may also be able to source PPE and cleaning products through The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) 'Safer Working Supplies' Portal. We have assurance that the suppliers and products listed on this portal have met standards set out by DHSC and that this route does not detract any supply from medical settings. In addition, Public Sector Buying Organisations (PSBOs) have pre-existing experience and relationships across our sector. Some of these organisations have e-catalogues offering PPE and cleaning products, including: ESPO, YPO, and NEPO.

Test and trace

The NHS Test and Trace service will help to manage the risk of the virus re-emerging as restrictions on everyday life are eased, as far as it is deemed safe to do so. The service:

- provides testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) to find out if they have the virus
- gets in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to gather information about any close recent contacts they have had
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus

It is vital that OOSS providers play their part by:

- making their settings as safe as possible for staff, children and parents
- promoting the need to get tested if anyone is symptomatic
- encouraging staff to heed any notifications to self-isolate and supporting them when in isolation.

More information on NHS Test and Trace for workplaces can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance.

If anyone in your setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they should be sent home and advised to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection guidance. For more information, see the section below on what happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting.

If a child is awaiting collection indoors, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them or you offer provision outside, you should move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products and following the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance before being used by anyone else.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone with symptoms, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive (see 'What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting?' below). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area of the setting with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting?

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19), they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days and arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus COVID-19. They can do this by visiting NHS.UK to arrange or contact NHS 119 via telephone if they do not have internet access. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to the setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

If the child, young person or staff member tests negative but is unwell, they should not return to that setting until they are recovered.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, NHS Test and Trace will speak directly to those they have been in contact with to offer advice. This advice may be that the rest of their class or group within the setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the class or group or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children and young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, group or site. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

Communicating safe working measures with staff

You should familiarise yourself with the government guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure that you have put in place measures to create a safe environment for the staff and children attending your OOSS, based on the five principles below:

- Carry out a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment (see the section "Carrying out a risk assessment" in this guidance)
- Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures (see the section "Effective Infection Protection and Control")
- Help people to work from home where possible
- Maintain social distancing, where possible
- Where people cannot maintain social distancing, do everything practical to manage the transmission risk (including considering whether the activity needs to continue for the business to operate)

Before reopening your provision, you should talk to staff about your plans and safety measures, including discussing whether training would be helpful.

If you employ cleaning contractors or staff then you should communicate additional cleaning requirements and agree additional hours to allow for this.

Arrange regular opportunities to get feedback from staff on the new arrangements.

The Department for Education's planning guidance for primary schools includes information on principles for staff that you may also be able to apply to your own setting, and will be especially relevant if you offer classroom-based provision.

Communicating with parents

You should communicate your plans for reopening your provision to parents, including new safety measures that you have put in place to reduce the risk of infection and transmission of the virus.

Consider the following steps:

- use technology to communicate with parents and carers digitally where possible.
- tell children, young people, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter your setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (following the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection).
- encourage parents to avoid using public transport to get to your setting. Ideally, they should walk or cycle where possible or use a private vehicle (provided they are only travelling with those from within their household).
- reduce contact between parents and carers when dropping off and picking up their children, for example by limiting drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family and staggering timings.
- when allocating drop off and collection times to parents, avoid scheduling these during peak hours for public transport.
- tell parents and young people their allocated drop off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use).
- work with parents and carers to consider how best to manage dropping off their children while maintaining physical distancing.
- avoid the need for parents and carers to wait, but where they have to, consider whether physical distancing markings could be used.
- make clear to parents that they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors.
- also think about engaging parents and children in education resources such as e-bug and PHE schools resources.
- ensure parents and young people are aware of recommendations on transport to and from education or childcare setting (including avoiding peak times). Read the Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers.

Safeguarding and managing the wellbeing of children and young people in your setting

Safeguarding and child Protection

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children and they may be at increased risk of harm or abuse. Due to the current circumstances, vulnerable children may be particularly isolated, meaning that the family, community and professional networks they usually rely on may be unavailable or hard to access. Therefore, it is important that you and your staff are aware of the safeguarding issues that can put children at risk, such as abuse and neglect, and the signs to look out for.

Signs to look out for which may suggest that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm include:

- unusual injuries, including bruises, burns, fractures, bite marks or signs of self-harm
- consistently poor hygiene, poor living conditions or inappropriate clothing
- communicating aggressively or using sexual language
- appearing withdrawn, guarded, anxious or frightened, particularly around certain individuals

If safeguarding issues come to light, they should be addressed using your setting's child protection and safeguarding policy, which you should consider updating ahead of reopening your setting.

If you have one or more employees or volunteers in your setting, then it is important to write down your child protection procedures to ensure that all staff members understand their responsibilities and know what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern, including what to do if a child makes a disclosure to you or your staff.

These should include details of your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL (if you choose to have one), and how to contact them, as well as contact details for local safeguarding services such as local authority children's social care, the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the police.

In addition, you may want to include details of Barnardo's recently launched See, Hear, Respond Service, which is a programme created to help children and young people in England who are experiencing harm and increased adversity during lockdown by providing support to those who are not being seen by schools or other key agencies.

You should review whether you or your staff need to refresh or undertake additional training on child protection and safeguarding issues before reopening your setting.

It will be especially important for providers to ensure that:

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they should act immediately
- appropriate designated safeguarding lead arrangements are in place
- unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- any volunteers are appropriately supervised. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Supporting children's wellbeing

It is important to recognise that you and your staff may also need to consider how to support:

- individual children who have found the long period at home hard to manage
- those who have developed anxieties related to the virus

Some children may also have experienced bereavements in their immediate family or wider circle of friends or family or had increased or new caring responsibilities.

As part of your provision, you may wish to provide:

- opportunities for children to talk about their experiences of the past few months
- opportunities for conversations with trusted adults where this may be supportive
- some lessons on relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or staying safe

Equality

As a provider of services to children and young people, it is important that you ensure you create spaces, services and opportunities that enable everyone to engage equally.

This may require adjustments to your working practices and approaches to ensure that everyone benefits fairly. Your organisation's equality and diversity policy should be considered at all times and especially when making decisions and judgements related to the impact on individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

When applying this guidance, organisations should be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers and individuals. Providers should be aware that some parents and carers may look to holiday clubs and out-of-school settings to offer respite childcare during the summer for children with special educational needs or with an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

Providers are permitted to open for disabled children [5] who are accessing these services as a local authority funded short break, and ensuring that provision is available and accessible to these children, as far as possible, should be remain a priority in these current circumstances.

Local Authorities will need to work with their short breaks provider base to explore maximum flexibility in delivery to enable children to attend services (and to ensure that these can operate during the summer holidays in particular, given this can be a key pressure point for families with caring responsibilities); for example, some local authorities have made more use of direct payments beyond their usual criteria.

It is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone in employment and the provision of services because of a protected characteristic, such as age, sex, race or disability.

Employers and organisations (voluntary or otherwise) also have additional responsibilities towards disabled individuals and those who are new or expectant mothers.

There is emerging evidence that BAME individuals may be more severely affected than the general population by coronavirus (COVID-19). Providers should be especially sensitive to the needs and worries of BAME children and young people, parents and carers, and staff, and should consider if any additional measures or reasonable adjustments may need to be put in place to mitigate risk.

Annex A: Resources to help children learn about coronavirus and how to keep themselves and others safe

Below are links to resources which may be helpful in supporting the children that attend your setting to learn about coronavirus (COVID-19) and promoting safety measures, such as frequent handwashing.

e-Bug has produced a series of helpful coronavirus (COVID-19) posters:

- Horrid hands
- Super sneezes
- Hand hygiene
- Respiratory hygiene
- Microbe mania

Busy Bees has produced activities for children to promote safety measures, such as Our hand washing song (PDF, 958KB).

Professional association for children and early years (PACEY): supporting children in your setting.

Dr Dog explains coronavirus.

Bright Horizons: Talking to Children about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus).

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1. 'School' means all schools whether maintained, non-maintained, or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies, and pupil referral units. It includes maintained nursery schools. ↩
2. 'College' means further education colleges and sixth-form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and institutions designated as being in the further education sector. ↩
3. Most providers caring for children under eight years old must register with Ofsted (on The Early Years Register or The Childcare Register) or a childminder agency, unless the law states otherwise. Exemptions are set out in the Childcare (Exemptions from Registration) Order (SI 2008/ No 979) and are summarised in the Registering with Ofsted guidance for childminders and childcare providers. Providers who are exempt from compulsory registration may still apply to register on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register if they meet its requirements. ↩
4. Full-time is not defined in law. Further information on institutions that must register at schools is contained in the department's guidance on registration. ↩
5. If a child meets the definition of disabled child within the meaning of s.17(11) of the Children Act 1989, the LA must provide short break services to the individuals who provide care for such children under paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989. If a child with SEND does not meet the s.17(11) definition, the LA can carry out an assessment of the child's needs and offer short break services if appropriate under s.17 (1) ↩

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

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