Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Department for Education
Ministerial department

Guidance

Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak

Updated 5 June 2020

Contents
1. Who this guidance is for
2. Where this guidance is for
3. Resources for providers
4. Funding
5. Coronavirus (Covid-19) testing and contact tracing
6. Coronavirus (Covid-19) vaccination programme
7. Safeguarding children and vulnerable children
8. Safeguarding and welfare
9. Early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements
10. Staffing
11. Childminders

Since 23 March, education and childcare settings have been open to priority groups (children of critical workers and vulnerable children), and from June 1 we plan to open the education and childcare sector rights back into place (see next to our EYFS staff and other guidance for more information on what we expect providers to do).

On 11 May, the Prime Minister announced a roadmap towards recovery, including plans for wider opening of educational settings from June 1. June subject to the government's five tests being met. We set out in this document what we expect early years providers to do to prepare to welcome back all children that require childcare, including those expecting if they had previously closed. On 28 May, he confirmed that all the government's five tests had been met and that we could open up from June 1. June, early years settings can welcome back all children.

We are continuing to work with the childcare sector to understand how the early years sector can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, quality childcare and childcare places are available for those returning to work now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

As the outbreak progresses, we will aim to provide you with as much notice and flexibility as possible and will do all we can to support the vital service you are providing to children, families and communities, and we thank you for work with us in a spirit of advice and support during this time.

We will update this page to further guidance becomes available.

This guidance should be read alongside the following guidance:

Guidance on infection control:

- Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings
- Cleaning non-healthcare settings outside a dwelling (which is not a place of work)
- Planning guide for early years and childcare settings

Guidance on funding:

- Financial support for education, early years and children's social care
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): business support
- Use of free early education entitlements funding

Other relevant guidance:

- Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people
- guidance on the early years foundation stage (EYFS) disapplications
- Ofsted's response to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Main changes to previous guidance

On 2 June, we:

- restructured guidance in line with wider opening
- updated guidance on cleaning in line with wider opening (section 2)
- updated content on funding including early years entitlements funding, including a clarification that nurseries which are eligible for charitable status will not be expected to apply for business rates relief, and added links on Competition and Markets Authority and Ofsted guidance (section 3)
- updated content on infection prevention and control summarising relevant guidance, including the use of small groups, preferred ratio by age and hygiene measures (section 5)
- added a new section on attendance, setting out principles of attendance, what to do if children do not attend, and what to do if children need to self-isolate (section 6)
- revised section on safeguarding to reflect settings which replace the old section on prioritising children with new content on the use of community centres and before and after school provision, and on the use of volunteers, and supporting home learning and revised content on critical workers (section 8)
- added a new section on safeguarding and welfare including child protection policies, staff training, and mental health and wellbeing, including a reference to the mental wellbeing and resources for children with SEND (section 8)
- updated content in EYFS section on paediatric first aid certificates (section 9.6)

On 5 June, we added a clarification on the requirement for parents to pay for the appropriate insurance (for example, public liability insurance) to cover all premises from which they provide childcare or childminding. (section 3.3)

1. Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for local authorities and all early years providers in England including:

- maintained schools
- independent schools
- independent schools
- all providers on the early years register including wraparound childcare and crèches (before and after school holiday care)
- all providers registered with an early years childminder agency

This guidance is for court owners as a point, as they work in the childminder's living home.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 What are early years and childcare settings responsible for?

On 11 May, the Prime Minister announced a roadmap towards recovery, including plans for wider opening of educational settings from June 1. June subject to the government's five tests being met. We set out in this document what we expect early years providers to do to prepare to welcome back all children that require childcare, including those expecting if they had previously closed. On 28 May, he confirmed that all the government's five tests had been met and that we could open up from June 1. June, early years settings can welcome back all children.

We understand that it may not be possible for all settings to open more widely or in ways of the time. Childcare settings should work together with local authorities to ensure children and families in their area can access the childcare they need. We expect local authorities to make arrangements with other settings to reduce the number of children in their care, if it is necessary to ensure that it is safe to do so. Settings are expected to work with local authorities to ensure

In some cases it may be necessary for settings to introduce a temporary cap on numbers, to ensure that children are kept in small groups, and to minimise risk of children between groups. If this is necessary, settings should prioritise sustainable provision for children of critical workers, and for the children for whom it is most critical that it is continuing to flourish in September, followed by younger age groups.

Where significantly reduced numbers of children are attending, we understand that shared provision through early years hubs and clusters is a good option.

Please see guidance on cluster and hub provision, including early years.

Childcare settings are responsible for complying with and acting on children who attend the settings as set out in the early years foundation stage statutory (EYFS) framework, including the EYFS welfare requirements. Ofsted will not be inspecting against the requirements in line with government guidance and ensuring there are followed by staff, parents, visitors, and where applicable, children.

2.2 Will it be mandatory for all registered childcare settings to open in some form?

No. We are asking settings to open more widely so that more children can be welcomed back. We understand however that some settings may be unable to open more widely or they are experiencing severe staff shortages due to self-isolation and sickness, or difficulties in accessing premises. We will work with local authorities to determine the best way to ensure sufficient childcare.

Settings should try to be as flexible as possible for parents and carers who work shifts or atypical hours and especially for parents who are critical workers.

2.3 What are local authorities responsible for?

Local authorities are responsible for coordinating childcare provision in their arrangements, including ensuring that there is sufficient provision for children of critical workers. Local authorities are also responsible for monitoring demand and capacity for childcare provision, including ensuring that there is sufficient provision for children of critical workers for those in priority groups as well as meeting local need. They should also put in place in alternative settings if necessary or working with neighbouring local authorities to coordinate provision while keeping in mind the impact of travel on families.

Local authorities' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area remain in place. Local authorities should work with schools, childcare providers, the commission (Ofsted) Safeguarding Partnership and Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MASH) local authorities are also responsible for supporting childcare settings to ensure they are able to meet their statutory responsibilities, including the EYFS, including plans that maintain, and ensuring those children are safely cared for whether at a setting or at home

2.4 What actions should local authorities consider to monitor and manage their local early years markets?

Local authorities should continue to work with all their early years providers to monitor and manage their local childcare market.

Local authorities should develop an understanding of any gaps in childcare supply, as well as any potential sustainability issues in their local market. They should be prepared be able to open more widely or respond if they have been closed.

Where needed, local authorities can manage the wider market flexibly to ensure that there is sufficient childcare provision continuing to prioritised access for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, followed by 3 and 4 year olds, and then younger age groups. This may include:

- moving children between providers where one provider has closed, and another provider is available and able to accept children
- operating through clusters and hubs to maintain educational provision, where necessary
- opening years ERSG block contingency budgets, where local authorities have them, or uncommitted central spend in the early years block

In exceptional circumstances, and when all other options have been exhausted, local authorities may consider using their flexibility to redistribute funds to ensure that there is sufficient provision for children of critical workers, followed by 3 and 4 year olds, and then younger age groups. This may include:

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Local authorities will need to ensure there are sufficient childcare places at this time, and to redistribute funding across settings accordingly – in a clearly focused and targeted way. This ability to redistribute free entitlement funding is exceptional and should be used only as a last resort. Local authorities should be working with SofS staff, who are able to determine where they need it, the most vulnerable children and early entitlement funding reduced, in order to fund childcare places elsewhere, may be required to provide support to the local authority in this end. Please see the Early Education Scheme in line with guidance on financial support for education, early years and children's social care.

3.2 Given childcare funding to local authorities is demand led, how will local authorities be funded for the early years entitlements by central government in 2020 to 2021 given the demand for childcare may be different to normal?

On 27 March the Chancellor confirmed the government will continue to pay funding to local authorities for the early years, school, high needs and early years pupil premium resourced for early years settings in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

It is expected that the initial early years dedicated schools grant (DSG) allocations for 2020 to 2021, announced in December 2019, will be updated to reflect participation in July 2020 to the usual day (that is, using the January 2020 early years census and January 2020 pupil count).

We would normally expect to update the early years funding rates for the financial year 2020 to 2021 with the 2020 census (used in summer 2021). We are considering how we can use the 2020 data to update the funding rates, taking into account how the figures may be impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We will provide further information as soon as it is available.

3.3 Can settings furlough their staff if, if they do not have enough staff to open, if there is no demand from parents, or if the setting needs to close due to coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

We have provided further guidance on how the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme applies to the education and childcare sector. We will update this guidance to reflect the flexibilities that the Chancellor announced on 20 May to support employers back to work and support their free childcare.

In addition:

- the Chancellor has announced that private childcare settings will be eligible for a business rates holiday for one year. That means non-local authority providers of childcare, including childminders and providers of EYFS and wraparound childcare (school age)
- nurseries in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief will benefit from the extension of the retail, hospitality and leisure business rate relief scheme to charitable nurseries and to childcare providers in receipt of small business rate relief
- nurseries which are eligible for a charitable rate relief will also pay no business rates for the year
- some settings operate from shared spaces which may need to make a proportion of the relief. We strongly encourage these shared spaces to reflect any business rates holiday they receive
- the 12 December General Election has meant that the Prime and Chancellor have been members of a partnership and have had priority due to coronavirus (COVID-19). The Chancellor announced on 27 March that the Government will pay 100 per cent of a maximum of £2,500 per month for 3 months. HTMC will ensure that childcare providers are eligible and invite them to apply online
- the Government has announced that it will increase the minimum income floor and also for furloughed employees (minimum income floor) will need make claims for furlough statistics and pay (SSP)
- the Business Interruption Scheme will now be interactive for 12 months, an extension of 6 months
- VAT payments due with VAT returns between now and the end June 2020 will be deferred. VAT registered businesses will need make their returns and payments as usual
- the Secretary of State for Business announced on 28 March 2020 that he will make changes to insolvency and company governance arrangements to ensure that continue flexible to help them avoid insolvency. This includes temporarily suspending the requirement for directors to be personally liable for debts incurred by their companies in the ordinary course of business, and temporarily suspending the ability of creditors to force companies into insolvency
- working tax credits has been increased by £1,000 a year
- the government has announced a £1 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and an increase in the Child Tax Credit element of the Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit claimants to ensure that it covers the cheapest third of rental deals.

3.8 How do early years settings access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)?

The CJRS scheme opened for applications on 20 April and guidance on how to access the scheme was published on 15 April. Childcare providers are eligible for the coronavirus scheme. Early years providers remain eligible for the CJRS while continuing to receive early entitlement funding to local authorities.

HMRC's guidance on furlough leave for Childcare and Customs on 26 March, states that childcare providers, which receive funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, are expect employers to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion and furlough employees who are at risk of being made redundant. Childcare providers who receive funding for staff costs, Employers should not be able to receive public funding for staff cost and furlough payments for the same staff.

We have provided further guidance on how the CJRS applies to the nursery and childcare sector.

On 17 April, DfE published guidance setting out how the CJRS and early entitlement funding interacts, confirming that early years settings can access the CJRS to keep on furloughed staff who could be expected to have been paid from early years funding that provider's private income.

A private provider should only furlough employees, and therefore seek support through the CJRS, if they meet the following conditions:

- the employee worked in an area of business where services are temporarily not required because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- the employee would otherwise be made redundant or laid off
- the employee is not involved in delivering provision that has already been funded through early years funding
- where appropriate, the employee is not required to deliver services for a child of critical worker and/or vulnerable child
- the CJRS claim is made for the employee's otherwise public grants received, and would have been paid to employees being furloughed

It is difficult to distinguish whether staff are funded through free entitlement or private income for the purpose of meeting the first 2 conditions. We have set out that on early years providers can access the CJRS to cover up for the proportion of staff which could be expected to have been paid out of private income.

3.30 Can childcare settings charge parents if they are not able to take up their child's place?

We are working hard to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on all parts of our society, including individuals and businesses. We expect nurseries to be able to continue to charge parents for the provision they are able to provide, that is, in light of these unprecedented circumstances, we expect nurseries to make arrangements clearly with them.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has established a COVID-19 Taskforce to ensure that consumers are not taken advantage of during the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the measures they have taken to contain it. People and businesses should report concerns about unfair practices to the CMA's consumer protection team. The CMA will take action where it thinks it is necessary. Where there is evidence that businesses have breached competition or consumer protection law, the CMA will take enforcement action where it considers

3.31 Can settings continue to charge parents such as nappies?

Settings may charge for consumables in line with the childcare the consumer guidance. As per this guidance, they should consider the impact of charges on disadvantaged families.

3.32 What arrangements do settings need to make about providing meals?

Where maintained nursery schools are open, they should continue to provide free school meals to children who would normally receive them.

In all other settings where free meals are provided, many settings may charge for meals in line with national entitlements guidance. As per existing guidance, they should consider the impact of charges on disadvantaged families.

3.33 Are settings covered by their insurance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

Business interruption insurance

Most business interruption insurance policies that covers government ordered closure and unaffected infectious diseases, the government's social distancing measures should be sufficient to allow businesses to make a claim against their insurance, provided the business has business interruption cover in place.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) also requests insurers to review their policies including handling claims fairly and promptly, providing reasonable guidance to help policyholders making claims, and not relying on technicalities to reject claims unless it is genuinely not in business interests of policyholders. The government has asked the FCA to ensure that the cases are being upheld during the crisis and fully supports the FCA in this. The FCA has set out its expectations of insurance firms and has opened up a list of actions for insurance firms to respond and implement to support customers.

Customers who feel they have been treated fairly should first make a formal complaint to their insurer. If they do not feel that their complaint has been dealt with fairly, they can then take it to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Small businesses also may have small businesses with turnover below £5 million.

However, businesses that have not purchased the appropriate level of cover should contact their insurance provider to discuss potential options, and may be in financial difficulty. This includes insurers such as business rates holidays, small business grants, and the CJRS.

Public liability insurance

Settings should have the appropriate insurance (for example, public liability insurance) to cover all premises from which they provide childcare or childminding. In exceptional circumstances, public liability policies may have been written or adjusted during the terms of the policy to exclude cover for pandemics or epidemics. Insurers have the ability to exercise discretion to exclude coronavirus (COVID-19) when offering public liability insurance renewals. Nurseries should check the terms and conditions of their public liability insurance policy to see if it covers them for coronavirus (COVID-19) related incidents. Insurers have committed to ensure that customers are treated fairly and that claims are handled in a timely and sensitive manner. Nurseries should contact their insurance provider if they are concerned about their coverage.

For general advice on insurance matters (not on specific policies) including those related to coronavirus (COVID-19), DBI can be contacted by phone on 0207 930 3333 or email at info@abi.org.uk.

4. Infection prevention and control

Keeping children and staff safe is our utmost priority. DfE is issuing an implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings, and guidance on cleaning in education and childcare settings, including the use of PPE, contain detailed advice on the measures we expect all childcare providers to put in place, including personal protective equipment (PPE), shielding, cleaning and hygiene, testing and contact tracing, and what to do if someone becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Settings should refer to these guidance documents when preparing to open more widely, to take prepares for wider opening from 1 June including practical measures to reduce risk of transmission, including: cleaning, hygiene, and ventilation, minimising contact and communicating with parents and carers, planning groups so that children are kept in children learn about coronavirus (COVID-19).

Settings should refer to these guidance documents and continue to follow the advice on hygiene and cleaning, including: washing hands with hand washing, cleaning, and sanitisation, and keep the risk of transmission.

4.1 How many children can be in one group in a setting?

Alongside good hygiene and cleaning, one of the main protective measures settings can put in place is to ensure children are in small groups, and that children do not mix in groups that there are no more than 30 children in a single group or cohort, or a setting. Providers can have several groups of 30 children (FTE) where and EYFS space allows, and children in EYFS and KS1 can be in groups of 30 children, and children in KS2 can be in groups of 30 children.

Reception is subject to school admissions (infant class size) regulations, therefore, schools should follow the primary guidance for reception which sets a limit of 30 children per class.

4.10 How many children can be in one group in a setting?

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Reception is subject to school admissions (infant class size) regulations, therefore, schools should follow the primary guidance for reception which sets a limit of 30 children per class.

4.2 What should settings do if separate groups cannot be maintained over the course of the day due to changes in children's attendance between the morning and afternoon?

This should be minimised as much as possible, but if needed, additional children can be added to groups in the afternoon.

4.3 Are settings allowed to invite non-staff members such as agency staff, speech and language therapists or parents for play and play activities?

Wherever possible, settings are encouraged to use their existing staff for wider opening times and to provide additional activities and support for children. However, settings may use other external professionals such as staffing agencies, speech and language therapists or counsellors, settings should assess the risk of bringing in external staff or visitors. Settings should ask, for example, the relevant person, they expect closely follow the protective measures in place, and the number of attendances should be kept to a minimum.

Where possible, the presence of additional members of staff should be spread on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis to limit contacts.

Settings that use volunteers to deliver sessions should ask to be directly assigned to a group and follow the same principles as staff.

Parents and carers should not be allowed into the setting unless this is essential, and children should be collected at the door if possible.

4.4 Do early years and childcare settings need PPE?

The majority of adults in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally wear for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases such as:

- children, young people and students where non-touching already breaches the scope of 2 metres, such as those who would normally continue to receive their care very close
- if a child, young person, or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and is unable to be immediately isolated from others until they can return home, there must should be worn by the supervising adult if distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is required, then a fluid resistant surgical mask should be worn by the supervising adult. It is under assessment whether there is a risk of splashing in the eyes, for example from coughing, or spitting, then eye protection should also be worn.

4.5 Are children in early years eligible for coronavirus testing?

Even if they, all children and members of their households will have access to testing if they develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, including children under 5. If they do, they can also arrange home testing, children will also be asked to take this evidence in education, and their parents or carers get back to school. If a child is tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure sign plans to protect other children and staff in their setting.

For further information, please read Guidance on SEND and early years, page 5 details.

5. Attendance

The following attendance will apply to the wider opening of settings:

- children should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms or their household
- all children who normally access childcare are strongly encouraged to attend so that they can benefit from the education and care provided by their setting
- vulnerable children expected to be encouraged to attend school, for example, there is no cap to the children with education health and care (EHC) plans that will be able to attend, and reasonable approach, further details on vulnerable children are in section 6 below
- children who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing conditions should not attend school during the shielding period
- children who are clinically extremely vulnerable but not clinically extremely vulnerable, those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), should be encouraged to attend school, but parents who do not want their children to attend if their child is in a category
- children who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) including those who are pregnant, can attend settings
- children who are too young to be able to understand and adhere to instructions on social distancing, such as children in early years settings, children who are not clinically extremely and shielding are advised not to attend a setting

Settings should be mindful that many parents may be anxious about sending their child back to school, and should be prepared to discuss their concerns. Settings should also be open to ensure the parent their children will be necessary, including, for example, if they play, as parents, in the safe operating procedures.

Settings should consider how to ensure communications are accessible to specific groups of parents to g. parents with English as an additional language) and parents of vulnerable children, so as to encourage attendance of these groups.

5.1 Are vulnerable children still encouraged to attend settings?

The government is keen to encourage vulnerable children and young people to attend educational settings, unless they have underlying health conditions that put them at risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. Please refer to the Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response. A brief summary of vulnerable organisations, across the different groups of children and young people, is provided below:

- for vulnerable children who have a social worker, attendance is mandatory unless this is appropriate in line with the advice set out by Public Health England
- vulnerable children and young people who are not known to children's social care, for example because they are a young carer, or have a disability or mental health condition, but their needs can be met by other services, mainly, inter-ministerial and education and skills ministers, should be encouraged to attend school, based on a risk assessment, in accordance with DfE guidance
- for vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the childcare provider's discretion in consultation with a local authority, attendance is encouraged and strongly recommended

Educational providers, local authorities, social workers, parents/carers, and other relevant professionals (where applicable), should work together to assess the various factors, such as the balance of risk, including health vulnerabilities, family circumstances, and the ability to meet the child's educational and social and emotional special educational needs. In some cases, a vulnerable children do not attendance is expected, the setting should follow up with the parent or carer – and social worker/lead/lead where appropriate – to explore reasons for absence.

5.2 Will children attend their usual childcare setting?

We are asking settings to open more widely to welcome all children back, but we acknowledge they may not always be possible. Our priority is ensuring that all children for those that need it.

Where a setting is unable to stay open or is open, local authorities will work with providers to ensure they are able to support children including providing a different provider who has spaces, where one provider has closed, or operating through clusters and hubs to maintain educational provision.

Where necessary, settings should prioritise providing places to vulnerable children and children of parents who are key workers. Please refer to the Supporting vulnerable Transitioning to Reception in September, followed by younger age groups.

5.3 What should happen if the child's usual provider is closed?

Local authorities should work with settings which are closed to identify alternative provision, and should work with parents to ensure children are able to access the provision that is as close as possible to their usual place. If a child moves settings, important information should be provided by the parent or carer to the new setting on day one, including emergency contact details, medical requirements and medical needs to enable the safety and welfare of the child.

In the case of vulnerable children, the closed setting should notify the local authority (and social worker, where relevant) that these vulnerable children need support and care, and should share information with the new setting, the local authority and local authorities (and social workers, where relevant) to support this.

Where a setting has closed, and a vulnerable child moves to a different early years setting, the closed provider should be whether it reasonably can to provide the information to the new provider, including the child's attendance pattern. The receiving setting should be aware of the reason the child attends and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, the receiving setting should: - Ensure they have the child's contact details, and the details of the child's social worker, if the particular vulnerable children. Their personal education plan, and ensure they are the child's social worker's (and, for looked after children, who the responsible Virtual School head is.

The transfer of necessary information should ideally happen before a child arrives at the new setting, but it may not be possible to do this in the first few days. The sharing of information will ideally happen between the designated teacher for looked after children (or previously looked after children) and the new setting, and should be individual with oversight of special educational needs provision for children with EHC plans.

Ofsted providers must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and sharing information relevant to safeguarding. This will mean that they can share information for the purposes of keeping children safe. For more information about how the Department for Education's guidance: Information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers guidance.

5.5 Can children go to two different settings?

Children should attend just one setting whenever possible and parents should be encouraged to make this clear to settings. Children may attend more than one setting, settings their child attends. Childminding settings should consider how they can work with parents to agree how best to manage any necessary partnerships, for example drop-off and pick-up schedules, to reduce the need for a provider to be with groups of children.

6. Considerations for settings

6.1 What should settings do if they are experiencing staff shortages due to sickness or self-isolation?

Children settings who are experiencing staff shortages should work with their local authority to identify the appropriate provision and be put in place alternative staffing arrangements as consulted as possible. Where necessary, they can call staff from other settings, for example, other childcare providers, schools, or local authority staff members with relevant additional settings (including any registered childcare providers which have been closed, or inactive local registered childcare providers). Settings should also consider how they can maintain the quality of provision as far as reasonably facilitate they feel. Wherever possible, ensure staffing arrangements are consistent on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis, in order to limit contacts.

6.2 What should happen if the premises where the provider usually operates is closed, such as the community centre or church hall?

Team Case, providing a process of planning of security will be closed for open providers in the early years register which usually use these premises. Providers should work with their local authority to find alternative premises. Ofsted will be in touch as well as the national lead for early years and childminders. They should also ensure they are managing risks related to other users of the premises.

6.3 Are before and after school clubs allowed to operate?

Provision which are registered with Ofsted or with a Childminder Agency which have been closed should not reopen. Providers of out of school provision may follow the protective measures guidance, are able to operate.

This is only the case for registered providers which operate on school premises. All other out of school settings are not able to reopen.

6.4 What are the expectations on settings regarding staying in touch with parents whose child is at home?

We accept that early settings have already been in touch with parents, and carers as it forms and are grateful for this. Settings should consider how to continue to support the parent and carer relationship, and should consider how they can ensure they have the sessions contact with their key parent and carers through the early years provision. Key parents and carers can be supported to provide a positive learning environment at home.

The Department for Education's Nursery Online Pilot, compared features tips and guidance for parents and carers to keep their children safe online and support their learning. There are many simple ways to help children learn and stay safe online, such as: Site 'Learning' Having everyday conversations, maintaining routines and staying together online. Parents and carers may also find it helpful to refer to the Ofsted's Inspecting the RSE in Primary and the National Nursery Teach Online and other videos and content. The Department for Education has published further guidance on supporting parents and carers to keep children safe online. Sharing the coronavirus outbreak.

Settings should work with local authorities to monitor the welfare of vulnerable children and ensure their attending provision, and other children they might wish to keep in touch with, for safeguarding purposes.

6.5 How are we monitoring early years and childcare provision during the outbreak?

The Department for Education (DfE) launched a data collection process in April 2020 to gather information on attendance, staffing, and provision in early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We have published a summary of the data in education and early years settings.

We ask providers to: - Have to identify and report on vulnerable children attendance as they return to childcare - Report on staff absence - Inform us any guidance received from the local safeguarding partners - any updated advice received from local authorities, for example EHC plan risk assessment, attendance and freedom to teach mechanisms - working arrangements with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head for looked-after children - what staff and volunteers should be informed of and what they need to do if they observe who may pose a safeguarding risk to children

Ofsted will be in touch with providers to ensure the information is being collected by settings, described the guidance on actions for educational providers and settings responses to wider opening.

All staff and volunteers should be made aware of the new policy and be kept up to date on this a revised.

7.2 Have there been any changes to the role of safeguarding lead?

Settings must continue to have a designated safeguarding lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters and ensure they are available, as far as is practical, for example they may be enjoying from home to be based at another setting, as long as they are still available to provide support, advice and guidance to staff members, children and parents/carers. Settings should also ensure that the designated safeguarding lead prioritises and focus on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

7.3 How should settings keep children safe online during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

Settings should consider whether any refresh or review of their child protection policy is needed in light of coronavirus (COVID-19). This could take the form of a coronavirus (COVID-19) addendum and include:

- how to identify and support vulnerable children and young people who are at risk as they return to childcare
- the DfE's safeguarding guidance
- any updated advice received from the local safeguarding partners
- any updated advice received from local authorities, for example EHC plan risk assessment, attendance and freedom to teach mechanisms
- working arrangements with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head for looked-after children
- what staff and volunteers should be informed of and what they need to do if they observe who may pose a safeguarding risk to children

Ofsted will be in touch with providers to ensure the information is being collected by settings, described the guidance on actions for educational providers and settings responses to wider opening.

All staff and volunteers should be made aware of the new policy and be kept up to date on this a revised.

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Ofsted will be in touch with providers to ensure the information is being collected by settings, described the guidance on actions for educational providers and settings responses to wider opening.

All staff and volunteers should be made aware of the new policy and be kept up to date on this a revised.

7.5 Is it necessary for settings to update their child protection policies in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

Settings should consider whether any refresh or review of their child protection policy is needed in light of coronavirus (COVID-19). This could take the form of a coronavirus (COVID-19) addendum and include:

- how to identify and support vulnerable children and young people who are at risk as they return to childcare
- the DfE's safeguarding guidance
- any updated advice received from the local safeguarding partners
- any updated advice received from local authorities, for example EHC plan risk assessment, attendance and freedom to teach mechanisms
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Ofsted will be in touch with providers to ensure the information is being collected by settings, described the guidance on actions for educational providers and settings responses to wider opening.

All staff and volunteers should be made aware of the new policy and be kept up to date on this a revised.

7.6 Are children's social care services still operating?

Yes, children's social care services are still operating and are working to support children, including those who are vulnerable, and their families, carers and communities. Settings can continue to have their needs met and to be supported as the setting takes on these children.

7.7 What provisions should be made for children with special educational needs and disability (SEND)?

Particular care will be needed in planning for children with SENDD as we return to their settings. The adjustment to the routines in a setting may prove more challenging for children with SENDD and their families. Early years providers should work with parents given as how support could be put in place to safely back into their setting.

Settings should be alert to the fact that there may be children with additional or expanded social, emotional and mental health needs as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), and there may also be children who have fallen further behind their peers as a result of the out of school settings, or increased dependence on social media and other systems.

Settings will need to ensure they have the staffing needed to support children with SENDD and EHC plans, including those who are being cared for by Local Authority Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) teams (LENCo) or a named individual with oversight of special educational needs provision for children with SENDD.

Most temporarily transferred the duty to local authorities and health commissioning bodies to secure or arrange the special educational or health provision specified in EHC plans, and to keep these under review. Local authorities and health bodies will be able to do so in part, provided to cooperate with the local authority to secure provision for children with SENDD duties remains in place during this period. Further information is available in the EHC needs assessments and plans guidance.

8 Early years foundation stage

8.1 Does the early years foundation stage still apply?

We are in early foundation stage (EFS) statutory in Parliament with the intention that schools and childcare settings must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old.

We have amended legislation to allow for the temporary disapplying and modifying of certain provisions of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) to provide for changes in workforce availability and potential fluctuations in demand and provision children are kept safe. These temporary changes came into force on 24 April 2020.

Full details of the modifications can be found in the guidance on early years foundation stage (EYFS) and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Temporary arrangements will be brought to an end. Settings and local authorities should continue to implement the EYFS as far as reasonably practicable, taking the flexibilities available to them and be ready for the modified requirements to apply in relation to paediatric first aid, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

8.2 Do settings need to meet the learning and development requirements in sections 1 and 2 of the EYFS?

Following the amendments to the EYFS from 24 April, early years settings only need to meet the requirements in section 3 and 4 of the statutory framework for the early years in the EYFS. We understand that there are exceptional circumstances in the children and workforce, and we will be flexible in our approach. We expect that children should benefit from a broad range of educational opportunities.

8.3 Will schools assess children against the EYFS profile this academic year?

The Secretary of State for Education has announced that there will be no exam or assessment for children in Year 2. This includes no assessment of the reception year against the early learning goals that form the EYFS profile. This also means no moderation by local authorities.

8.4 Will settings be required to undertake the progress check at age 2?

Settings will be required to undertake the progress check at age 2 during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

8.5 Does someone with a paediatric first aid certificate still need to be on site?

The requirements in the EYFS in paediatric first aid certification have been modified so that it is sufficient for a person to have submitted valid paediatric first aid certificate.

The existing requirement remains in place where children aged 0-2 (in certain ratios as per Paragraph 3.21 and Annex A of the EYFS) are cared for, or intended to be cared for, at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate. Childminders who are registered to care for children under the age of 2 must have a paediatric first aid certificate or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. Childminders, as they are already required to have full PFA certification.

The requirement to have emergency paediatric aged 0 to 5 also on site (with no children aged 2 or 3 or 4) to ensure children are kept safe. Childminders who are registered to care for children under the age of 2 must have a paediatric first aid certificate or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. Childminders, as they are already required to have full PFA certification.

Childminders may be required to have a first aid certificate, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, if they are registered to care for children under the age of 2. The qualification level that will hold in order to be counted in the ratio requirements. Childminders who are registered to care for children under the age of 2 (including the managed childcare) need a full and relevant paediatric first aid certificate, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, if they are registered to care for children under the age of 2.

In nursery classes maintained schools, caring for children aged 2 and over, reasonable endeavours should be used to ensure that at least one member of staff is in possession of a valid paediatric first aid certificate. Childminders who are registered to care for children under the age of 2 (including the managed childcare) need a full and relevant paediatric first aid certificate, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, if they are registered to care for children under the age of 2.

Further details is set out in Early Years Foundation Stage: disapplications and modifications for early years provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

8.6 It is still a requirement for early years settings to have a separate baby room for children under the age of 2 during this period of disruption?

The EYFS requirement to have a separate baby room is a safety issue for the protection of children and staff. Ofsted will be in touch with providers to ensure that the safety always takes the timing of when this is appropriate. If the layout of the setting means that it is impossible for a separate baby room to be in place, a suitable area may be partitioned off to provide safety for young children.

8.9 Can settings take on new staff (including volunteers) even if a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has not been completed?

The requirements set out at paragraph 3.11 of the EYFS remain in place.

Settings must obtain criminal records checks for new members of staff including volunteers. If an application has been made but the DBS disclosure has not arrived, new staff and volunteers can still care for children as long they are supervised by someone who has a DBS check. Under no circumstances can an unchecked member of staff be left alone with children.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the childcare setting, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

8.10 What if a member of staff already has an enhanced DBS check but is moving temporarily to another early years setting?

Where members of the early years and childcare workforce are already engaging in regulated activity and already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained for them to temporarily move to another setting to support the care of children.

The onus remains on the receiving setting to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including by seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

9. Ofsted

9.1 What are the notifications requirements for settings providing childcare?

We have asked Ofsted to work with us and local authorities to find out which early years providers, including childminders, are currently open or temporarily closed. This is to help find out if there is sufficient and accessible childcare available in the coming weeks and to help support vulnerable children as best we can.

From 1 June, Ofsted still need further information about whether some providers are open or closed. You may receive an email in the coming weeks to ask you about your setting and plans for the future. Please check that this email comes from an Ofsted.gov.uk address before responding as soon as you can.

In the meantime, if your operating circumstances do change (i.e. you open or close), please let Ofsted know by sending an email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk with 'Change in operating hours' in the subject field. In the body of the email, please confirm the unique reference number for each setting and the details of the change. You can find your URN on your registration, your inspection report(s), and on your Ofsted reports page.

9.2 Will Ofsted still carry out inspections?

The Secretary of State for Education announced the suspension of routine Ofsted inspections on 17 March 2020.

The safeguarding responsibilities of settings have not changed, and Ofsted's inspection and regulatory work triggered by safeguarding concerns will continue.

See Ofsted's response to coronavirus (COVID-19) for more information.

9.3 What is Ofsted doing about unregistered provision?

Ofsted is aware that these are extremely worrying times for both settings and parents. However, the health, safety and wellbeing of children is our first consideration, and government continues to expect childcare to take place only within registered settings.

Ofsted will consider legal enforcement action against those who set up unregistered childcare, in line with their duties as a regulator. This is in order to keep children as safe as possible in these difficult times.

See Ofsted's response to coronavirus (COVID-19) for more information.

10. Childminders

From 1 June 2020, childminders can look after children of all ages, in line with their current Ofsted registration, and within usual limits on the number of children they can care for.

10.1 Will early years entitlement funding continue for childminders?

On 17 March 2020, the Chancellor confirmed the government would continue to pay local authorities for free early years entitlement places for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.

We have published guidance on the use of free early education entitlements funding setting out how local authorities can use their free entitlement funding differently, redistributing it – in exceptional cases and in a clearly focussed and targeted way – in order to secure childcare for the children of critical workers, and for vulnerable children, where their usual arrangements are no longer possible.

10.2 Are childminders eligible for the Self-employment Income Support Scheme?

Eligibility for the scheme is based on employment structures and not professions. You can apply if you are self-employed, or a member of a partnership, and have lost profits due to coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as meeting further eligibility criteria. HM Revenue and Customs will contact individuals who are eligible and invite them to apply online.

10.3 Can childminders work with other childminders to look after more children together?

Yes – up to 3 childminders (or a mix of up to 3 childminders and assistants) can work together in the same domestic premises. However, if more than 3 childminders work together they will need to apply to Ofsted to register childcare on domestic premises.

If registered to deliver childcare on domestic premises, 4 or more childminders (or a mix of 4 or more childminders and assistants) can work together in the same domestic premises, which would enable them to care for larger groups of children and still meet ratio requirements. Further details of requirements for childminders and childcare on domestic premises is available.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

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