Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Policy paper

Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020

Updated 10 June 2020

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This guidance has been updated to reflect the announcement by the Prime Minister that the government's 5 tests have been met and the decision, based on the evidence, to move forward with some opening of education and childcare settings.

It also includes details on how primary schools can use flexibility to welcome back additional pupils, for some, where they have capacity.

As part of national social distancing measures to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), we have had to limit the number of children and young people attending education and childcare settings. This has been hard for children and their families to cope with. That is why, since 23 March 2020, education and childcare settings have been keeping to new guidance to provide education and childcare of a vital standard.

As well as offering face-to-face provision for those able to attend, we have also been providing remote education for children and young people who are not attending at home. Innovative and best practice work has been taken place, by committed staff, to develop resources to make the education the best it can be.

Throughout this period, the work and dedication of critical workers has been crucial to our response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We have prioritised the care of young people - babies, children, support staff, children's services, children's social care and others, who have worked tirelessly to support the education and welfare of young people.

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, we are now able to take the next step in our plan to begin to lift restrictions and modifying measures which have been in place. Based on all the evidence, from June 2020 we are welcome back more children to early years and primary settings, initially, in the first phase of wider opening of education and childcare. We will also be supporting secondary schools to prepare for their opening on 15 June, and continuing to support those who are vulnerable and children of key workers.

We know that in some primary schools, there will be capacity to welcome more children back. In groups smaller than 15, before the summer holidays. This may be because, since 1 June, take-up amongst eligible children is lower than expected, or because, since then, some children have returned to their education setting full-time or back part-time. There is no expectation or primary schools to welcome back additional children where they do not have capacity to do so, and they should only do so if it is safe to do so and they are able to do so while following the guidance. We set out in this guidance what they can do if they do have capacity to do so safely. We may choose to welcome back additional pupils. It is up to schools to decide which additional pupils, if any, they can welcome back while following the guidance.

We have worked closely with the sector, and will continue to do so as we continue to assess to support the wider opening of schools, colleges and childcare settings. In this document, we set out the steps we are taking to support the sector, and the ongoing information about protective measures which schools and childcare providers worked with the profession to produce more detailed guidance to support planning.

Next steps

Education and childcare settings are already open to priority groups. Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) we are encouraging eligible children to attend - it is no longer necessary for parents of children in these groups to think about whether their child should go to school, childcare or a childcare provider and social worker, vulnerable children and their families will be being in touch with their school or childcare provider to discuss how it is appropriate for them to do so.

From the start of coronavirus (June 2020), we are asking primary schools to welcome back children in reception, Year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups. Primary schools will also be able to welcome back other children, including those who are not vulnerable children or key workers, on a rolling or flexible or accommodation basis while still following the approaches set out in the protective measures guidance and their risk assessment. We know that it will be important for children in year 6 and their secondary education colleagues to offer some flexibility and support in relation to the transition education of year 6 and year 10 students and 10 to 16 learners in the first year of their secondary education. We know that secondary schools and colleges are preparing to offer year 6 and year 10 students and 16 to 19 learners in the first year of their secondary education, year, alongside their Year 7 and Year 11 students who are offering to prepare for their exams.

We are also asking nurseries and other early years providers, including childminders, to welcome back children in reception, Year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups and to prioritise the approach being taken by reception schools and year 1 schools. We are also asking nurseries to be open for year 10 and 11 students (as they have to sit year 10 SATS for some pupils) and for 16 to 19 students, providing they are able to follow the protective measures and other guidance and support their exams and other learning.

We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn and for their wellbeing and development. We know that it is not ideal that children have been out of their usual education setting for so long. We know that it is not ideal that children have been out of their usual education setting for so long. Children returning to educational settings and colleges in greater numbers will also allow more families to return to work.

We are therefore gradually increasing the numbers of children and young people attending education and childcare settings, while ensuring that we do so in a way that is not allowing public gravity, settings can initially reduce the number of children and young people they are providing for, and we will be working with local authorities to reduce risk. Children and young people will need to stay within their year groups whenever possible and we will continue to recommend a range of protective measures to prevent the transmission of the virus. We will also be asking secondary schools to prepare for a phased return for some of their pupils, and offering settings under the Covid-19 Recovery Premium to offer catch-up and other support to

Costs associated with opening for more children and young people

As previously confirmed, schools will continue to receive their core funding allocations – as determined by the local authority for maintained schools and through the general annual grant (GAG) for academies. FE colleges continue to receive funding in line with the flexibilities that have been announced in recent weeks including payment on profile for 16 to 19 study programmes without reconciliation. In addition, we have announced a fund for schools to cover specific additional costs as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak – this remains open and should be used by schools as appropriate. Access to the wider business support schemes, including Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), can continue to be used for staff typically paid for through private income, on condition that the principles in Department for Education's sector specific guidance continue to be met.

For early years settings, the dedicated schools grant (DSG) should continue to be paid by local authorities for provision of free entitlements. Where parents are accessing hours beyond the free entitlements they are eligible for, early year providers should continue to charge parents in the normal way. The wider business support packages can continue to be used as appropriate, including the loan schemes and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), on condition that the principles in Department for Education's sector specific guidance continue to be met.

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, appropriate and affordable childcare is available for those returning to work now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

Further guidance and support

We have published:

- supporting guidance on protective measures which should be implemented in education settings
- guidance for parents and carers
- a planning guide for early years and childcare settings
- a planning guide for primary schools
- guidance for secondary school provision
- guidance for further education providers

This complements the existing guidance for schools and educational settings that continues to be relevant (and which will be updated in due course where needed).

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1. Throughout this document there is a distinction made between 'vulnerable children' which has a wide definition as described in this link and in the relevant section below; and those who are 'clinically vulnerable' to coronavirus (COVID-19). ↩

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