

Part of [Education and childcare during coronavirus](#)



Policy paper

Opening schools for more children and young people: initial planning framework for schools in England

Updated 16 June 2020

The Prime Minister has announced the government's roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, including the phased return of some children to school from 1 June, at the earliest. This planning framework has been developed to support those in schools and academy trusts, including mainstream, special, and alternative provision, to prepare and decide arrangements for more children returning to school.

All schools are different, and it is not possible for the government to set specific national guidelines that could be universally applicable.

We have created the framework:

- to help school leaders and trusts to start to think through the steps they might need to take to open their schools for more pupils
- as a starting point from which schools and trusts may choose to develop their own plans

This framework will be developed further and we will work with the profession to produce more detailed guidance ahead of 1 June 2020, alongside updates to existing guidance as necessary ahead of 1 June. We will also be producing operational guidance for childcare settings and colleges, in addition to further advice for schools.

Read this guidance alongside:

- [Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#)
- [Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

We expect schools and trusts to work closely with:

- parents, staff and unions as they normally would, when agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances
- their local authorities to determine what services they require and agree on any specific arrangements during this period

This is not an exhaustive list and not all aspects mentioned will be relevant to every setting. Schools and trusts will need to make their own judgments on how to plan for the safe opening of their settings based on their knowledge of their school community and premises.

Many of the aspects in this framework are operational and so are aimed at school and trust leadership teams. The executive leaders of multi-academy trusts (MATs) should make it clear how much of this will be carried out and decided by headteachers and how much will be decided by the central executive team. Before coming to some decisions, school and trust leaders may also need to consult governing boards and local authorities for advice.

Theme	Key action list
Children and parents	Identify likely numbers of pupils returning and agree required staffing resource and approach and liaise with your local authority on your plans.
	In special schools, specialist post-16 and hospital schools only, agree which additional pupils will return irrespective of year groups to achieve a phased return.
	Plan content and timing of communications to parents and pupils (including discussing attendance expectations and other specific things that parents should do to help prepare returning pupils, for example, arrangements for drop-off/collection).
	Plan to resume taking attendance registers and continuing to complete the online educational setting status form to provide daily updates on how many children and staff are in school.
	Plan how children of critical workers and vulnerable children will be accommodated alongside returning year groups and encourage attendance (unless they are extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding, or medical advice or further guidance suggests they should not attend).
	Agree what returning support is available for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children (including any dual-registered students) and put in place provision for the return of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in conjunction with families and other agencies and engage with partners who will help to provide that support, for example, local authorities.
	Agree what safeguarding provision is needed in school to support returning children (e.g. where new issues have arisen, or existing ones escalated) and consider any necessary changes and referrals as more children return to school, including those with problems accessing online offers. Check for revised protocols from your local authority and update safeguarding policy if necessary.
	Update behaviour policies to reflect the new rules and routines necessary to reduce risk in your setting and agree how to communicate this to school staff, students and parents and review uniform expectations.
	Work with your catering supplier to ensure meals are available for all children in school. Also, consider your arrangements for those year groups still out of school and eligible for benefits related free school meals.
	Agree whether breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and after-school clubs can operate (in line with the implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings guidance), and under what terms.
Staff (teachers, support staff and non-teaching staff)	Decide content and timing of staff communication(s) including if bringing staff in in advance of pupils returning is necessary.
	Consider options if necessary staffing levels can't be maintained (including school leaders and key staff like designated safeguarding leads and first aid providers).
	Identify staff who can't return to school at this point (for example, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable or those who are clinically vulnerable or living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to on site) and how they can work from home (for example, supporting remote education).
	Agree any flexible working arrangements needed to support any changes to your usual patterns (for example, staggered start/end times).
	Agree staff workload expectations (including for leaders).
	Decide what staff training (either delivered remotely or in school) is needed to implement any changes the school plans to make (for example, risk management, curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding).
	Put in place measures to check on staff wellbeing (including for leaders).
Protective measures and hygiene	Read the guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings and agree how this will be implemented in your school, including agreeing on any necessary updated health and safety policy and risk assessments.
	Decide the physical and organisational structures needed to limit risks and limit movement around the building(s) (for example, classroom layouts, entry and exit points, staggered starts and break times, class sizes, lunch queues, use of communal staff areas). Agree how safety measures and messages will be implemented and displayed around school.
	Decide what an enhanced cleaning schedule looks like and how it will be implemented in your school (for example, how often, when/if an additional clean is necessary) and how you will ensure sufficiency of supplies.
	Decide the approach to enhance hygiene (for example, toilet use, hand washing) and decide on policy related to usually shared items (for example, books, toys, practical equipment).
	Plan the school level response should someone fall ill on site (in line with relevant government guidance).
	Make arrangements for the very small number of cases where personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies will be needed; if your staff provide intimate care for any children or young people and for cases where a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home.
Pupil wellbeing	Plan likely mental health, pastoral or wider wellbeing support for children returning to school (for example, bereavement support) and discuss with your local authority what wider support services are available. Work with your local authority to secure services for additional support and early help where possible (for example, around anxiety, mental health, behaviour, social care, or changes to mobility), and consider how these might apply to pupils and students who were not previously affected.
	Agree what learning is appropriate (including the relationship between face-to-face and remote education), for example, identify curriculum priorities, agree revised expectations and required adjustments in practical lessons, and any approaches to 'catch up' support.
Learning	Work with your local authority or trust (and where applicable NHS Clinical Commissioning Group) and families to identify what provision can be reasonably provided for in line with education, health and care (EHC) plans.
	Agree ongoing learning offer for eligible pupils who can't attend school, as well as offer for those that continue to be out of school.
	Agree ongoing approach for learning offer for vulnerable children and children of critical workers who are in school but not in the returning year groups.
	Work with other school based-provision as necessary (for example, nursery, SEN unit) to ensure policies are aligned where they need to be.
	Agree approach to any scheduled or ongoing building works.
Other considerations	Plan arrangements with your suppliers and check they are following appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures (for example, food suppliers, grounds maintenance, transport providers), including when in school.
	Ensure you have considered the impact on staff and pupils with protected characteristics, including race and disability, in developing your approach.

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