Guidance

What parents and carers need to know about nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges until August 2020

Updated 11 July 2020

This guidance applies to the 2020 summer term. It is for parents and carers of children and young people of:

- registered nurseries and childminders, pre-schools, playgroups and maintained nursery schools
- primary and secondary schools including independent schools, maintained nursery academy trusts, free schools and special schools
- colleges

Main changes to previous guidance

We have updated the information on:

Opening nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to more pupils

From 1 June, we asked:

- nurseries and childminders to welcome back children of all ages
- primary schools in England to welcome back children in key transition years – nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6

Schools continue to offer places to children who are vulnerable and to children of critical workers.

From 15 June, secondary schools, sixth form and colleges have been asked to offer education to children in:

- exam year 10 and year 12
- Y10 to Y9 students in the first year of a 2-year study programme

Colleges are continuing to offer their provision to children who are vulnerable and to children of critical workers in every year group.

Flexibility for primary schools to welcome back additional children this term

We know that in some schools, there will be the capacity to welcome more children back. In group sizes of no more than 15, before the summer holiday, this may be feasible because late-arrival eligible children tend to lower their expected. There is additional funding to support this. We know that many schools have done this already. We know that no expectation on primary schools to welcome back more children in other year groups will not have the capacity to do so.

Your school will contact you if it is able to welcome back additional children. It will be up to individual schools to decide which children to invite back.

We also know that some children who have been in year 6 and have not yet taken an SAT sit the other tests in early summer, such as those for phonics and multiplication. We know that your child has this item. If you do not, the school may choose to offer this place to another pupil.

Vulnerable children and young people

Vulnerable children and young people is one year group should attend their school, where it is appropriate and there are no shielding concerns for their particular household, and/or following risk assessment for children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP). This is so that they can gain the educational and social benefits of attending.

Vulnerable children and young people are those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or a looked after arrangement
- have an EHC plan and is deemed following a risk assessment that their needs can be met and their health and care needs can be met safely
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by their nursery, childminder, school or college, local authority (including children's social care services) or other vulnerable children and young people who, in the judgment of their school, college or local authority where attending early years, school or college would be protective and beneficial, including children and young people who are: at risk of harm or neglect; receiving support from children's social care services; adopted; children; those at risk of exploitation; those at risk of mental ill-health; those at risk of physical ill-health; those who are caring for or living with a family member who is vulnerable from attendance because of a mental health need and others at local discretion

This includes children who are in kinship care arrangements, those who are in foster care, care leavers, children and young people aged 5 to 18 (or aged 5 to 25 for children and young people with an EHC plan).

Critical workers

Children in any year group with at least one parent or carer who is listed as a critical worker can attend school.

You may be asked for evidence that you are a critical worker, such as a work ID badge or payslip.

Steps nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges are taking to make sure they are safe for pupils

We have worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) to develop guidance on implementing protective measures which nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges should have in place from June. We have also worked closely with PHE to develop a system where the risk of transmission of infection is significantly reduced.

These controls are:

- avoiding contact with anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices
- regular cleaning
- minimising contact and mixes

We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children find it harder to follow social distance rules where possible, such as keeping their distance. Staff is deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account.

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges should reduce the risk of transmission by keeping children and staff in smaller consistent groups and keeping them apart from each other.

Ensuring sufficient distance between pupils is likely to mean secondary school classes will be smaller than usual. Secondary schools will need to take a risk assessment in these circumstances (for example, a larger group could be taught in a larger space provided sufficient distance between pupils can be maintained).

Colleges should plan to keep students in groups that are as small as possible and as low-mix as little as possible with other groups.

If you are worried about your children returning to school, speak to the school about your concerns and the support available.

Actions nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will take if there is a suspected case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

If a child, young person or staff member has symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19), they should not attend their nursery, childminder, school or college. If they develop symptoms while attending their nursery, childminder, school or college, they should be sent home and should follow the stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Anyone with symptoms should self-isolate for 7 days. Then fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.

Everyone has access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and can book a test by going to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-test or by calling 119, or contact NHS 111 via telephone if they do not have internet access.

Children, young people and staff should inform their nursery, childminder, school or college immediately. You should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and your child must self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean they have been in school for 1 or 2 days after their symptoms first appeared). If the test result is negative, they can end their self-isolation period. If the test result is positive, they should continue to self-isolate for 7 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean they have been in school for 1 or 2 days after their symptoms first appeared). The household should self-isolate for 14 days. Following the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Actions nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will take if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The NHS Test and Trace service will contact anyone that tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and ask them to share information about people with whom they have been close, recent contact and places they have visited.

When NHS Test and Trace identifies that a child, young person or member of staff who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) spent some time in a nursery, childminder, school or college, it will work closely with Public Health England (PHE) to inform the nursery, childminder, school or college and those with whom the child, young person or member of staff has been in close contact with, of the next steps to take.

Local Public Health England teams will work with the school to contact those identified as close contacts and advise them to self-isolate for 14 days from the last time they were in close contact with the person who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). They will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm the identity of those who need to self-isolate. This will be based on the information they have to hand but should be aided by staff lists.

In most cases, this will be the child or member of staff's timetable class or group who will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person with the positive test.

Public Health England teams will work with the school to ensure that the right control measures are implemented to minimise the risk of transmission to other children, young people and staff in the school, including, in exceptional circumstances, closure of the whole nursery, childminder, school or college will not generally be necessary.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or tests positive. They should instead follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

If the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14 day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) illness within the 14 day period.

If the test results are positive, they should inform their setting immediately and should self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the school/setting has been in touch before the 7 days have elapsed). The household should self-isolate for at least 14 days. Following the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Special schools

From 1 June, we have asked special schools and PRU settings to work towards a phased return of more children and young people, without a fixed or set number of children in a school.

From 15 June, we have also asked specialist post-16 institutions to work towards a phased return of young people, without a fixed or specific year group or cohort, to nurseries and childminders.

Read the guidance for special schools, specialist colleges and local authorities to find out how they are supporting children and young people with SEND during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Nurseries and childminders

We have asked nurseries and childminders to open for children of all ages.

Childcare fees and charges

We expect nurseries to comply with the law and take a reasonable and proportionate approach to parents' fees, considering their unprecedented circumstances. We encourage communities are very sympathetic with their fees.

If you feel you have been treated by other consultation charging during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, you can report it to the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) using their online form.

30 hours free childcare and tax-free childcare

If you are temporarily not meeting the minimum income requirement for 30 hours free childcare or tax-free childcare as a direct consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and would normally meet the requirement, you can still apply.

You should continue to apply as normal if you have a limited or fluctuating income and will be contacted if you need to supply further evidence of eligibility.

Subject to parentage (several or temporary unemployment in the 30 hours free childcare and tax-free childcare regulations, we intend to allow critical workers who have lost their employment or been furloughed to continue to receive childcare as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. In ensure eligible for 30 hours for the current 2020 to 2021 tax year (up to a cone of £100,000).

We have previously asked local authorities to use their discretion to waive the validity period for 30 hours free childcare codes for parents in critical or vulnerable children and eligible and expecting to take up a 30 hours childcare place between 1 April 2020 and 31 July 2020 inclusive, for a period of 30 days (31 days in March). We have asked them to take up that discretion in the summer term.

Previously, only the children of critical workers and children who are vulnerable were able to access childcare. Now that nurseries and childminders are able to welcome children, we are asking local authorities to use their discretion in accepting the codes of parents who are: in critical or vulnerable children and eligible and expecting to take up the entitlement, meeting the eligibility criteria and have being capacity nurseries or childminders to take them on. Nurseries, childminders and local authorities will need to confirm that the child, the parent and the provider are eligible for the entitlement. This will be valid for a 30 hours place in the summer term.

You should continue to apply for your 30 hours free childcare and tax-free childcare as you currently using it.

Read the guidance on tax-free childcare and 30 hours free childcare during coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for more information.

Attendance

We want to encourage children and young people who are in the eligible year groups to attend, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence.

You should notify your child's school or college as normal if your child is unable to attend or that staff will contact you to discuss self-care.

Parents will not be penalised for non-attendance at this time.

If you are a parent of a vulnerable child and do not want them to attend school, speak to your social worker or school.

If you are concerned about the risk of your child contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) when attending, speak to your nursery, childminder, school or college about the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk of transmission for all children and staff.

Opening hours

We want nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to be open for their normal hours and if possible, continue with breakfast club and after school provision.

Breakfast / after school clubs

School-based supervised care providers, such as breakfast and after school clubs, can operate for children in eligible year groups or practise groups if they are:

- operating on the same premises as the school or early years provision these children attend or work at
- only caring for children of the school or early years provision at a time

Providers should follow the same protective measures being taken by nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges. Parents of children in the opening children in the same cohort/cohorts/year groups that they are in during the day.

If wraparound providers are unable to implement the same protective measures they should only offer outdoor provision. In doing so, providers should ensure they can keep children social distanced and a group of no more than 6, including staff members, in accordance with the guidance on social distancing.

Summer provision

Providers of community activities, summer clubs, tuition and other out-of-school activities will be able to open over the summer, with safety measures in place.

Adjustments to the current restrictions on these providers will be made as part of step 3 of the government's recovery strategy (Friday 4 July). Ministers will then update school holiday the guidance on protective measures for providers of:

- community activities
- holiday or after-school clubs
- tuition
- other out-of-school settings

Admissions

We have eased the regulations so that admission authorities can hold prepare for telephone, video conference or in writing, where necessary, instead of holding face to face hearings with parents. Find information on the appeals process is available.

Transport

Local authorities continue to be under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for eligible children who are able to attend school.

Local authorities have been asked to be flexible to support transport costs where necessary for 16 to 19 year olds.

You are encouraged to consider all other forms of transport, such as cycling and walking if you can, before using public transport, particularly during peak times. Walking plans can be helpful in this, particularly if using public transport, you should follow the safer travel guidance for passengers.

You should do all you can to help make sure you and others can travel safely. You should follow the guidance on using public transport to support travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Try to avoid travelling on public transport, particularly at peak times. Wherever possible, walk, cycle or use your own transport to travel to school or college. If you do use public transport, maintain a 2 metre distance, which means deliberately avoid sitting next to people. If this is not possible, you should face away from people. Wear a face covering. Follow the guidance on maintaining a safe distance and hand hygiene. School transport often carries the same children on a regular basis, which reduces the risk of transmission.

When deciding whether children would wear a face covering as dedicated home to school transport, it is also important to remember:

- children aged 11 and 12 are expected to wear face coverings in school
- children aged 13 and above are expected to wear face coverings in secondary – guidance on face coverings in English schools is available
- children under 3 years old should not wear face coverings
- children under 11 are not expected to wear face coverings on public transport

Dress with consideration of the fact that a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on reading facial expressions and clear sound.

Uniform

There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in school. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often or differently than usual.

School meals

Schools should provide meal options for all children attending school. Pupils should be able to purchase a meal from their usual supplier and pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meal eligibility criteria.

If your child usually receives free school meals and is not attending school, then the school should provide support and an alternative.

As school kitchens reopen, we expect schools to make food parcels available for collection or delivery for any children that are eligible for free school meals who are staying at home. Where schools are not able to provide meals or food parcels for children who are there, they can continue to offer vouchers to families of eligible pupils.

We know due to coronavirus (COVID-19) families will face increased pressure on household budgets. We have made it easier for families to claim free school meals in the coming months. That is why we are claiming that free school meals through Universal Credit and which eligible families who are eligible for free school meals to claim vouchers for the 6 weeks summer holiday.

You can still apply for free school meals. Contact your local authority who will verify your eligibility.

Meals in further education colleges

We expect colleges to continue to support students who are eligible for and usually receive, free meals in colleges. This includes students who are new eligible and students they are continuing to attend the college or are studying remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19) related issues.

What pupils will be taught

Schools continue to be best placed to make decisions about how to support and educate all their pupils during the period when the school is closed and staff and pupils.

Where year groups are returning to school, we would expect school leaders and teachers to:

- consider their curriculum priorities for the term ahead and how to support pupils to access where pupils are first learning and agree what adjustments may be needed to the school curriculum over the coming weeks
- identify and plan how best to support the education of high needs pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and special educational needs and disability (SEND) and vulnerable pupils
- support pupils in year 6 who will need to draw their primary and secondary education teams together to support their upcoming transition
- support pupils in other year groups who are transitioning between to years 12 and 13 and the first year in Y10 to Y9 students, who are starting their first year of study (GCSE). It takes and other qualifications such as vocational.

Schools and colleges will continue to support pupils attending school as well as those who are learning remotely, including those who are self-isolating.

Our school and be prioritised if they are able to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to their pupils during the period.

Exams

Various assessments, including SATs, and exams including GCSEs, AS levels and A levels, have been cancelled this year.

Students taking GCSEs, AS and A levels will receive calculated grades this summer. Read more about how GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2020.

For students taking other qualifications instead of or alongside GCSEs and A levels, such as some BTECs, will also receive a calculated result wherever possible.

There will be some qualifications where it is not possible, and where it is not needed to provide a calculated result. Awarding organisations will work with their centres to provide as that students can receive a result this summer.

Where it is not possible to adapt the assessments, these will be delayed. Should the qualifications regulator – in working with the awarding bodies who provide the assessments to agree the approaches.

We recognise that students who are studying GCSE, A level or equivalent courses, full or part-time, will need to know as soon as possible what assessment and qualification this year. We are working with Ofqual and the exam boards to develop our approach to next year's students in right of this.

Resources and support

We have published a set of online educational resources to help children to learn at home. Find information on the support available for parents and carers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Further support includes:

- a DfE of online educational resources which have been identified by some of the country's leading educational experts to help pupils to learn at home
- enhanced education plans for those who have EHC plans
- resources from Ofsted Research Schools, a sector-led initiative to support teachers and school leaders to use evidence to improve pupil outcomes
- the Department for Education's Twitter feed, which will be used to share information and resources with parents and carers

Yours sincerely

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Minds. Read further guidance on how to help children 2 to 4 to learn at home during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Every pupil in the country has experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). That is why the government has announced a package worth £1billion to support pupils to catch up. Next academic year, all state-funded primary and secondary schools in England will receive additional funding which they can use to support pupils to catch up.

They can choose to spend this on effective interventions such as:

- extra teaching time
- small group tuition
- holiday clubs

In addition, the government will be launching a national tutoring programme in autumn 2020, to provide extra support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who will be amongst those hardest hit by the disruption to education.

Keeping your child safe online

With children spending more time online to do schoolwork and other activities, there could be an additional risk in relation to online safety.

It is important that you talk to your children about online safety, show an interest in what they are doing online, including knowing the sites they will be accessing and who your child is interacting with online. In talking to your children, you can discuss age-appropriate 'ground rules' such as how much time they spend online doing different things, what games and apps are appropriate to use and what your children like and dislike about being online.

You should also consider setting up and reviewing age-appropriate parental controls. Setting parental controls can be a quick and effective tool to help protect children online.

Here are some useful links to help you keep your children safe online:

- government guidance on keeping children safe from online harms such as child sexual exploitation, cyberbullying and harmful content
- government guidance on staying safe online including parental controls, fact-checking information, communicating with family and friends while social distancing is in place and taking regular breaks from the screen
- Thinkuknow is the education programme from the National Crime Agency (NCA) proving age-appropriate resources for children and support for parents
- Parent Info is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- Childnet provides a tool kit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- Internet Matters provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- LGfL provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including 6 top tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- Net Aware provides support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, providing a guide to social networks, apps and games
- Let's Talk About It provides support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- UK Safer Internet Centre provides tips, advice, guides and resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

Age-appropriate practical support for children on reporting concerns is available from:

- Childline – for general support
- UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse

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1. For the purposes of this guidance 'colleges' means publicly funded sixth form and further education colleges, independent training providers and special post-16 institutions. ↩

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

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