Department for Education

Guidance

Protective measures for holiday and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Updated 20 August 2020

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Main changes to guidance

We have updated this guidance as follows:

- Amended the guidance to extend its applicability into the autumn school term, and reflect that state schools have now closed for the summer holidays
- Set out a change to the protective measures which will be effective from the point at which all pupils return to school in the autumn, making clear the position on group sizes and how providers can minimise the risk of children mixing outside their school bubbles
- Updated content on music and performing arts
- Added additional content on educational visits
- Added additional content on shared resources

About this guidance

Providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children are now able to open for both outdoor and indoor provision provided that they follow the protective measures set out by government in this guidance.

We recognise the important role out-of-school settings play in providing enriching activities, giving children the opportunity to socialise with others outside their household and promoting their wellbeing. We also recognise the importance of these settings in providing additional childcare options to working parents and carers.

We are aware many providers have reopened and put safety measures in place. This document sets out national guidance to support them and advise on practical steps they can take to minimise the risk to children, staff and parents who attend their settings by reducing the risk of infection and transmission of the virus. Providers should also consider any local restrictions in their local area and have regard to any specific guidance in place covering local lockdowns.

Scientific advice suggests that there is a moderate to high degree of confidence that the susceptibility to clinical disease of younger children (typically until they become teenagers) is generally lower than for adults. However, it remains important that protective measures as outlined in this guidance are put in place to help reduce the risk of transmission.

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

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

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for organisations or individuals who provide community activities, tuition, holiday clubs or after-school clubs for children (up to age 18), as well as their staff and volunteers. This guidance will be relevant for:

- providers which fall within the government's definition of an out-of-school setting (OOSS)
- providers caring for children aged 5 and over and registered with Ofsted on either the compulsory or voluntary childcare register
- schools or colleges which offer extra-curricular activities or provision for children before and after school

Registered early years providers caring for children under the age of 5 should refer to the guidance for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Many providers will be offering a range of services and activities to young people (including those up to the age of 25). Providers of youth services and activities should also refer to the National Youth Agency's guidance for managing youth sector spaces and activities during COVID-19 as well as their accompanying tools and resources to support safe service provision.

What is an out-of-school setting?

OOSS are organisations or individuals that provide tuition, training, instruction or activities to children (up to the age of 18) in England without their parents' or carers' supervision, but are not:

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

OOSS generally provide tuition, training, instruction or activities outside normal school hours (such as evenings, weekends, school holidays), although some OOSS are run part-time during school hours to help meet the needs of those who are typically educated at home. OOSS should not, however, be operating full-time (preventing a child attending a lawfully operating school). They may, for example, include tuition or learning centres, extracurricular clubs, supplementary schools, uniformed youth organisations, religious settings offering instruction in their own faith, and summer clubs.

OOSS can occur in many kinds of venue, from a person's home to much larger and more formal places such as community and youth centres, sports clubs, and places of worship. Fees may or may not be charged, and some settings may operate on a commercial basis.

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

Home education

Parents (including guardians and foster carers) who have chosen to home educate their own child may wish to have their children attend group activities either in formal OOSS or in the homes of others who have chosen to home educate.

Where a child who is home educated takes part in an OOSS the guidance set out above will apply. This is the case regardless of whether the OOSS is attended solely by children who are home educated or a combination of children attending school and children being home educated.

Where a child who is home educated takes part in a group activity at the home of others who have chosen to home educate, the host should, as far as possible, follow this guidance for OOSS and the guidance on working safely during coronavirus in other people's homes. This applies only to group activities which have the principal purpose of education and should not be used to justify purely social activities beyond those permitted under the government's general guidance on social distancing.

Carrying out a risk assessment

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

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

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

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

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

Indoor provision

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

If you offer indoor sports activities for children, you should refer to the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) for providers of grassroots sports and gym / leisure facilities.

Outdoor provision

If your setting operates outdoors, you should also refer to the guidance for providers of outdoor facilities on the phased return of sport and recreation in England.

In-home provision

If you normally offer provision in your own home or another home, for example if you are a private tutor, you should refer to the government guidance on working safely during coronavirus in other people's homes.

Considering group sizes

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

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

To reduce the risk of transmission within a setting, providers should aim to minimise the number of different people each child comes into contact with. As such, during the summer holiday period providers should seek to maintain small groups of no more than 15 children, with the same children each time wherever possible (do not mix groups unless absolutely necessary) and at least one staff member, depending on the type of provision or size of the group.

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

As far as it is possible, providers should also ensure that where they have multiple groups of children in their setting, that these groups are not mixing within the setting itself.

You should keep a written or electronic list of the children in each group for at least 21 days for Test and Trace purposes.

Potential challenges to achieving consistent groups may include:

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

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

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

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

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

Group sizes for children under 5

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

Providers caring for children both under the age of 5 and aged 5 and over separately may choose to apply the measures outlined in the early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance to those children under the age of 5, and the measures outlined in this guidance to those aged 5 and over, where it is possible to do so. Where providers have mixed age groups together they will need to, as far as possible, keep all children irrespective of age in small consistent groups of no more than 15 with at least one staff member, or with more staff members to meet relevant ratio requirements.

Group sizes from autumn term 2020

When state schools in your local area reopen for all pupils in autumn term 2020, we are advising providers to keep children in small groups of no more than 15 children with the same children each time wherever possible (do not mix groups unless absolutely necessary) and at least one staff member, depending on the type of provision or size of the group.

Multiple groups of 15 plus staff can use the same shared space, if that is necessary, with distancing between the groups. Where this is the case the other protective measures within this guidance will be even more important to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of the virus.

Where it is possible to do so, providers should also try to work with parents, the schools or early years settings which children attend to ensure, as far as possible, children can be kept in a group with other children from the same bubble they are in during the school day. This will minimise the amount of mixing between different groups of children outside of school, and therefore the risk of infection. The government will keep group sizes under review.

Where it is not possible to group children in the same bubbles as they are in during the school day, you should seek to keep children in consistent groups, as far as possible, and frequently review these groups to minimise the amount of 'mixing' (that is, the number of different people each child comes into contact with). For example, when new children register for your provision, you may wish to firstly determine whether they attend the same school or early years setting as other children in your setting and group them together if appropriate. To help you review your groups, you should also keep up-to-date records of the children attending your setting for at least 21 days, including the schools or early years setting that they attend and the specific groups and members of staff they have been assigned to in your setting.

Educational Visits

Providers should not offer overnight or residential provision for children. This is consistent with the latest government guidance on meeting people from outside your household, which advises that you should not stay overnight away from your home with members of more than 2 households.

The government will keep this position under review and continue to be guided by the best scientific and medical advice to ensure that the right decisions are taken at the right time. The government also advises against any overseas trips for children under 18 organised by educational settings.

Providers can, however, offer non-overnight domestic educational visits. This should be done in line with protective measures, such as keeping children within their consistent group, relevant COVID-secure travel arrangements and the COVID-secure measures in place at the destination. Providers should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be done safely. As part of this risk assessment, providers will need to consider what control measures need to be used and ensure they are aware of wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. Providers should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.

Effective infection protection and control

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

These can be seen as a 'system of controls' that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response':

Prevention:

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

Numbers 1 to 4 must be in place in out-of-school settings, all the time

Number 5 must be properly considered and providers must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 6 applies in specific circumstances. See the section on personal protective equipment (PPE) for more information.

Response to any infection:

1. engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
2. manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the out-of-school settings community
3. contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

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

Indoor provision

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

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

Providers who offer indoor sports activities for children should also refer to the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) for providers of grassroots sports and gym / leisure facilities.

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

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

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

Outdoor provision

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

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

In-home provision

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

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

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

As already mentioned, any group activities undertaken by home educators involving their own children but taking place outside of their own household should be carried out in line with the protective measures outlined above. They should also refer to the guidance on working safely during coronavirus in other people's homes.

Providers of music, dance and drama or sports provision

Particular care should be taken to observe social distancing in the case of a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe more heavily and more rapidly during exercise. In addition to referring to guidance for indoor sports providers and guidance for providers of outdoor facilities, providers of

Some children may be more experienced bereavements in their immediate family or wider circle of family and friends and need extra care and support in the coming weeks.

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

- opportunities for children to talk about their experiences of the past few months
- opportunities for conversations with trusted adults where they may be worried
- social stories or relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or days of remembrance

Supporting children and young people's wellbeing

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

- individual children and young people who have found the long period of isolation difficult
- those who have experienced bereavement or loss

Some children may also have experienced bereavements in their immediate family or wider circle of family and friends and need extra care and support in the coming weeks.

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

Safeguarding and child Protection

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental ill-health and trauma for children and young people. It is important to be aware of signs of abuse. Early help and safeguarding support to vulnerable children may be particularly important, meaning that the family, community and professional support that children and young people have been used to in the past, may be not available or less available. It is important that you and your staff safeguarding issues that can put children at risk, such as abuse and neglect, and the signs to look for.

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

- mental illnesses, including trauma, bereavement, PTSD, anxiety, depression and eating disorders
- concerning behaviours and signs of abuse and neglect
- unexplained injuries or injuries that are not consistent with the child's explanation
- disclosures or allegations of abuse
- a volunteer who has been checked for DBS unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity

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- social stories or relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or days of remembrance

Who can attend your out-of-school setting?

Children of all ages may attend out-of-school settings. However, if you live in an area that is experiencing a local COVID-19 outbreak, different local restrictions may apply to children and young people living in that area. Please check if such restrictions are in place in your area.

DCSS should not be used as a replacement for school or early years attendance.

When carrying out a risk assessment for your setting, you should consider how children and young people will be supported to attend your setting and how to manage their attendance. Children should be encouraged to attend as much as possible, and deeply to ensure their children attend the same setting. Consideration should be given to how children will be supported to attend the same setting, for example, by providing transport or childcare. It is also ensuring that children who attend your setting are assigned to a particular group, and that they are kept with the same children and staff each day. In some cases, as far as possible, children should be encouraged to attend different schools can attend the same out-of-school setting, but providers, where possible, should try to ensure that children in the same bubble are kept together as far as, for example, they share transport to and from school or childcare. Providers should also ensure that children who are outside the local area, for example, children who attend your setting should be within walking or cycling distance

Face Coverings

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the general use of face coverings in educational settings or other indoor settings with activities. The evidence will be kept under review. Face coverings are not required for out-of-school provision on children and staff are mixing in consistent groups. Face coverings are recommended for staff and adult visitors to schools. They may also be required for other adult visitors in specific circumstances. Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (except children under the age of 11 and those who are exempt). Face coverings are also required in certain settings in England.

Out-of-school settings providers should have a process for removing face coverings when children and young people are arriving, departing and communicate it clearly to them. Children and staff must be instructed not to touch the front of the face covering during use or when being taken off. Face coverings should be stored in a bag or other suitable container until it can be safely disposed of. Disposable face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a bag for washing. Wash hands immediately after handling them (which applies more broadly to touching any face covering). Guidance on safe wearing of masks in schools, colleges and children's social care providers may be helpful.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The majority of staff in DCSS will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work.

PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases:

- children, young people or staff who have been routinely already treated the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive the PPE they need.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be provided to a member of staff, young person or other service provider who is suspected of COVID-19 symptoms.

The Department for Education has published guidance on Safe Working in Education, Childcare and Children's Social Care settings, including advice on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in these settings. This guidance sets out the steps you should take to ensure that PPE should be used.

Providers should use the information in the guidance to assess the risk to children, young people and staff in their setting and put in place measures to manage the risk. The Local Coronavirus Support Teams (LCST) will be in touch with providers who are in their area to offer support and advice on how to manage the risk of transmission in their setting. They will also be in touch with providers who have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in their setting. Where there is a local lockdown, providers may be asked to support the local response to the local lockdown. See the COVID-19: operational guidance for education and childcare providers.

Test and trace

The NHS Test and Trace service will help to manage the risk of the virus or emerging from coronavirus and to keep the risk low. It will do this by ensuring that:

- provides testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) to find out if they have the virus
- gets in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to gather information about who they have been in close contact with
- tells those contacts, where necessary, to self-isolate to help prevent the spread of the virus

The NHS Test and Trace service will also:

- ensure that anyone who is asked to self-isolate can receive financial support and other support if they have been asked to do so
- ensure that anyone who is asked to self-isolate can receive clinical advice if they need it
- ensure that anyone who is asked to self-isolate can be tested if they develop coronavirus symptoms

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the days or weeks after a case, the local health protection team will conduct a rapid investigation and advise on control measures. In most cases, this will mean that the local health protection team will work with the setting to identify close contacts and advise on precautionary measures - perhaps the whole class, group or site. Where necessary, they will also advise on the closure of a particular class, year group or site to reduce risk of transmission. Closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

Communicating safe working measures with staff

You should familiarise yourself with the government guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure that you have put in place measures to manage the risk of transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease in your setting.

- Carry out a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment (see the section "Effective Infection Protection and Control")
- Develop cleaning, hygiene and ventilation arrangements (see the section "Effective Infection Protection and Control")
- Help people to work from home where possible
- Maintain social distancing, where possible
- Manage the risk from close contact working, do everything practicable to manage the transmission risk from close contact working where the activity needs to continue for the business to operate.
- Ensure that people who are ill do not come to work, staff about your plans and delivery measures, including your risk assessment and cleaning regimes.

If you employ cleaning contractors or staff then you should communicate additional cleaning requirements and agree additional cleaning regimes with them.

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

The Department for Education's guidance for full operation of schools, colleges and other children's services, provides a framework for safe working in schools, colleges and other children's services.

Communicating with parents

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

Consider the frequency of:

- use technology to communicate with parents and carers digitally where possible
- text messages, parent mails, parent apps, or other digital platforms, consider not to enter your settings if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) including a new, persistent cough, temperature or loss of taste or smell (anosmia).
- encourage parents to avoid using public transport to get to your settings, if they can, and encourage them to walk or cycle to your settings, if it is possible and if they can do so safely and in a manner that is socially distanced.
- reduce contact between parents and carers when dropping off and picking up children, for example, by staggering drop off and pick up times, using a car park for drop off and staggering timing
- when allocating drop off and collection times to parents, avoid scheduling times that are at the same time as the school day, as this is important as many people will be at work at these times.
- list parents and young people their allocated drop off and collection times and ensure that they are aware of the importance of not arriving early or late, and of the importance of social distancing.
- work with parents and carers to consider how best to manage dropping off and collecting children and young people.
- avoid the need for parents and carers to enter your setting, if possible, but to consider whether physical distancing measures, if needed, could be put in place to ensure that they can safely enter your setting.
- also think about wrapping parents and children in education measures such as the use of face coverings.
- ensure parents and young people are aware of their responsibilities on transport to and from education or childcare settings (including avoiding travelling if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)).

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

Safeguarding and child Protection

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental ill-health and trauma for children and young people. It is important to be aware of signs of abuse. Early help and safeguarding support to vulnerable children may be particularly important, meaning that the family, community and professional support that children and young people have been used to in the past, may be not available or less available. It is important that you and your staff safeguarding issues that can put children at risk, such as abuse and neglect, and the signs to look for.

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

- mental illnesses, including trauma, bereavement, PTSD, anxiety, depression and eating disorders
- concerning behaviours and signs of abuse and neglect
- unexplained injuries or injuries that are not consistent with the child's explanation
- disclosures or allegations of abuse
- a volunteer who has been checked for DBS unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity

Supporting children and young people's wellbeing

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

- individual children and young people who have found the long period of isolation difficult
- those who have experienced bereavement or loss

Some children may also have experienced bereavements in their immediate family or wider circle of family and friends and need extra care and support in the coming weeks.

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

- opportunities for children to talk about their experiences of the past few months
- opportunities for conversations with trusted adults where they may be worried
- social stories or relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or days of remembrance

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

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19) they should immediately be sent home to isolate and be guided to get a test, where to self-isolate and what to do. The NHS Test and Trace service will then be in touch with the person who has been tested and they have contact with a contact tracer. The contact tracer will then arrange, where necessary, for the person who is a close contact to be asked to self-isolate. The Department for Education's guidance provides more information on what to do if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a setting. There will be a local response to a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting. If there is a local lockdown, providers may be asked to support the local response to the local lockdown. See the COVID-19: operational guidance for education and childcare providers.

Communicating safe working measures with staff

You should familiarise yourself with the government guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure that you have put in place measures to manage the risk of transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease in your setting.

- Carry out a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment (see the section "Effective Infection Protection and Control")
- Develop cleaning, hygiene and ventilation arrangements (see the section "Effective Infection Protection and Control")
- Help people to work from home where possible
- Maintain social distancing, where possible
- Manage the risk from close contact working, do everything practicable to manage the transmission risk from close contact working where the activity needs to continue for the business to operate.
- Ensure that people who are ill do not come to work, staff about your plans and delivery measures, including your risk assessment and cleaning regimes.

If you employ cleaning contractors or staff then you should communicate additional cleaning requirements and agree additional cleaning regimes with them.

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

The Department for Education's guidance for full operation of schools, colleges and other children's services, provides a framework for safe working in schools, colleges and other children's services.

Communicating with parents

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

Consider the frequency of:

- use technology to communicate with parents and carers digitally where possible
- text messages, parent mails, parent apps, or other digital platforms, consider not to enter your settings if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) including a new, persistent cough, temperature or loss of taste or smell (anosmia).
- encourage parents to avoid using public transport to get to your settings, if they can, and encourage them to walk or cycle to your settings, if it is possible and if they can do so safely and in a manner that is socially distanced.
- reduce contact between parents and carers when dropping off and picking up children, for example, by staggering drop off and pick up times, using a car park for drop off and staggering timing
- when allocating drop off and collection times to parents, avoid scheduling times that are at the same time as the school day, as this is important as many people will be at work at these times.
- list parents and young people their allocated drop off and collection times and ensure that they are aware of the importance of not arriving early or late, and of the importance of social distancing.
- work with parents and carers to consider how best to manage dropping off and collecting children and young people.
- avoid the need for parents and carers to enter your setting, if possible, but to consider whether physical distancing measures, if needed, could be put in place to ensure that they can safely enter your setting.
- also think about wrapping parents and children in education measures such as the use of face coverings.
- ensure parents and young people are aware of their responsibilities on transport to and from education or childcare settings (including avoiding travelling if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)).

Equality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is emerging evidence that BAME individuals may be more severely affected than the general population by coronavirus (COVID-19). Providers should be especially sensitive to the needs and worries of BAME children and young people, parents and carers, and staff, and should ensure interventions in the work setting to manage risk are carefully and appropriately communicated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr Dog explains coronavirus.

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

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

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

Check the new rules for January 2021

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