

Part of Education and childcare during coronavirus



Guidance Critical workers who can access schools or educational settings Updated 28 September 2020

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This guidance has been updated as all pupils return full-time to schools and educational settings from the start of the autumn term, and to reflect that there may be exceptional circumstances in which some level of restriction to education or childcare is required in a local area, as set out in the Department for Health and Social Care's COVID-19 contain framework.

Return of all pupils to education

Schools and colleges are welcoming back all children and young people from the start of the autumn term.

It is vital that children and young people return to school and college for their:

- educational progress
wellbeing
wider development

School attendance is mandatory again. For parents and carers of children of compulsory school age, this means that the legal duty on you as a parent to send your child to school regularly will apply.

Local restrictions

In local areas where restrictions have been implemented by national direction, we anticipate that education and childcare will usually remain fully open to all, with the additional requirement that face coverings should be worn by staff and pupils in schools and colleges, from year 7 and above, when moving around communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which some level of restriction to education or childcare is required in a local area. In those situations, local and national partners will carefully consider which tier of restriction, as set out in the Department of Health and Social Care's COVID-19 contain framework, is the most appropriate one to implement. The key aim will be to retain as much face-to-face education and access to childcare as possible. The 'tiers of restriction' will ensure that extensive limitations on education and childcare are a last resort and that full-time on-site provision is available for vulnerable children and children of critical workers in all cases.

To support contingency planning should education settings need to limit attendance in line with the tiers of intervention, the definition of critical workers and vulnerable children is in the following section.

Vulnerable children and young people

Vulnerable children and young people include 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 who are a looked-after child
have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services
adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers
those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
others at the provider and local authority's discretion

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

Health and social care

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes:

- childcare
support and teaching staff
social workers
specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response to deliver this approach

Key public services

This includes:

- those essential to the running of the justice system
religious staff
charities and workers delivering key frontline services
those responsible for the management of the deceased
journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

Local and national government

This only includes:

- those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the coronavirus (COVID-19) response
or delivering essential public services, such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food:

- production
processing
distribution
sale and delivery
as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

Public safety and national security

This includes:

- police and support staff
Ministry of Defence civilians
contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak)
fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)
National Crime Agency staff
those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes:

- staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure)
the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response
key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services)
postal services and delivery
payments providers
waste disposal sectors

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support Check the new rules for January 2021

Services and information Departments and policy

Table with 3 columns: Services and information, Departments and policy, and a third column with links like 'How government works', 'Departments', 'Worldwide', etc.