Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Guidance

Education and childcare settings: New National Restrictions from 5 November 2020

How New National Restrictions to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) impact education, childcare and children's social care settings.

Published 4 November 2020
Last updated 5 November 2020 — see all updates
From: Department for Education

Applies to: **England**

Contents

— Early years and childcare
— Out-of-school activities and wraparound childcare
— Schools
— Children's social care, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people
— Further education and apprenticeships
— Higher education

Related content

Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Education and childcare

Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care

What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus

On Saturday 31 October the Prime Minister announced New National Restrictions, which come into force on Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December, to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The government continues to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our children and young people and will not be closing early years settings, schools, further education (FE) colleges or universities. It remains very important for children and young people to attend, to support their wellbeing and education and help working parents and guardians. Senior clinicians still advise that school is the best place for children to be, and so they should continue to go to school. Schools have implemented a range of protective measures to make them safe.

Childcare or education is one of the exceptions that children, young people and parents and carers can leave their home for.

Education settings and childcare settings must continue to take swift action when they become aware of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting. Early years settings, schools, colleges and out of schools settings can contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority for support on the action they should take to respond to a positive case.

The advice service can be reached by calling the DfE Helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. Callers will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform them of what action is needed based on the latest public health advice. Any general queries relating to coronavirus and education and childcare settings should select option 3 or 4.

Early years and childcare

There are several ways that parents and carers can continue to access childcare for the duration of the national restrictions:

- early years settings and childminders remain open, and parents can continue to use these settings as normal
- parents will be able to access other childcare activities (including wraparound care) where reasonably necessary to enable parents to work, seek work, attend education or training, or for the purposes of respite care for carers
- nannies will be able to continue to provide services in the home
- parents are able to form a childcare bubble with another household for the purposes of informal childcare, where the child is 13 or under
- some households will also be able to benefit from being in a support bubble, which allows single adult households to join another household

Settings should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in guidance.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) will be extended until the end of March 2021 (up to 80% of current salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500). Early years providers' access to the CJRS remains as published. The Job Support Scheme, which was scheduled to come in on Sunday 1st November, has been postponed as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is being extended.

Business premises forced to close in England are to receive grants worth up to £3,000 per month under the Local Restrictions Support Grant. Also, £1.1bn is being given to local authorities to enable them to support businesses more broadly.

Find out more about the CJRS, all other business support and self-employed support that is being made available.

Face coverings

In early years settings, there is no change to the existing position. It is not mandatory for staff and visitors to wear face coverings. In situations where social distancing between adults in settings is not possible (for example when moving around in corridors and communal areas), settings have the discretion to recommend the use of face coverings for adults on site, for both staff and visitors.

Disapplications

Specific EYFS disapplications are in place for any provider who cannot comply with the early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements in full due to restrictions or requirements imposed through the national lockdown.

Transport

Journeys should only be made:

- for education or childcare
- for work purposes
- to exercise outdoors or visit an outdoor public place
- for visiting venues that are open
- for a medical reason, such as taking someone to hospital

If it is necessary to travel, settings are encouraged to walk where possible, and to plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. This will allow settings to maintain social distancing while travelling.

If it is necessary for a childminder to pick up or drop off a child at school and walking is not practical, then a private vehicle for single household use is preferable. Use of public transport should be minimised.

Visitors to the setting

Settings should restrict all visits to the setting to those that are absolutely necessary.

Clinically extremely vulnerable children and staff

Children

More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19), even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Parents should be advised to speak to their child's GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend childcare or nursery during the period this advice is in place.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education or childcare.

Parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter shortly confirming this advice.

Staff

Those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions.

All other staff should continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

Clinically vulnerable staff and children

Staff and children who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically extremely vulnerable, may continue to attend early years and childcare settings in line with current guidance.

Out-of-school activities and wraparound childcare

Out-of-school activities (including wraparound care) may continue to operate if their primary purpose is providing registered childcare, or where they are offering other childcare activities, where this is reasonably necessary to enable parents to:

- work or search for work
- undertake training or education

Out-of-school activities may continue to operate for the purposes of respite care, including for vulnerable children.

Out-of-school activities that are primarily used by home educating parents as part of their arrangements for their child to receive a suitable full-time education (which could include, for example, tuition centres, supplementary schools, or private tutors) may also continue to operate for the duration of the national restrictions.

Youth support services, including 1-1 youth work and support groups, may also continue to operate.

These settings should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in the protective measures for holiday clubs and after-school clubs and other out-of-school clubs for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak guidance. 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, where it is relevant to do so.

All other out of school activities, not being primarily used by parents for these purposes, should close for face-to-face provision for the duration of the national restrictions.

Face coverings

In out-of-school settings, face coverings should be used where it is a requirement of the indoor setting and where the teaching, training or activity is taking place in an area in which children aged 11 and over or staff are likely to come into contact with other members of the public (complying with relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) sector guidance).

In addition, face coverings should be worn by adults and children aged 11 and above when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms or activity rooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

Respite

Parents or carers of disabled children may continue to access respite care to support them in caring for their disabled child. Where activities are being provided solely for this purpose, they are able to continue.

Clinically extremely vulnerable children and staff

Children

More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19), even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Parents should be advised to speak to their child's GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend childcare or nursery during the period this advice is in place.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education or childcare.

Parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter shortly confirming this advice.

Staff

Those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are advised to work from home and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions.

All other staff should continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

Clinically vulnerable staff and children

Staff and children who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically extremely vulnerable, may continue to attend early years and childcare settings in line with current guidance.

Schools

Schools continue to remain open for all children and young people as they have since the start of the autumn term for the duration of the national restrictions.

Being at school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time spent out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of education, and children's future ability to learn. It continues to be our aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in the classroom far outweigh the low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) and schools can take action to reduce risks still further.

We published actions for schools during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak guidance to support schools to welcome back all children from the start of the autumn term.

Schools should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in this guidance. These measures provide a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for pupils and staff. If schools follow the guidance and maximise control measures, they can be confident they are managing risk effectively.

We would expect schools to ensure any changes required in light of national restrictions are in place as soon as practically possible, and by Monday 9 November at the latest.

Home tutoring and elective home educating

Home tutoring and out-of-school activities to support elective home education can continue to operate provided that they are primarily used by home educating parents as part of their arrangements for their child to receive a suitable full-time education.

Music, dance and drama

Music, dance and drama can be undertaken in school so long as safety precautions are undertaken. Advice is provided in the full opening guidance for schools.

Residential providers and boarding schools

Residential providers should support students to reduce travel between home and educational accommodation unless absolutely necessary. Where students normally travel between their boarding school and home during term time for the purpose of education, this is allowed.

Face coverings

In primary schools and education settings teaching year 6 and below, there is no change to the existing position. It is not mandatory for staff and visitors to wear face coverings. In situations where social distancing between adults in settings is not possible (for example when moving around in corridors and communal areas), settings have the discretion to recommend the use of face coverings for adults on site, for both staff and visitors.

In schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. This was already the case for pupils in year 7 and above, and staff and visitors for those schools that were in areas where local alert level 'high' and 'very high'.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings and we expect adults and pupils to be sensitive to those needs.

Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in year 7 and above when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college.

Clinically extremely vulnerable children and staff

Children

More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19), even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Parents should be advised to speak to their child's GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend education whilst the national restrictions are in place. Schools will need to make appropriate arrangements to enable them to continue their education at home.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.

Parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter shortly confirming this advice.

Staff

Those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions.

All other staff should continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

Clinically vulnerable staff and children

Staff and children who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically extremely vulnerable, may continue to attend school in line with current guidance.

Transport

The transport guidance sets out a framework for local authorities and schools to follow when arranging transport to and from schools from the autumn term. We are clear that there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach where the system of controls describes everyscenario,but itprovides a set of principlesto support informed local decision making and risk assessment.

Children and young people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport. Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in year 7 and above when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college. This does not apply to those who are exempt.

Travel in or out of local areas should be avoided, and parents, carers and staff should look to reduce the number of journeys they make - but travelling to deliver and access education is still permitted.

Staff, children and their parents and carers are encouraged to walk or cycle when travelling to and from school where this is possible, and to plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. This will allow social distancing to be practised.

Exams

The Prime Minister and Education Secretary have been clear that exams will go ahead next summer, as they are the fairest and most accurate way to measure a pupil's attainment. Pupils now have more time to prepare for their exams next year, as most AS, A levels and GCSEs will be held 3 weeks later to help address the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Sport and physical education

It is important that children continue to remain fit and active and, wherever possible, have the 60 active minutes of daily physical activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officers.

Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls.

Sports whose national governing bodies have developed guidance under the principles of the government's guidance on team sport and been approved by the government are permitted. Schools must only provide team sports listed on the return to recreational team sport framework. Competition between different schools should not take place, in line with the wider restrictions on grassroots sport.

Pupils should be kept in consistent groups and sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups.

Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible), distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise. External facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities.

Schools are able to work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular activities where they are satisfied that it is safe to do so. Where schools are offering extra-curricular activities (that is, before and after school clubs) they should only do so where it is reasonably necessary to support parents to work, search for work, or undertake training or education, or where the provision is being used for the purposes of respite care.

Schools should consider carefully how such arrangements can operate within their wider protective measures.

Activities such as active miles, making break times and lessons active and encouraging active travel help to enable pupils to be physically active while encouraging physical distancing.

Children's social care, vulnerable and

disadvantaged children and young people

Children's services and social care provision will continue as they have been to protect and support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people for the duration of the national restrictions.

Local authorities are reminded of the guidance for children's social care that was issued at the start of the first national restriction. We continue to recommend that no one should have to leave care during this period if they do not feel confident to do so. Where young people do leave care during the national lockdown, it should be right for that young person and take account of their wishes and feelings. Settings they are moving into should be safe in relation to risk factors arising from coronavirus (COVID-19).

As set out in the guidance for full schools opening and FE autumn term guidance, schools and colleges should continue to take steps to ensure vulnerable children and young people who can't attend their school or college are able to access their remote education. Contact should be maintained to ensure they are doing so. Vulnerable children include those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, children with a social worker and children who are 'otherwise vulnerable'.

Further education and apprenticeships

Further education colleges will remain open to on site delivery for the duration of the national restrictions. Further education colleges should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in the actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak guidance.
Apprenticeship providers should continue to follow the guidance for providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Face coverings

In further education colleges, face coverings should be worn by adults and students when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

Face coverings should also be worn when travelling on public transport or dedicated transport to these settings.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings and we expect staff and students to be sensitive to those needs.

Exams

Exam resits that started on 2 November should continue and our exam support service will help colleges manage this process.

Public health guidance to support autumn exams has also been published. This guidance sets out arrangements that schools, colleges and other exam centres should implement when delivering exams in autumn 2020 to enable them to progress while reducing the transmission risk of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Prime Minister and Education Secretary have been clear that exams will go ahead next summer, as they are the fairest and most accurate way to measure a pupil's attainment. We therefore need to keep schools and colleges open so that children are able to keep

keep schools and colleges open so that children are able to keep progressing towards exams and the next stage of education or employment. Students now have more time to prepare for their exams next year, as most AS, A levels and GCSEs will be held 3 weeks later to help address the disruption caused by the pandemic. It is expected that for the majority of vocational and technical qualifications that are taken alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will look to align timetables with 2021 exams.

Online delivery

For 16 to 19 study programmes, providers should continue to seek to deliver the majority of education on site unless they have had written public health advice to move some groups to remote teaching, in which case they should inform their ESFA territorial team. If there are operational constraints which necessitate a greater proportion of online teaching, providers should discuss this with their ESFA territorial team directly or email FED.COVIDCENTRAL@education.gov.uk, ahead of any announcement.

Providers should preserve provision on site for learners who need it, including vulnerable learners, children of key workers and learners without access to devices/connectivity at home.

For adult education, we are asking providers to consider moving to online teaching where possible to do so while still achieving educational objectives, using existing flexibilities within the FE Operational guidance. Where education needs to continue on site to enable access to equipment, or where students cannot access remote delivery, this can continue in a Covid-secure way.

Residential providers

Residential providers should support students to reduce travel between home and educational accommodation unless absolutely necessary, and in particular residential students on adult programmes should remain in their educational accommodation if possible and not move between home and educational accommodation during term time, in line with the approach for universities. Where students normally travel between their FE education setting and home during term time for the purpose of education this is allowed.

Public facing facilities

Public facing facilities that are used for the purposes of training, for example hair salons, restaurants and gyms, should no longer be open to members of the general public from 5 November in line with the closure of these businesses in the wider community.

Apprenticeships and other training in the workplace

Apprenticeship delivery and assessment (including the assessment of functional skills qualifications (FSQs)) is extremely flexible and can continue to take place in person or online. Face-to-face training and assessment can continue to take place in the workplace (where it is open), in education and assessment settings, and in community settings where a venue is being used for training or assessment. It is up to training providers, employers, end point assessment organisations and FSQ assessment organisations to agree how apprenticeship training is delivered, and how assessments are undertaken. They should consider whether they want to take advantage of more than one delivery method to balance minimising any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience, in line with the providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak guidance.

For adult apprentices, employers, providers, end point assessment organisations and FSQ assessment organisations should review how training and assessments are taking place and identify opportunities to increase the proportion of online training and assessment where that is appropriate. Where in-person delivery is essential this can continue providing all relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance is complied with.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education have set out the existing agreed additional flexibilities to the delivery of end point assessment in their end point assessment guidance and supporting FAQ document. Their list of standards with temporary discretions or flexibilities can be found on their website.

The government is also supporting ongoing employment through the extension of the Coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS) to the end of November, which apprentices can take advantage of.

Sport and physical education

Sport and physical education as part of education and training can continue.

Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising distancing between consistent student groups and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene and using maximum fresh air ventilation through either opening doors and windows or ventilation systems.

Competition between different colleges should not take place, in line with the wider restrictions on grassroots sport.

Transport

Travel in or out of your local area should be avoided, and you should look to reduce the number of journeys you make but travelling to deliver and access education or childcare is still permitted.

Face covering must be worn on public transport. This does not apply to those who are exempt.

If staff and students need to travel, they are encouraged to walk or cycle where possible, and to plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. This will allow social distancing to be practiced whilst travelling.

Clinically extremely vulnerable young people and staff

Young people

The evidence shows there is a very low risk of becoming very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19), even for young people with existing health conditions. Evidence now shows that young people under 18 who were originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable should speak to their GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether they should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those young people whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend education whilst the national restrictions are in place. Further education colleges will need to make appropriate arrangements to enable them to continue their education at home.

Young people who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.

Adult learners

Those students who are over 18 who receive a letter confirming that they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend education whilst the national restrictions are in place. Colleges will need to make appropriate arrangements to enable them to continue their education at home.

Students who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.

Staff

Those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions.

All other staff should continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

Clinically vulnerable people

Staff and children who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically extremely vulnerable, may continue to attend education in line with current guidance.

Higher education

Universities have welcomed students back and we have published guidance advising universities on reopening to ensure they have safety measures in place to minimise the spread of the virus.

Universities and adult education settings should consider moving to increased levels of online learning where possible. Further guidance on the consideration of online and in person tuition is available.

Like everyone, if students live at university, they should remain in their current accommodation and must not move back and forward between their permanent home and student home during term time. Students should only return home at the end of term for Christmas. We will publish further guidance on the end of term shortly.

Clinically extremely vulnerable students and staff

Students

Students who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to study from home and not to go into their university or higher education setting. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past.

Students who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.

Staff

Those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions.

All other staff should continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

Clinically vulnerable people

Staff and students who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically extremely vulnerable, may continue to attend face-to-face education in line with current guidance where it is provided.

Published 4 November 2020
Last updated 5 November 2020 + show all updates

Print this page

Explore the topic

Education, training and skills

Education and childcare during coronavirus

Is this page useful?

Yes No There is something wrong with this page

Transparency and freedom of information releases

OGL All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated

© Crown copyright