Department for Education
Department for Education

Guidance

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

Updated 17 December 2020

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Find out how this may affect this section of guidance.

About this guidance

Providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, breakfast or after-school clubs, and other out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak need to take reasonable measures to manage the risks. These protective measures set out by government in this guidance.

We recognise the important role out-of-school settings play in providing children and young people with a place to learn, socialise, and have fun, in a safe environment outside their household and prioritising their wellbeing. We also recognise the important role they play in supporting parents who need childcare to work or attend education or training.

We are aware many providers have reopened and put safety measures in place. We have worked closely with the sector to develop this guidance on practical steps they can take to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their settings. We have also worked with the sector to ensure parents can safely access provision for children can continue to operate at all alert levels both now and in future.

Public Health England has also produced a guide to the legal duty of confidence that the availability for clinical purposes of personal data, including test results, may place on organisations. This guidance, 'Data protection: a toolkit for schools', explains that protective measures in schools may involve the processing of personal data, including test results.

For children aged 2 to 4 we encourage providers to determine whether attendance is beneficial to children's development, and for children aged 5 to 18 we also encourage providers to determine whether attendance is beneficial to children's education, development and wellbeing. We encourage providers to manage the risks to children and staff in their setting, and put in place the protective measures as outlined in this guidance.

Related guidance for parents and carers is available for parents and carers to support them to understand how they can reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) when their children attend out-of-school settings.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for organisations or individuals who provide community activities, holiday clubs, or breakfast and after-school clubs for children from Ofsted's registered early years or childcare register.

This includes:

- providers who fall within the government's definition of an out-of-school setting
- providers running childcare and early years provision for children in other the compulsory or voluntary childcare register
- providers who are not on the Ofsted register but provide childcare or provision for children before and after school

Registered early years providers caring for children under the age of 5 should follow the guidance for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Childminders who are registered with Ofsted should also refer to the National Foster Agency's guidance for maintaining foster children and providing care during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for additional risk assessment and safety measures.

What is an out-of-school setting?

Ofsted's childcare register is organised into 3 different parts: voluntary childcare, learning, and childcare, or activities for children (up to the age of 8) in England. Ofsted refer to these parts as 'aims'. Supervision, but are not:

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

Out-of-school settings generally provide supervised activities, training, instruction or care for children outside the school day, during school holidays, although some may also provide services during school hours to help meet the needs of those who are typically educated at home. Out-of-school settings may also provide services for children with additional needs, including providing a suitable environment for therapy, for example, music, tuition or learning centres, extra-curricular clubs, supplementary schools, or faith or community activities. Religious settings may be exempt from the care both, and holiday clubs.

Venue-specific guidance

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Find out how this may affect venues and facilities.

Out-of-school settings can occur in many kinds of venue, from a person's home to a church hall and from a school playing field to a sports centre, sports clubs, and places of worship.

Specific protective measures guidance has been released for different types of premises. If you run your club, tuition or activity out of one of the premises, you should follow the guidance for that premises, in addition to the guidance for this:

- exercise for classes or venues
- guidance for community venues, village halls and other multi-purpose community facilities
- guidance for the management of grassroots sport and recreational facilities
- guidance for sports and leisure facilities
- guidance for full contact martial arts
- guidance on maintaining a safe environment in other people's homes

Providers operating out of these premises should work with the relevant organisation to ensure they are following the relevant guidance and have put in place the relevant protective measures to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). See carrying out a risk assessment for more information.

Home education

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Find how this may affect home education.

Parents (including guardians and foster carers) who have chosen to home educate their own children should follow the guidance for parents and carers, either in out-of-school settings or in the homes of others who have chosen to home educate.

Where a child who is home educated takes part in an out-of-school setting, this should be in a group that is not mixed with other groups, and should be attended using the household or a single other household, in accordance with children attending school and children being home educated.

Home educated children may also participate in activities delivered at the home of another, either home educated or attending school. The activity will, as far as possible, follow the guidance and also the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools, colleges, nurseries and childcare settings to ensure the participant is educated safely. Parents should be satisfied that any social activities beyond those permitted under the government's general guidance on meeting socially are safe.

Carrying out a risk assessment

Venue-specific guidance, and other guidance, should take during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, will help providers to carry out a risk assessment. Before restarting your provision, we strongly recommend that all providers consult the guidance on the Health and Safety Executive on coronavirus (COVID-19), including:

- Managing risks and risk assessment at work
- Top 10 risk assessment
- Find out about and qualifications during the coronavirus outbreak

Where premises are shared between several organisations, you should assess risks related to building, occupancy and water safety. You should ensure that all organisations sharing premises have a clear understanding of who is responsible, when undertaking risk assessments, and how they will manage the premises. As part of your risk assessment, you should identify protective measures to put in place to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) including:

In most cases, risk assessment and preparation for reopening of out-of-school settings should be straightforward. Providers will be able to make the premises and activities safe, and put in place the protective measures, without any significant change to their usual operations. Some providers may need to make changes to their usual operations, for example, to ensure they can maintain a sufficient number of staff to be present in the setting, and outline the protective measures they will put in place and to establish who is responsible for implementing each protective measure.

You should place any significant findings of the risk assessment with your other health and safety records. If you have 5 or more employees, you are required to record your risk assessment. Your risk assessment should be reviewed to reflect the health and safety risks in your setting, and outline the protective measures you have put in place to manage those risks. Where there is a change to your provision, you should review your risk assessment and update the protective measures that you are operating your provision out of, for example, you should outline these in them or direct them to the relevant policy.

Considering group sizes

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

- the current government guidance on social distancing
- the ability to maintain sufficient distance to implement social distancing and protective measures
- the age of the children in attendance
- the ability to implement other protective measures, (static, classroom set-up, rather than an activity that requires movement)
- the size or layout of your premises

You should take into consideration within a setting, providers should aim to minimise the number of different people each child comes into contact with.

Where it is possible to do so, providers should keep children with parents, the schools or early years settings and children's attendance attends, as far as possible, in a group that is not mixed with other groups, and should be kept separate from other groups. In the case of children, you should keep a group together with their teacher, and in the case of children in early years settings that they attend and the specific groups and members of staff that they have been assigned to.

Dependent on the factors listed, you may need to have groups of less than 15 children, or you may need to have more than 15 children in a group, for example, in a sports setting or outdoor activity, providing social distancing.

Providers that are operating in areas where local COVID-secure teams are in place can continue to use the Ofsted registration process to open a new group in the school day. If this is not practicable then, as far as possible, small, temporary groups of up to 15 children can be established without having to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of the virus.

Group sizes for children under 5

Early years settings are not required to keep children in small, consistent groups. Providers of early years provision should consider how they can operate in other protective ways, and settings typically include a ratio, such as 1 staff for the lowest ratio, to the group of children. Settings should still consider the number of children they can safely care for, and the ratio of staff to children, and if you should need to be operating with a smaller number of children than your usual capacity, to ensure you can maintain social distancing.

Providers caring for children both under the age of 5 and ages 5 and over separately may have to have more than one group of children aged under 5 in a childcare provision, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to ensure children can maintain social distancing. Providers should also ensure children from ages 5 and over are not mixed with children under 5 years old, to ensure children mixed age groups together they will need to, so far as possible, keep all children in the same group as much as possible, and ensure that children of least one staff member or with more staff members to meet relevant ratio requirements.

Educational visits and trips

The guidance for full opening schools, sets out the requirement's position in relation to educational visits and trips. This guidance also sets out the position on other overnight or residential trips.

The government will keep this position under review and continue to be guided by the best scientific and medical advice, and will update this guidance if it takes at the right time.

The government also advises against any overseas trips for children under 18 at this time, including educational trips.

Providers can, however, offer non-essential domestic educational visits or trips. You should take into account the government's position on overseas children within their consideration process, relevant COVID-secure travel guidance, and the Foreign Travel Advice when making your decision. Providers should consult the Foreign Travel Advice and the guidance for advice on undertaking risk assessments to ensure educational visits can be made safely. Providers should also consider the risk to participants and what control measures are in place, and the risk of transmission and of virus arising in visiting tourist and outdoor venues.

However, providers should also consider whether additional restrictions apply in the area they are visiting, such as those in place for local lockdowns, and whether or groups of children and overseas groups do not become commingled.

Outdoor exercises, water sports and other physical activities are important (PPE).

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

Number 5 must be properly considered and providers must put in place measures that can be proportionate circumstances.

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

Response to any infection

- Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the staff or children and young people
- Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team (HPT) advice

Number 7 is Public Health England's current advice for schools.

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

If this is not practicable and of your own home, you should consider whether a specific, well-ventilated room could be designated for this.

Indoor provision

As the UK coronavirus is considerably lower outdoors, providers who provide indoor activities should consider whether they can do so in a safe way outside.

If you operate your setting in a shared space, you should have regard to relevant guidance for operators of shared spaces, such as the guidance for the hospitality sector, the guidance for places of worship, and the guidance for gyms, or, if it is the responsibility of the owner of the shared space, to ensure that they are implementing the protective measures as set out in this guidance.

However, you should also discuss infection protection and control measures with the owner of the shared space, and ensure that you and the other users of the shared space, have put in place the protective measures in this guidance, and that you have a clear understanding of who is responsible for groups cross 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 duties, and should ensure that they do so in a way that their premises are safe for people to use and to operate their.

Providers of music, dance and drama or sports provision

Particular care should be taken to observe social distancing in the case of sports using measures and other activities, such as dance, where social distancing may not be feasible. In addition to referring to guidance for sports and leisure facilities, providers should also consider the guidance for exercise for classes or venues, the guidance for Sport England, and advice from organisations such as the Association for Physical Education and the Dance Teachers' Guild.

Additional special precautions should be taken when using musical instruments, wind and brass given concerns that these were potentially higher risk activities. Guidance for the performing arts sector, including the Musicians' Union, Equity, the Incorporated Society of Musicians, and the Dance Teachers' Guild, set out to develop the scientific evidence on these activities, which has allowed to reconsider appropriate risks.

Children and young people can now engage in singing, wind and brass in the context of their education, extra-curricular activities, and other activities, provided in the organisation, in accordance with the following mitigations, the cumulative risks of aerosol transmission. Although singing and playing wind instruments can be a high risk activity, the current scientific and medical studies have indicated that the risk of transmission is lower than it had in particular contexts. As such with appropriate safety considerations, singing and playing wind instruments can resume.

Wind and brass instruments can be played in groups of up to 15 in a school context, out-of-school settings providers should look to mitigate the potential risks, such as by ensuring the instruments are not shared, and by ensuring that:

- they are limiting the number of children singing or playing together as far as possible and ensuring the children remain in their groups of no more than 15, with the same children each time whenever possible and at least one hour apart
- children are provided with a clear view of the conductor, such as through a single bubble, see advice provided by the sector for more information
- they are keeping the number of children singing or playing together as far as possible and ensuring the children remain in their groups of no more than 15, with the same children each time whenever possible and at least one hour apart
- children are provided with a clear view of the conductor, such as through a single bubble, see advice provided by the sector for more information
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Managing toilet usage

Different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered if it is practicable and if it is safe to do so. Toilet blocks should be cleaned regularly, consider how you can minimise the number of people using the toilet at any one time. You should promote good hand hygiene and encourage all children to wash their hands after using the toilet. Hand sanitiser should be made available for staff.

As with all frequently used surfaces, toilets should be cleaned thoroughly using standard products such as detergent and bleach. A risk assessment of cleaning required will depend on usage but it is advised to be more frequently than daily and should include door handles, handrails, taps, flush buttons, toilet seats, toilet bowls and pan surfaces. Cleaning should be done once a day, and in particular between use by different classes and groups.

See COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance for advice on cleaning, including the use of disinfectants, and the safe disposal of any waste from a new coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as advice for cleaning facilities after the coronavirus (COVID-19) has been suspected of having, or confirmed to have, coronavirus (COVID-19).

Reviewing staff availability

As part of your risk assessment, you should consider appropriate staff cover and how this may be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in your school or setting, and ensure that a clear chain of command is in place and understood by all staff.

Before deciding on whether to open your setting, you should consult your staff members to ensure that they are available to work.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the new national restrictions affect this section of guidance.

Since the introduction of shielding, many more measures have been introduced in communities, including tiers and local lockdowns, the vaccination programme, and the widespread use of face coverings, all of which have reduced the need for extreme shielding measures.

The government also has better data on new infections and how individual people are affected by COVID-19 than it did when shielding was first introduced in local areas. As such, Public Health England has updated its guidance and advice on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 to reflect the changes to the epidemiological picture and the protections now in place.

In most cases, staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable can still attend your school or setting, and should do so if they are able to work from home. Staff who are the most COVID-19 clinically vulnerable, who were previously advised to shield, are shielding measures may be put in place for the clinically extremely vulnerable. This will be based on local COVID-19 alert levels and will be based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable staff can return to work. While it is advisable they should follow the measures in this document to minimise the risks of transmission.

As for all staff, this includes measures to manage social contact and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social distancing in line with the latest national restrictions.

When working out staff roles you should consider how many staff you have available and how they can be deployed.

- Do you have at least one member of staff who is suitable and willing to work in your setting?
- Do you need to make your person with responsibility for Coronavirus (COVID-19) health and safety available to work in your setting? You may want to consider a deputy DSL to cover in the event of the DSL being unwell or unavailable to attend school.
- Do you have a suitable and sufficient number of teachers in your setting?

The answer to any of these questions is no, then you should find a solution to this before going further. If you are seeking a suitable person to temporarily fill a role in your setting, you should consider if there are any suitable employees already in your setting who could be redeployed to undertake duties allowing them to take that post, such as taking an reference and the appropriate DBS check. Further information on DBS checks and safer recruitment can be found in the Safeguarding and child protection in education guidance document.

In terms of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, a person is considered to be working in a school or college during the school term, or working for or for children. If an individual is barred by the DBS but is engaging in this activity, it is a criminal offence. Further information on DBS checks and safer recruitment can be found in the Safeguarding and child protection in education guidance document.

An unqualified person undertaking these activities on a regular basis would also be eligible for a barred list check, if they are undertaking the activities of this process. To understand which kind of check is right for your staff, DfE guidance on DBS checks for schools and colleges in England provides a helpful signpost for a basic, standard and enhanced DBS check.

You should ensure that new staff members and volunteers understand and implement the protocols you have put in place following the guidance and advice associated to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Such protocols should be shared with staff members, volunteers and visitors.

Who can attend your out-of-school setting

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the new national restrictions affect this section of guidance.

Children of all ages may attend out-of-school settings.

Out-of-school settings 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 many people are coming into your setting, for example, such as the tendency for older children to mix with other community groups outside your setting or school, and how this can be managed safely.

Attending out-of-school settings is not mandatory, as it is based on the wishes of children and young people. However, it is crucial that we ensure we are encouraging our children to attend school, and that we are clear with children and parents who are being encouraged to visit the number of settings their children attend for or as possible, and ideally to ensure their children attend the same setting each day. Children should not be encouraged to attend more than one setting, and it is best to restrict the number of children who are being encouraged to attend as to ensure that children who attend your setting are assigned to a bubble. Children who are in a bubble should be encouraged to attend the same setting when attending out-of-school settings. Children attending groups from different schools can attend the same out-of-school setting, but providers should be aware that children from different bubbles should not mix. Providers should ensure they are, as far as practicable, keeping children in their bubbles and facilities that they are in throughout the school day.

You should also ensure that children and young people who live outside the local area ideally, children who attend your setting should live within walking or cycling distance.

Local COVID alert levels

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the new national restrictions affect this section of guidance.

On 12 October the government introduced a system of local COVID alert levels. If you live, work or volunteer in a local area that is in tier 2 'high' or tier3 'very high' alert, there are additional restrictions. Read the guidance COVID alert levels: what it means for you for more information on what the local COVID alert levels are.

Currently, supervised activities, training and education for children can continue to operate in all areas, including those in tier 3 'very high' alert. Providers should continue to follow the guidance they have been provided in conjunction with local authorities to drive down the transmission of the virus. Providers should also be aware of the local COVID-19 outbreak management plans, because decisions may be made by local authorities, particularly in local hotspots, to pick authorities, children and support groups.

Face coverings

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the new national restrictions affect this section of guidance.

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in children outside of classrooms and out-of-school settings activities. This evidence will be kept under review. Pupils are not expected to bring face coverings to school or other settings, and should not be expected to wear them in classrooms or other teaching areas. Face coverings may be worn by adults and children in communal areas if they choose to do so, for example, in corridors and shared areas. Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (except children under the age of 11). Face coverings may be worn in other circumstances or when in shops or supermarkets.

Outside of a traditional classroom, out-of-school settings should consider recommending that a pupil or student who is travelling to a teaching place in an area where the local lockdown is in place, or which is taking place in an area where the local lockdown is in place, should wear a face covering in accordance with the COVID-19 vaccination programme (COVID-19 vaccination programme).

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The majority of staff in out-of-school settings 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 and their carers where close contact is needed, where the use of PPE due to that interaction care needs should continue to know and be aware of the risks
- PPE should be worn if distance (2 metres) cannot be maintained from any person who is coughing or sneezing or otherwise unwell with COVID-19 symptoms.

The Department for Education has published guidance on Safe Working in Education, Childcare and Children's social care providers. Public Health England has published guidance on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Infection Control. Providers should refer to these documents in order to understand when PPE should be used.

Providers should ensure that their staff are trained in how to obtain the very limited amounts of PPE required. Providers may also need to consider how to dispose of PPE safely, in accordance with the guidance.

Medical masks, filter face masks and other PPE are not required in the vast majority of cases. Providers should be aware that the use of medical masks and other PPE, should dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a bag to be taken home to be washed. Staff should follow the Public Health England guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings and follow the guidance cleaning non-healthcare settings outside a household or bubble, including cleaning after a suspected case of coronavirus (COVID-19) or a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting.

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

Where a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19) they should be sent home to their place to the setting if they remain unwell, they should return to that setting until they are recovered.

Where a child, young person or staff member develops a fever, a dry cough or a loss of taste or smell they should be sent home to contact with to offer advice and to arrange a test for COVID-19. Where the child, young person or staff member is able to attend school, they should be asked to self-isolate. The rest of the household, or household bubble, should be asked to self-isolate.

Symptoms for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a new continuous cough
- high temperature
- loss of or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

they should be sent home to contact with to offer advice. The COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Children and young people should not be sent home with symptoms unless they are unwell.

- more, if possible, to a well-ventilated room where they can be isolated (where it cannot be ventilated, they should be moved to a room with adequate adult supervision)
- ideally, they should be at least 2 metres away from other people, if it is not possible to isolate from the other people in the setting
- use a separate bathroom if possible. this should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the cleaning non-healthcare settings guidance before other people use it. Further information on cleaning is in the guidance.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (for example, if they need to care for a child with complex needs).

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not call the GP practice, urgent care centre or hospital.

Staff should be aware that children may be upset or distressed to be sent home to their place of the setting and separated from their parents or carers. They should be tended to or the child supervised by tests positive (see 'What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting'). They should wear their usual PPE if they are required to care for a child unwell with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area of the setting with normal products should be undertaken once the child has left the setting. Staff should be aware of causing the child further upset. See the COVID-19: cleaning non-healthcare settings guidance.

Use of the NHS COVID-19 app in out-of-school settings

Following the launch of the NHS COVID-19 app in England, all out-of-school settings and wraparound providers may find it helpful to refer to the guidance on the app and how it can support their settings. Providers may find it helpful to include information on the app as part of their wider communications and activities for children.

The app is intended to be used in conjunction with the Test and Trace in England. This will ensure that if someone who has been in close contact with someone who is ill, they can be quickly notified and advised to self-isolate. The app will also ensure that people who have been exposed to infection are that they can take action.

The app is available to download for anyone aged 16 and over if they choose to do so. Staff members who are 16 and over may choose to do so.

You should understand how the app relates to your setting's process for contacting people who are ill with COVID-19 symptoms. Ensure that your setting's aware of symptoms and, as a result, self-isolate and book a test. Refer to the guidance on the app and how it can support your setting.

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Where a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19) they should be sent home to their place to the setting if they remain unwell, they should return to that setting until they are recovered.

Where a child, young person or staff member develops a fever, a dry cough or a loss of taste or smell they should be sent home to contact with to offer advice and to arrange a test for COVID-19. Where the child, young person or staff member is able to attend school, they should be asked to self-isolate. The rest of the household, or household bubble, should be asked to self-isolate.

Symptoms for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a new continuous cough
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they should be sent home to contact with to offer advice. The COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Children and young people should not be sent home with symptoms unless they are unwell.

- more, if possible, to a well-ventilated room where they can be isolated (where it cannot be ventilated, they should be moved to a room with adequate adult supervision)
- ideally, they should be at least 2 metres away from other people, if it is not possible to isolate from the other people in the setting
- use a separate bathroom if possible. this should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the cleaning non-healthcare settings guidance before other people use it. Further information on cleaning is in the guidance.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (for example, if they need to care for a child with complex needs).

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not call the GP practice, urgent care centre or hospital.

Staff should be aware that children may be upset or distressed to be sent home to their place of the setting and separated from their parents or carers. They should be tended or the child supervised by tests positive (see 'What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting'). They should wear their usual PPE if they are required to care for a child unwell with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area of the setting with normal products should be undertaken once the child has left the setting. Staff should be aware of causing the child further upset. See the COVID-19: cleaning non-healthcare settings guidance.

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 health or wellbeing difficulties for children and young people in the short or medium or long term. Due to the current circumstances, vulnerable children and young people may be at greater risk than usual. Staff working in these professional networks may also be at greater risk of harm and find it hard to access. Therefore, it is important that they and your staff are aware of the additional risks that children may face, and that you do all you can to keep children safe and to support them.

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

- unusual injuries, including bruises, burns, fractures, bite marks or signs of strangulation
- unexplained injuries or injuries given conflicting explanations by carers
- communicating aggressively or using sexual language
- being withdrawn, or showing signs of depression, particularly around school attendance

If safeguarding issues come to light, they should be addressed using your safeguard and child protection policy, and the guidance.

If you have one or more vulnerable children or young people, then it is important to ask about your child protection procedures to ensure that all children are kept safe and that the wellbeing of children is at the heart of your plans. Ensure that your child protection policy is up to date and that it reflects the current situation.

These should include details of your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL if you have one, and how they will be contacted, as well as contact details for local safeguarding services such as local authority children's services, the Police and the local multi-agency safeguarding hub.

In addition, you may want to include details of Barnardo's recently launched helpline for children and young people who are being abused or neglected and psychologists in England have developed a free online and telephone adverse childhood experiences (ACE) support to those who are not being abused but are experiencing adversity.

You should review and update your child protection policy and consider adding additional training on child protection and safeguarding issues before reopening your setting.

It will be especially important for providers to ensure that:

- the lead person responsible for child protection is clearly identified
- if anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they should act immediately
- appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that children who are vulnerable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or volunteer in your setting
- the lead person responsible for child protection and/or children's services is a volunteer who has been checked for left 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 mental health.

- individual children and young people who have found the long period of home learning
- those who have developed anxieties related to the virus

Since children may have experienced bereavement in their immediate family or wider circle of friends or family or has increased or new caring responsibilities.

As part of your provision, you may want to consider:

- opportunities for children to talk about their experiences of the past few months
- opportunities for conversations with trusted adults where they may feel comfortable
- some lessons or relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or staying safe

Equality

As a provider of services to children and young people, it is important that you meet your duties under equalities, service and support delivery and employing groups.

This may require adjustments to your working practices and approaches to ensure that everyone feels welcome. Your equalities and diversity and inclusion policy should be considered at all times and especially when making decisions about how to implement the guidance, and when making decisions about your arrangements.

When applying this guidance, organisations should be mindful of the particular circumstances of their staff, children and young people. Some groups may be more affected than others by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the

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

Here are some 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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