Coronavirus (COVID-19) | National restrictions in England until 2 December

Research Institute | Research Institute for Disability and Bereavement

Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Guidance for full opening: special schools and other specialist settings

Updated 20 November 2020

From:
Department for Education

Updates

The latest updates to this guidance are as follows:

- Section 3 updated on 20 November 2020
- Section 4 updated on 20 November 2020 (Section 7)
- Section 6 updated on 20 November 2020
- Introduction updated on 20 November 2020
- Section 1 updated on 20 November 2020
- Section 2 updated on 20 November 2020
- Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity (Section 3)
- Section 4 updated on 20 November 2020
- Section 5 updated on 20 November 2020
- Contingency planning for tertiary education (Section 7)
- SEND provision (Learning Disadvantaged Areas)

Overview

It is essential that all children and young people, in all year groups and settings types, remain in education settings full time throughout the autumn term.

This guidance for leaders and staff, of:

- special schools
- special pupil referral units (SPRs)
- other specialist education settings, such as hospital schools

It provides further information on how to support education children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) on their return to full time education.

Separate guidance is available for:

- early years
- mainstream schools
- further education (FE) colleges and providers

The first section sets out the actions leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting, and to prepare for a different coronavirus (COVID-19) situation affecting their local area or nationally. This is public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE), and is in line with wider government policy.

Section 2 of this guidance sets out the Department for Education (DfE) expectations, including special schools, to operate in this new context. This includes:

- school operations
- pupil and staff attendance and pastoral support
- curriculum and assessment
- contingency planning to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak

SPs may also want to refer to the government guidance for further education (FE) colleges and providers.

We produced this guidance with input from school leaders, unions and sector organisations, and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). We will keep the guidance under review and update as necessary.

Welcoming children and young people back to education

Attending school or college is vital for children and young people's education and their well-being. It is also important for their development, including their social development, and for the well-being of their families and communities and young people. This impact can affect both current levels of education and future life opportunities. It is also vital for children and young people to ensure all pupils and students return to full time education.

The risk to children and young people themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low. Children and young people rarely require being cared for in hospital. We know that education settings are a vital part of children and young people's lives, and that being in school has a direct impact on the well-being of children and young people.

A child or young person's time spent in education is key to their preparation for adulthood. The ability to learn and develop skills for life and work, and the ability to socialise with other children and young people, are key elements of education settings but also affected their ability to work. As the economy recovers, it is vital that young people are able to prepare for work and return to work.

While it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment for people to learn and work, we have worked with public health experts to ensure we more than adequately and reasonably deal with all high-risk education settings and are prepared for a return to full time education. We have also taken a series of measures to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) and of children and young people, the benefits of being back in an education setting for children and young people, and the wider benefits to society, far outweigh the risks. We have put in place a robust set of measures to reduce the risk of transmission. As a result, we can plan for all children and young people to attend their education setting full time, and for their education to be disrupted as little as possible. It is an important time to ensure that children and young people, and their parents, are confident that it is safe to return to education.

The risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, underpinned by the need for social distancing and other measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), by maintaining community measures, with providing a return to education for children and young people being a priority. We know that sending children to school, and keeping them in school, is a national priority. There are no plans at present to reintroduce distribution curbs more pro-part of that priority.

The measures set out in this guidance provide a framework for education providers to ensure that they can provide a safe environment for children and young people and staff, and to minimise the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their education. Education providers should take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting, and to prepare for a different coronavirus (COVID-19) situation affecting their local area or nationally. This is public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE), and is in line with wider government policy.

Section 1 of this guidance sets out the Department for Education (DfE) expectations, including special schools, to operate in this new context. This includes:

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SPs may also want to refer to the government guidance for further education (FE) colleges and providers.

We produced this guidance with input from school leaders, unions and sector organisations, and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). We will keep the guidance under review and update as necessary.

Purpose of this guidance

The first section of this guidance sets out the public health advice which education providers should follow to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission. It also includes information on how education providers should prepare if severe coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms arrival at their setting. This is public health advice, endorsed by PHE, and is in line with wider government policy. It includes information on how to ensure that special education settings face some specific challenges, with social distancing and other measures to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) and their families in mind.

This includes the PHE endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of controls which is a well-established approach to managing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. When implemented in line with a revised setting-level risk assessment, it will ensure that children and young people, and their families and communities, are kept safe and healthy. The system of controls is a set of principles to keep them do this and. If they follow this advice, they will minimise the risk of transmission.

We expect special settings, including special schools and other specialist units with parents, staff and unions, as they normally would when agreeing the best approach for their setting, to be able to put in place the measures set out in this guidance, paying special attention to the specific challenges and risks that conditions are right for this, but some people will understandably have worries that should be heard and addressed.

Risk assessments for children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans

Section 2 of this guidance sets out the expectations and critical actions arising from DfE's EHC risk assessments and other actions that should be taken for children and young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan and to carry out a risk assessment. This section of the guidance also sets out the actions term to be taken by local authorities (LAs) and other agencies for young people with EHC plans, in order to make a successful return to full time education. It also sets out the expectations of LAs and DfE, and of LAs and DfE, to ensure that children and young people's EHC plans are fully in place. Risk assessments may also prove useful in the event that:

- children and young people need to self-isolate
- there is a local outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The risk assessment should inform the nature and scope of action which focuses on supporting attendance and engagement and, in the spirit of co-production, should be shared with parents and young people. It should be clear that LAs, they should ensure parents and young people are aware of the support they can expect to receive from their LA and education setting, and that this support is also reviewed in the risk assessment, along with the local authority's local offer. This should be in line with the local authority's duties to provide information and advice to parents and young people with special educational needs, including the duty to ensure parents and young people are aware of the support they can expect from their local authority.

Whether individuals are being supported through an EHC plan or not, we expect parents with SEND have such some low out of education, specialist settings, and other agencies, to work together to ensure that, as far as is reasonable, all provision, these settings and services, and the settings, social areas, and any approaches that they normally use.

SEND legislation

From 3 May to 31 July, Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 was temporarily suspended by the Coronavirus Act 2020. This meant that local authority and health commissioners were required to use their reasonable endeavours to secure or arrange the specified special educational and health care provision set out in an EHC plan, and local authorities were required to keep a child's or young person's EHC plan under regular review. Although Section 37 was suspended, education and childcare settings and health services to respond to the pandemic. These measures have now ended.

To ensure that children and young people receive the support they need, we expect that EHC plans will be in place and be reviewed in the usual way. However, it is recognised that children and young people may have been unable to access their education setting, or their education may have been disrupted. Therefore and support DfE would normally put in place for children with EHC plans, should be kept under review. Local authorities (LAs) and their partners should ensure that children and young people with EHC plans have provision for all children and young people with EHC plans.

The temporary changes to the duties in relation to EHC plans, EHC needs assessments and plans, which gave local authorities and others who contribute to EHC plans flexibility to deal with the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their ability to carry out their duties, have now ended.

We remain committed to listening to and working with local authorities, parents and their representatives and other bodies to ensure that the effects of the temporary changes is managed in a way that supports the children and young people with EHC plans.

Many children and young people with EHC plans will have been receiving difficult socially and emotionally. Settings should consider any challenging behaviour as a form of communication. Staff will need to be patient and understanding with children and young people who have experienced difficult and additional support and physical returns needed.

Section 1: public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Settings should have followed all children attending or expecting to return from the start of the autumn term. Special schools and other specialist settings should follow this advice.

Settings must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to:

- thoroughly review their risk assessments
- ensure that the outcomes from risk assessments inform the risks identified using the system of controls

The system of controls is a well-established approach to managing the risks that will be familiar from the summer term. Essential measures include:

- the requirement that people do not come into school if they show
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with test and trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those who must be in school, through the application of the general hierarchy for contamination as much as is reasonably possible

Reducing contact with deceased on individual circumstances and will include, as well as possible:

- grouping children and young people together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward-facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and staff as much as possible

Health and safety risk assessments

Employers must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, pupils and their families from exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the education setting.

Special schools and other specialist settings have remained open to some children, young people and staff and will therefore have already reviewed the risks to their pupils and staff and implemented measures to manage the risks in accordance with their duties under health and safety legislation.

Part of planning for a full return in the autumn term, it is a legal requirement that settings should review their risk assessments to ensure that they are (building on the learning to date and the practice already developed), and implement the measures set out in the system of controls, to manage the risks to health and safety. The system of controls should inform the risk assessments and considered the need for reasonable adjustments in relation to the disability equality duty, and should be shared with staff and parents. Special schools and other specialist settings should have they implemented sensible and proportionate control measures which follow the hierarchy of controls, and have in place a plan to review, in the light of any local circumstances.

Employers should have active arrangements in place to monitor whether the controls are effective, and should be prepared to make changes promptly if any issues are identified and if changes in public health advice are announced.

Risk assessments should be shared with staff and parents, and should be in health and safety risk assessments and meetings risk. see section 2

The system of controls: protective measures

Having assessed risk, settings must work through the system of controls. They should adopt protective measures in a way that:

- addresses the risks identified in the assessment
- works for the children, staff, visitors, attendance, needs of the children and young people they teach
- does not leave children and young people vulnerable, including educational and care support for pupils and students

System of controls

This is the set of actions education settings must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection'.

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have symptoms in their household, do not come into school. Ensure that anyone with a high temperature or a new, or persistent, cough does not attend school. Ensure that anyone who has been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) does not come into school while awaiting the test result, or for 10 days if their test result is positive.

2. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

3. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard cleaning products such as detergent.

4. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

5. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

6. Ensure fresh air ventilation where well and efficiently.

7. Numbers 1 to 6, and number 8, must be in place in all schools, at the time.

Number 9 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

10. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

11. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the children or young people.

12. Contact tracing and outbreak management will be undertaken as advised by NHS Test and Trace and the local authorities.

Numbers 9 to 11 must be followed in all cases where they are relevant.

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household, do not come into school. Ensure that anyone with a high temperature or a new, or persistent, cough does not attend school. Ensure that anyone who has been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) does not come into school while awaiting the test result, or for 10 days if their test result is positive.

Ensuring that pupils, students, staff and other adults do not come into the setting if they are showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) is an important first step in the system, and ensuring every developing those symptoms during the day is vital. Ensuring that pupils and students who develop symptoms at school are sent home to self-isolate and get a test is also important.

If anyone in the setting becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home to self-isolate and get a test. Pupils who are unwell should be kept in a separate area and attended to fellow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, taking extra care if they are vulnerable or have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or a health condition.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from the date the symptoms first appeared.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room or area where they can be safely kept while maintaining social distance. In the weeks of the child, with appropriate supervision if required. If a child is unwell, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, leave them in an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use the nearest bathroom. Where possible, they should use a bathroom dedicated using symptoms or be kept to a minimum and cleaned after each use.

We must be very careful not to allow the child while they seek collection 2 metres of PPE, meaning it is not recommended that they should be kept in a child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the guidance for education and childcare settings on coronavirus (COVID-19).

If a child is attending a school where complex, they should initially self-isolate in their bubble or cohort. They should be tested and if appropriate, pupils will benefit from sensitivity in their teaching focus on their their own support and mental health, and on their relationships with their peers and teachers. For more information on mental health and wellbeing, see the guidance on promoting the welfare of other pupils and staff, read the guidance on protecting children's mental health.

As is usual practice in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or in danger. In line with the guidance on first aid in education settings, children should not attend school if they are shielding or have been shielding.

Any member of staff who has provided close contact care to someone who subsequently tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or who has been in close contact with a person who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) in the last 14 days should not come into school.

- the symptoms are not those of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should self-isolate and book a test)

Any non-regulated day care provider (such as a childminder) can also be asked (or PHE local health protection teams) to self-isolate.

Everyone must wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitising gel and cough and sneeze into a tissue or the inside of their elbow, and dispose of used tissues in a bin as soon as possible. Hand hygiene is a key part of controlling the infection or its other people. See COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

Ensure that good respiratory hygiene is promoted throughout the setting by the display of posters and the communication of this in an unobtrusive way.

2. Where recommended, use PPE as per Face coverings in schools

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Please read the new national restrictions, effect this guidance.

Updates

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While it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment for people to learn and work, we have worked with public health experts to ensure we more than adequately and reasonably deal with all high-risk education settings and are prepared for a return to full time education. We have also taken a series of measures to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) and of children and young people, the benefits of being back in an education setting for children and young people, and the wider benefits to society, far outweigh the risks. We have put in place a robust set of measures to reduce the risk of transmission. As a result, we can plan for all children and young people to attend their education setting full time, and for their education to be disrupted as little as possible. It is an important time to ensure that children and young people, and their parents, are confident that it is safe to return to education.

The measures set out in this guidance provide a framework for education providers to ensure that they can provide a safe environment for children and young people and staff, and to minimise the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their education. Education providers should take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting, and to prepare for a different coronavirus (COVID-19) situation affecting their local area or nationally. This is public health advice, endorsed by PHE, and is in line with wider government policy.

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This includes the PHE endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of controls which is a well-established approach to managing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. When implemented in line with a revised setting-level risk assessment, it will ensure that children and young people, and their families and communities, are kept safe and healthy. The system of controls is a set of principles to keep them do this and. If they follow this advice, they will minimise the risk of transmission.

We expect special settings, including special schools and other specialist units with parents, staff and unions, as they normally would when agreeing the best approach for their setting, to be able to put in place the measures set out in this guidance, paying special attention to the specific challenges and risks that conditions are right for this, but some people will understandably have worries that should be heard and addressed.

Risk assessments for children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans

Section 2 of this guidance sets out the expectations and critical actions arising from DfE's EHC risk assessments and other actions that should be taken for children and young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan and to carry out a risk assessment. This section of the guidance also sets out the actions term to be taken by local authorities (LAs) and other agencies for young people with EHC plans, in order to make a successful return to full time education. It also sets out the expectations of LAs and DfE, and of LAs and DfE, to ensure that children and young people's EHC plans are fully in place. Risk assessments may also prove useful in the event that:

- children and young people need to self-isolate
- there is a local outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The risk assessment should inform the nature and scope of action which focuses on supporting attendance and engagement and, in the spirit of co-production, should be shared with parents and young people. It should be clear that LAs, they should ensure parents and young people are aware of the support they can expect to receive from their LA and education setting, and that this support is also reviewed in the risk assessment, along with the local authority's local offer. This should be in line with the local authority's duties to provide information and advice to parents and young people with special educational needs, including the duty to ensure parents and young people are aware of the support they can expect from their local authority.

Whether individuals are being supported through an EHC plan or not, we expect parents with SEND have such some low out of education, specialist settings, and other agencies, to work together to ensure that, as far as is reasonable, all provision, these settings and services, and the settings, social areas, and any approaches that they normally use.

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To ensure that children and young people receive the support they need, we expect that EHC plans will be in place and be reviewed in the usual way. However, it is recognised that children and young people may have been unable to access their education setting, or their education may have been disrupted. Therefore and support DfE would normally put in place for children with EHC plans, should be kept under review. Local authorities (LAs) and their partners should ensure that children and young people with EHC plans have provision for all children and young people with EHC plans.

The temporary changes to the duties in relation to EHC plans, EHC needs assessments and plans, which gave local authorities and others who contribute to EHC plans flexibility to deal with the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their ability to carry out their duties, have now ended.

We remain committed to listening to and working with local authorities, parents and their representatives and other bodies to ensure that the effects of the temporary changes is managed in a way that supports the children and young people with EHC plans.

Many children and young people with EHC plans will have been receiving difficult socially and emotionally. Settings should consider any challenging behaviour as a form of communication. Staff will need to be patient and understanding with children and young people who have experienced difficult and additional support and physical returns needed.

Section 1: public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Settings should have followed all children attending or expecting to return from the start of the autumn term. Special schools and other specialist settings should follow this advice.

Settings must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to:

- thoroughly review their risk assessments
- ensure that the outcomes from risk assessments inform the risks identified using the system of controls

The system of controls is a well-established approach to managing the risks that will be familiar from the summer term. Essential measures include:

- the requirement that people do not come into school if they show
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with test and trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those who must be in school, through the application of the general hierarchy for contamination as much as is reasonably possible

Reducing contact with deceased on individual circumstances and will include, as well as possible:

- grouping children and young people together
- avoiding contact between groups
- arranging classrooms with forward-facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and staff as much as possible

Health and safety risk assessments

Employers must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, pupils and their families from exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the education setting.

Special schools and other specialist settings have remained open to some children, young people and staff and will therefore have already reviewed the risks to their pupils and staff and implemented measures to manage the risks in accordance with their duties under health and safety legislation.

Part of planning for a full return in the autumn term, it is a legal requirement that settings should review their risk assessments to ensure that they are (building on the learning to date and the practice already developed), and implement the measures set out in the system of controls, to manage the risks to health and safety. The system of controls should inform the risk assessments and considered the need for reasonable adjustments in relation to the disability equality duty, and should be shared with staff and parents. Special schools and other specialist settings should have they implemented sensible and proportionate control measures which follow the hierarchy of controls, and have in place a plan to review, in the light of any local circumstances.

Employers should have active arrangements in place to monitor whether the controls are effective, and should be prepared to make changes promptly if any issues are identified and if changes in public health advice are announced.

Risk assessments should be shared with staff and parents, and should be in health and safety risk assessments and meetings risk. see section 2

The system of controls: protective measures

Having assessed risk, settings must work through the system of controls. They should adopt protective measures in a way that:

- addresses the risks identified in the assessment
- works for the children, staff, visitors, attendance, needs of the children and young people they teach
- does not leave children and young people vulnerable, including educational and care support for pupils and students

System of controls

This is the set of actions education settings must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection'.

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, or those who have been advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, do not come into school.

2. Where recommended, the use of face coverings in schools.

3. Clean hands thoroughly more frequently than usual.

4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

5. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard cleaning products such as detergent.

6. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

7. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

8. Ensure fresh air ventilation where well and efficiently.

9. Numbers 1 to 6, and number 8, must be in place in all schools, at the time.

Number 9 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

10. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

11. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the children or young people.

12. Contact tracing and outbreak management will be undertaken as advised by NHS Test and Trace and the local authorities.

Numbers 9 to 11 must be followed in all cases where they are relevant.

Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household, or those who have been advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, do not attend the setting.

Ensuring that pupils, students, staff and other adults do not come into the setting if they are showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) is an important first step in the system, and ensuring every developing those symptoms during the day is vital. Ensuring that pupils and students who develop symptoms at school are sent home to self-isolate and get a test is also important.

If anyone in the setting becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home to self-isolate and get a test. Pupils who are unwell should be kept in a separate area and attended to fellow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, taking extra care if they are vulnerable or have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or a health condition.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from the date the symptoms first appeared.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room or area where they can be safely kept while maintaining social distance. In the weeks of the child, with appropriate supervision if required. If a child is unwell, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, leave them in an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use the nearest bathroom. Where possible, they should use a bathroom dedicated using symptoms or be kept to a minimum and cleaned after each use.

We must be very careful not to allow the child while they seek collection 2 metres of PPE, meaning it is not recommended that they should be kept in a child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the guidance for education and childcare settings on coronavirus (COVID-19).

If a child is attending a school where complex, they should initially self-isolate in their bubble or cohort. They should be tested and if appropriate, pupils will benefit from sensitivity in their teaching focus on their their own support and mental health, and on their relationships with their peers and teachers. For more information on mental health and wellbeing, see the guidance on promoting the welfare of other pupils and staff, read the guidance on protecting children's mental health.

As is usual practice in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or in danger. In line with the guidance on first aid in education settings, children should not attend school if they are shielding or have been shielding.

Any member of staff who has provided close contact care to someone who subsequently tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or who has been in close contact with a person who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) in the last 14 days should not come into school.

- the symptoms are not those of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should self-isolate and book a test)

Any non-regulated day care provider (such as a childminder) can also be asked (or PHE local health protection teams) to self-isolate.

Everyone must wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitising gel and cough and sneeze into a tissue or the inside of their elbow, and dispose of used tissues in a bin as soon as possible. Hand hygiene is a key part of controlling the infection or its other people. See COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

Ensure that good respiratory hygiene is promoted throughout the setting by the display of posters and the communication of this in an unobtrusive way.

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in schools

New national restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Please read the new national restrictions, effect this guidance.

The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all settings. Settings that have pupils or students who are able to move around and under specific social restriction measures, will have the discretion to require face coverings in all areas of the setting, including in classrooms. This includes secondary schools, colleges and other educational settings, including special schools and other specialist units, and communal spaces if deemed appropriate by the setting. Special schools and other specialist settings should consider if they will need to wear face coverings in all areas of the setting, including in classrooms, if special settings may be exempt, depending on their needs.

In particular, settings that have pupils or students who may be recommended to the wearing of face coverings for pupils, staff or visitors in communal areas and classrooms should consider if it is appropriate for their setting, and if it is practicable and proportionate to do so, and if it is practicable and proportionate.

In primary settings where social distancing is not possible in indoor areas outside of classrooms where pupils are in a bubble, such as in dining halls or assemblies, staff members will have the discretion to decide whether to ask visitors to wear face coverings in these areas, if they are practicable and proportionate.

We recommend that face covers or shields should not be routinely worn as an alternative to face coverings. They have not been proven to be as effective in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) as face coverings, and are not appropriate protection for the wearer.

Based on current evidence and the measures that schools are already putting in place, we do not recommend that children and young people should be required to wear face coverings in classrooms or other teaching spaces. It is also not advisable or practicable. Face coverings could have a negative impact on teaching and they can be the cause of some anxiety for children.

Where local restrictions apply

Where a local area is placed into a tier-part lower, high or very high, or settings where pupils or students are required to self-isolate, we recommend that staff, pupils by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms and in communal areas, should wear face coverings in secondary schools, colleges and other educational settings, including special schools and other specialist settings, as well as overall.

In the event of local restrictions being agreed, settings will need to consider how to ensure face coverings are used by staff, parents and pupils that the new arrangements require and they are fully implemented and enforced.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical impairment or disability, illness or mental health difficulties
- would be unable to remove a face covering without assistance
- clear sound or lip-reading is important

The same exemptions will apply in education settings, and we would expect teachers and other staff to be flexible in their approach to those who are exempt from wearing face covers and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and pupils and people will have access to face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society, and PHE has made recommendations on how to make them at home.

However, where someone is struggling to access a face covering, where they have forgotten to bring one, or where it is damaged or soiled, it is good practice to have a few spares available for use in such circumstances.

Schools may choose to make face coverings mandatory on the grounds that they are in the best interest of their pupils and students.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

Settings should have a process for removing face coverings when those who use face coverings arrive and when face coverings are worn within the setting. This process should be communicated clearly to pupils and staff and allow for adjustments to be made for those children and young people with SEND who may be distressed if required to remove a face covering against their wishes.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on – and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Where a face covering becomes damp it should not be worn, and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Children and young people must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it and they must dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin (not recycling bin) or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom.

Further guidance on face coverings

Separate guidance is available on:

- face coverings in education settings
- preventing and controlling infection, including the use of PPE, in education, childcare and children's social care settings

3. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser. Special settings must ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at the setting, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating.

Special education settings will want to consider what frequency of hand washing is best for which pupils, students and staff, and incorporate time for this in timetables or lesson plans. Staff working with children and young people who spit uncontrollably may want more opportunities to wash their hands than other staff, or, children and young people who use saliva as a sensory stimulant or who struggle with 'catch it, bin it, kill it' may need more opportunities to wash their hands than children and young people who do not. Specialist settings will typically have handwash basins in or adjacent to classrooms, so may be able to use these to maximise hand washing.

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Points to consider and implement:

- whether the setting has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all pupils and staff can clean their hands regularly
- supervision of hand sanitiser use given risks around ingestion. Small children and pupils with complex needs should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly. Skin friendly skin cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative
- building these routines into school culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure younger children and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so settings must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available to support pupils and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, settings must ensure younger children and those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all pupils understand that this is now part of how the setting operates. The e-Bug coronavirus (COVID-19) website contains free resources for schools, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Some pupils with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these pupils and the staff working with them and is not a reason to deny these pupils face to face education.

5. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents

Points to consider and implement:

- putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes more frequent cleaning of rooms or shared areas that are used by different groups and frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- toilets will need to be cleaned regularly and pupils must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet - different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered but is not a requirement if the site does not allow for it

Public Health England has published revised guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings to advise on general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning those settings when there is a suspected case.

6. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and education settings must consider how to implement this. Special settings must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children, young people and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on children's ability to distance, the layout of the setting, and the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum.

We recognise that maintaining distance or forming bubbles could be particularly difficult in special settings, particularly given the need for staff to administer care support and provide therapies to the children and young people attending. However, the average number of pupils or students attending a special school or SPI is much lower than the average number in a mainstream school, and this in itself, will help to limit the number of contacts for any individual.

The points to consider and implement are set out in the following sections.

a. How to group children and young people

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of children, young people and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group. They have been used in special settings in the summer term in recognition that children, and especially the youngest children and those with complex needs, cannot socially distance from staff or from each other and this provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and to keep that number as small as possible.

However, the use of small groups restricts the normal operation of education settings and presents both educational and logistical challenges, including the cleaning and use of shared spaces, such as the playgrounds, boarding houses, dining halls, and toilets, and the provision of specialist teaching and therapies. This is the case in both primary and secondary schools, but is particularly difficult in secondary schools, and special settings.

In this guidance for the autumn term, maintaining consistent groups remains important, but given the resumption of the full range of curriculum subjects, settings may need to change the emphasis on bubbles within their system of controls.

Settings should assess their circumstances and look to implement 'bubbles' of an appropriate size, to achieve the greatest reduction in contact and mixing, without unduly limiting the quality or breadth of teaching, or access for support and specialist staff and therapists.

Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and children and young people that are able should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Settings with the capability to do it should take steps to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.

When using larger groups, the other measures from the system of controls become even more important to minimise transmission risks and to minimise the numbers of pupils and staff who need to self-isolate. We recognise that younger children and those with complex needs will not be able to maintain social distancing and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all or nothing' options and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. Some settings may keep children and young people in their class groups for the majority of the classroom time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport, or for boarding pupils in one group residentially and another during the school day. Siblings may also be in different groups. Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between children and young people will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the timetable and specialist provision but should minimise the number of interactions or changes wherever possible.

b. Measures within the classroom

Maintaining a distance between people whilst inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face contact lowers the risk of transmission. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with children and young people with complex needs, or those who need close contact care. Educational and care support should be provided for these children and young people as normal, with other increased hygiene protocols in place (as set out above) to minimise risk of transmission.

Where possible, for example with older children with less complex needs who are able to self-regulate their behaviours without distress, children and young people should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers. This will not be possible for the youngest children, and some children and young people with complex needs, and it is not feasible in some settings where space does not allow. Settings doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time will help.

When staff, children or young people cannot maintain distancing, the risk can also be reduced by keeping pupils and students in the smaller, class-sized groups described above.

Settings should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

c. Measures elsewhere

Groups should be kept apart, meaning that settings should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the setting kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, settings should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Settings should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

Settings should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other.

Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

d. Measures for arriving at and leaving the setting

We know that travel patterns differ greatly between settings. If those patterns allow, settings should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave. Staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time. A staggered start may, for example, include condensing or staggering free periods or break time but retaining the same amount of teaching time, or keeping the length of the day the same but starting and finishing later to avoid rush hour. Settings should consider how to communicate this to parents and remind them about the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection, including that gathering at the gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed.

Settings should also have a process for removing face coverings when pupils, students and staff who use them arrive at the setting and communicate it clearly to them. Pupils and students must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all pupils and students), dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' bin (not recycling bin) or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom. Guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care provides more advice.

e. Other considerations

Some children and young people with SEND (whether with EHC plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that these measures will involve, so staff should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories.

Schools, local authorities, health professionals, regional schools commissioners and other services should work together to ensure that children with medical conditions are fully supported, including through the use of individual healthcare plans, so that they may receive an education in line with their peers. In some cases, the pupil's medical needs will mean this is not possible, and educational support will require flexibility. Our guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions remains in place.

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual. They, as well as supply teachers, peripatetic teachers or other temporary staff can move between settings. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Such specialists will be aware of the PPE most appropriate for their role. Settings should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, catering staff and deliveries, as well as cleaning staff on site who may be working throughout the setting and across different groups. This will require close cooperation between settings and the other relevant employers. Settings should have discussions with key contractors about the setting's control measures and ways of working for the autumn term. Settings should ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school or college hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors with sufficient detail to support rapid contact tracing if required by NHS Test and Trace.

As normal, schools should engage with their local immunisation providers to provide immunisation programmes on site, ensuring these will be delivered in keeping with the school's control measures. These programmes are essential for children's health and wellbeing and can also provide benefits for staff. Where a child or young person routinely attends more than one setting on a part time basis, for example because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and a special setting, the settings should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the child or young person. Pupils should be able to continue attending both settings. While some adjustment to arrangements may be required, pupils in this situation should not be isolated as a solution to the risk of greater contact.

Equipment and resources are integral to education. During the summer term, their use was minimised, many were moved out of classrooms, and there was significant extra cleaning. Given the increasing knowledge we have of the virus, that position has now changed for the autumn term. For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, arts, and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always when moved between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

Settings will need to make an assessment of the cleanability of equipment used in the delivery of therapies (for example, physiotherapy equipment, sensory equipment), to determine whether this equipment can withstand cleaning and disinfecting between each use (and how easy or practical it would be to do so) before it is put back into general use. Where cleaning or disinfecting is not possible or practical, resources will have to be restricted to one user, or be left unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different individuals.

Outdoor playground equipment should be more frequently cleaned. This would also apply to resources used inside and outside by wraparound care providers. It is still recommended that children and young people limit the amount of equipment they bring into the setting each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, hats, coats, books, stationery and mobile phones. Bags are allowed. Pupils and teachers can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to pupil education and development. Similar rules on hand cleaning, cleaning of the resources and rotation should apply to these resources.

7. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

The majority of staff in education 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, including:

- where an individual child or young person becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at settings, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- where a child or young person already has routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

When working with children and young people who cough, spit or vomit but do not have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, only any PPE that would be routinely worn, should be worn.

Read the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care for more information about preventing and controlling infection, including when, how PPE should be used, what type of PPE to use, and how to source it.

8. Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated

When the setting is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

This can be achieved by a variety of measures including:

- mechanical ventilation systems – these should be adjusted to increase the ventilation rate wherever possible, and checked to confirm that normal operation meets current guidance (if possible, systems should be adjusted to full fresh air or, if not, then systems should be operated as normal as long as they are within a single room and supplemented by an outdoor air supply)
- natural ventilation – opening windows (in cooler weather windows should be opened just enough to provide constant background ventilation and opened more fully during breaks to purge the air in the space). Opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air
- natural ventilation – if necessary external opening doors may also be used (as long as they are not fire doors and where safe to do so)

Further advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak and CIBSE Coronavirus (COVID-19) Advice.

To balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature, the following measures should also be used as appropriate:

- opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
- increasing the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied (for example, between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused)
- providing flexibility to allow additional, suitable indoor clothing – for more information see school uniform
- rearranging furniture where possible to avoid direct drafts

Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained particularly in occupied spaces.

Response to any infection

9. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

Settings must ensure they understand the NHS Test and Trace process. This means ensuring that staff members and parents and carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- Self isolate and book a test if they are displaying symptoms. The main symptoms are a high temperature, a new continuous cough and/or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Staff and pupils must not come into the setting if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them when at the setting - all children and young people can be tested if they have symptoms, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit.
- Provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace.
- Self-isolate if they or a member of their household is symptomatic, or if they have been in close contact with someone who develops symptoms and/or tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and they are advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the PHE Local Health Protection team.

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. We will release more details on new testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with settings so they understand what the quickest and easiest way is to get a test.

All schools have been sent an initial supply of 10 home test kits and information about how to order to replenish this supply when they are running out. Schools should call the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119 if these have not arrived.

Having a test at a testing site will deliver the fastest results. The test kits sent to schools are provided to be used in the exceptional circumstance that an individual becomes symptomatic and schools believe they may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. It is for schools to determine how to prioritise the distribution of their test kits in order to minimise the impact of the virus on the education of their pupils.

These kits can be given directly to staff or parents/carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school. In particular, these tests kits will also help ensure that symptomatic staff can also get a test and if they test negative, can return to work as soon as they no longer have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). Further information is provided in our guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19): test kits for schools and FE providers.

Settings should ask parents and staff to inform them immediately of the results of a test and follow this guidance.

1. If someone with symptoms tests negative for coronavirus (COVID-19), then they should stay at home until they are recovered as usual from their illness but can safely return thereafter. The only exceptions to return following a negative test result are where an individual is separately identified as a close contact of a confirmed case, when they will need to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of that contact, or if other members of their household are symptomatic.

2. If someone with symptoms tests positive, they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to the setting only if they do not have symptoms other than a persistent cough or loss of sense of smell or taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill if they have symptoms, or from the date the test was taken if asymptomatic. If they still have a high temperature, they should continue to self-isolate until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should all self-isolate for the full 14 days.

NHS COVID-19 app

The app is available to anyone aged 16 and over to download if they choose. For some young people, particularly some with SEND, parents will need to decide whether or not their use of the app is appropriate.

This will mean that some students in year 11, and the majority of students in years 12 and above will be eligible to use the app and benefit from its features. Staff members will also be able to use the app. The guidance for schools and further education colleges in England is intended to provide information to senior leaders in education settings about the app and how it works, and to set out guidance for its use within schools in England.

10. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school and college community

Settings must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Settings can contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. This 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. Settings will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice. The advice service will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

If, following triage, further expert advice is required the adviser will escalate your call to the PHE local health protection team.

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will work with settings to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on their advice, settings must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with a case for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, we recommend settings keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes place between children, young people and staff in different groups (see section 6 of the system of controls for more on grouping pupils). This should be a proportionate recording process, sufficient to ensure contact tracing can take place. Settings do not need to ask pupils to record everyone they have spent time with each day or ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

A template letter will be provided to settings, on the advice of the health protection team, to send to parents and staff if needed. Settings must not share the names of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They should get a test, and:

- if someone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) starts to feel unwell and gets a test for coronavirus themselves, and the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period - this is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period) - their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

Settings should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children and young people or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

In the majority of cases, settings and parents will be in agreement that a child with symptoms should not attend the setting, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending the setting, the setting can take the decision to refuse the child if in their reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect pupils and staff from possible infection with coronavirus (COVID-19). Any decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and the current public health advice.

The PHE local health protection team will also contact settings directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the setting - as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

Further guidance is available on testing and tracing for coronavirus (COVID-19).

11. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

If settings have 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak, and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If settings are implementing controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole setting closure based on cases within the setting will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a setting is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole setting if necessary, in line with routine published health outbreak control practice.

Supporting children and young people in special

residential settings

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

If a child in a residential setting shows symptoms, they should initially self-isolate in their residential setting household. Most children and young people will benefit from self-isolating in their boarding house so that their usual support can continue. Others will benefit more from self-isolating in their family home. For more information on how to care for a symptomatic child while protecting the welfare of other pupils and staff, read the guidance on isolation for residential education settings. This applies to residential special schools and colleges. It contains advice on how to manage self-isolation in these settings in the event of a confirmed or possible case.

In the case of any localised outbreaks, we expect them to keep the residential provision open if necessary. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. They will need to remain open to those who:

- have particular needs that cannot be accommodated safely at home
- do not have suitable alternative accommodation

Supporting children and young people receiving hospital education on hospital sites

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

Pupils in hospital schools have returned to their setting full time from the beginning of the autumn term where it:

- if it is safe and feasible
- in line with hospital infection prevention and control (IPC) measures

Settings should work with their local NHS trusts to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for all patients as far as their health permits. We expect local NHS trusts to continue to work collaboratively with headteachers to enable students to receive their education, including through access to classrooms and space in which to teach.

Mainstream schools should continue to support their pupils in hospital, including through remote learning support, to minimise the impact of their hospital stay on their education.

Alternative provision

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

As with other settings, pupils in alternative provision (AP) settings (including pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools) have returned to school full-time from the start of the autumn term. To support this, AP settings must comply with health and safety law which requires employers to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. They should work through the system of controls outlined above, adopting measures that help them meet each control to the fullest extent possible, in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their setting, and allows them to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils.

When working through the system of controls, APs should take steps to minimise social contact and mixing as far as is practicable. All APs, especially larger AP schools, should consider whether pupils can be placed into smaller groups and still receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Due to the smaller size of many AP settings, and because APs are not typically organised by year groups, APs may wish to adopt whole school bubbles as part of their system of control and in order to best meet the needs of their students.

Section 2: school operations

If you are a specialist post-16 provider, you can also read the FE guidance for information relating to the following school operations.

Transport

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

Social distancing has significantly reduced available transport capacity. This guidance sets out a new framework for transport to and from schools during the autumn term. Further information is set out in the transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020 guidance.

We are making a distinction between dedicated school transport and wider public transport:

- by dedicated school transport, we mean services that are used only to carry pupils to school - this includes statutory home to school transport, but may also include some existing or new commercial travel routes, where they carry school pupils only
- by public transport services, we mean routes which are also used by the general public

Settings should encourage staff, parents and pupils to walk or cycle to school if at all possible. The government has announced a £2 billion package to promote cycling and walking, including to support pop-up bicycle lanes and widened pavements. For some families, driving children to school will also be an option.

Where children and young people rely on public transport to get to school or college, and cannot walk or cycle, the coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers will apply.

Children and young people must not board home to school transport if they, or a member of their household, has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Dedicated school transport, including statutory provision

Local authorities remain under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible children and young people. Local authorities will need to work with special settings to ensure that children and young people can get to their setting. If a child or young person needs transport to get to the setting named in his or her EHC plan, the local authority will normally have to pay for it. [footnote 1]

Although the provision of transport for post-16 students is not a statutory duty for local authorities, it is often critical to those learners being able to access college provision. We ask local authorities to continue to provide transport if they had been doing so previously.

Pupils and students on dedicated school services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and tend to be consistent. Therefore, wider transmission risks are likely to be lower. During the autumn term, local authorities are not required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport on dedicated school or college transport. However, distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible. This will help to both minimise disease transmission risks and maintain consistent reinforcement of public health messaging to children and staff, particularly at the point where they are leaving school and heading back into the community each day. What is practicable is likely to vary according to local circumstances.

The approach to dedicated transport should align wherever possible with the principles underpinning the system of controls set out in this document and with the approach being adopted for the setting. It is important, wherever it is possible, that:

- social distancing should be maximised within vehicles
- children either sit with their 'bubble' on school transport, or with the same constant group of children each day
- children and young people clean their hands before boarding transport and again on disembarking
- additional cleaning of vehicles is put in place
- organised queuing and boarding is put in place where possible
- ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) is maximised, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents

Dedicated school services can take different forms and the precise approach taken will need to reflect the range of measures that are reasonable in the circumstances. It will require a partnership approach between settings, local authorities, trusts, dioceses and others. In particular, it is imperative that settings work closely with the local authorities that have statutory responsibility for 'home to school transport', as well as a vital role in working with local transport providers to ensure sufficient transport provision. The government has announced additional funding for local transport authorities for this purpose.

Local authorities, working with education settings and transport operators as necessary, should identify the risks arising from coronavirus (COVID-19) and must then work through the system of controls and adopt measures in a way that addresses the identified risk, works in the local circumstances, and allows children and young people to attend their educational setting. Local authorities should take account of the particular needs of children and young people with SEND and, where necessary, be informed by the views provided by the parents and the setting.

The transport guidance for schools acknowledges that implementing bubbles will still bring benefits even if implemented partially, and that settings may need to allow mixing into wider groups in certain circumstances, including on transport. However, we know that vehicle capacity and the complexity of some home to school transport arrangements mean there will often be limits to the extent to which mixing can be minimised. Where it is not possible, the other measures in the system of controls become even more important.

In order to maximise home to school transport capacity, some local authorities have asked some parents to accept personal travel budgets or mileage allowances to take their child to their school or educational institution. This is permissible with the parent's consent but not something parents or local authorities can insist on. Local authorities should not expect parents to commit to accepting a personal payment or mileage allowance for a specified period of time, particularly in the current economic climate, and participation will not impact future eligibility on dedicated school transport. The local authority will need reasonable notice to put home to school arrangements back in place for the child or young person when required again.

Face coverings and PPE on dedicated school transport

In accordance with advice from PHE, from the autumn term, we recommend that local authorities advise children and young people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering. We are adopting this position in light of children and young people attending education full time, as well as the fact that it will not always be possible to apply the same social distancing measures as apply on public transport. Settings should support local authorities in promoting the use of face coverings on school transport and help them to resolve any issues of non-compliance where appropriate.

A face covering is a covering of any type which covers the nose and mouth. It is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of PPE.

Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed, for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. Additionally, some children and young people may need to be able to lip-read, or see people's faces, in order to communicate, while others may be distressed if the people around them wear face coverings.

Children and young people will need to understand how to handle their face covering properly to ensure that any additional risks associated with their use are identified.

Transport operators should conduct a risk assessment for all their operations including dedicated school transport services. This will determine the most appropriate safety measures to put in place such as for social distancing and face coverings. The guidance for operators provides further advice for staff.

Fluid-resistant surgical masks, gloves, aprons and eye protection used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment (PPE) should continue to be reserved for people who need to wear them at work. Drivers and passenger assistants will not normally require PPE on home to school transport, even if they are not able to maintain a distance from the children and young people on the transport. However, where the care and interventions that a child or young person ordinarily receives on home to school transport requires the use of PPE, that should continue as usual. For more information, read:

- How should I care for children who regularly spit or require physical contact?
- guidance on the specific steps that should be taken to care for children with complex medical needs, such as tracheostomies (this includes aerosol generating procedures)

Attendance

Attendance expectations

It is vital for all children and young people to attend their education setting to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils or students falling further behind. Pupil attendance has therefore been mandatory from the beginning of the autumn term. The usual rules on attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure their child's attendance regularly at the education setting where they are registered (where they are a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)
- settings' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the option to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Pupils clinically extremely vulnerable

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

A small number of pupils and students will still be unable to attend, in line with public health advice to self-isolate, because:

- they have had symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or a positive test result themselves
- they live with someone that has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

New advice for those identified through a letter from the NHS or a specialist doctor as in the group deemed clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) has been published. The guidance provides advice on what additional measures individuals in this group can take tailored to each local COVID alert level. The UK Chief Medical Officers have issued a statement on schools and childcare reopening which states that there is a very low rate of severe disease in children from coronavirus (COVID-19) and far fewer children should remain in this group in the future following their routine discussions with their clinician.

All pupils, including those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, can continue to attend school at all local COVID alert levels unless they are one of the very small number of pupils or students under paediatric care (such as recent transplant or very immunosuppressed children) and have been advised specifically by their GP or clinician not to attend school.

Those who remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional at their next planned clinical appointment - more advice is available from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

In the future, the government will only reintroduce formal restrictive shielding advice in exceptional circumstances where this has been advised by the Chief Medical officer, and then only for a limited period of time. The government has written to families recently to inform them that a short period of more formal shielding is in place again only during national restrictions. For this period only, all those children whose names remain on the clinically extremely vulnerable list should stay at home.

If pupils or students are unable to attend their setting because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we expect settings to immediately offer them access to remote education. Settings should monitor their engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be formally recorded in the attendance register.

Where children are not able to attend school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), their absence will not be penalised.

Pupils and families who are anxious about attending their educational setting

All other pupils must attend their setting. Support should be put in place to address the potential concerns of pupils, students and families who may be reluctant or anxious about attending. This may include:

- pupils who were previously shielding but have been informed that this is no longer routinely advised except in exceptional circumstances for short periods of time
- those living with someone who is clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable
- those concerned about possible increased risks from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or those with certain health conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

If parents of pupils with possible risk factors are concerned, we recommend settings discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school. Settings should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, if the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

Some children and young people with EHC plans who have spent time away from their setting may need preparation for their return. This preparation might include visits to the setting, social stories, and any other approaches that they and local authorities would normally use to enable a child or young person with SEND who has spent some time out of education to return to full time attendance.

A reasonable adjustment for a child or young person with SEND who has found restrictions exceptionally difficult socially and emotionally may involve a brief phased return to school but this decision should be taken in discussion with parents or carers and in response to the needs of an individual child, not applied as a blanket policy for all children or young people at a setting. Any phased return or part-time learning arrangements should always be temporary measures which are agreed with the family in advance, kept under review and removed as soon as possible. This will ensure that children and young people with SEND benefit as quickly as possible from attending school and accessing the support services that they need.

Actions for all settings and local authorities

There is separate guidance on recording attendance at addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020/2021 academic year. We are asking settings to work with families to secure regular attendance as this will be essential to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

We are asking settings and local authorities to:

i. Continue to communicate clear and consistent expectations about attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate).

ii. Identify pupils and students who are reluctant or anxious about attending or who are at risk of disengaging and develop plans for re-engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, those who were persistently absent before the outbreak and those who have not engaged with the setting regularly during the outbreak.

iii. Use the additional catch-up funding, existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and pupil premium funding to support the families who need additional support to secure pupils' and students' regular attendance.

iv. Work closely with other professionals, such as social workers, as appropriate to support the return to settings including, continuing to notify the child's social worker if they have one, of non-attendance.

Advice for schools and local authorities to support them to improve school attendance is available.

Workforce of settings

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

We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and PHE to develop this specific guidance for school settings. PHE and DHSC endorsed system of controls outlined in this document sets out the measures that school leaders and all school staff should follow.

Where settings implement the system of controls outlined in this document, in line with their own workplace risk assessment, PHE and DHSC confirm that these measures create an inherently safer environment for children, young people and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. As a result, on current evidence, PHE and DHSC advise that schools are not currently considered high risk settings when compared to other workplace environments.

Most school-based roles are not ideally suited to home working and settings may expect most staff to attend. Some roles, such as some administrative roles, may be conducive to home working, and senior leaders should consider what is feasible and appropriate.

All staff should follow the measures set out in the system of controls section of this guidance to minimise the risks of transmission. This includes continuing to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene and maintaining social distancing in line with the provisions as set out in part 6 of the 'Prevention' section.

School leaders should explain to staff the measures put in place to reduce risks. We anticipate adherence to the measures in this guidance will provide the necessary reassurance for staff to attend settings. If staff are concerned, including those who may be clinically vulnerable, clinically extremely vulnerable or at possible increased risk from coronavirus, we recommend school leaders discuss any concerns individuals may have around their particular circumstances and reassure staff about the protective measures in place.

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.

New advice for those identified through a letter from the NHS or a specialist doctor as in the group deemed clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV or shielding list) was published on 13 October. The guidance provides advice on what additional measures individuals in this group can take tailored to each local COVID alert level.

All staff can continue to attend school at all local COVID alert levels.

In the future, the government will only reintroduce formal restrictive shielding advice in exceptional circumstances where this has been advised by the Chief Medical officer, and only for a limited period of time. The government has written to individuals recently to inform them that a short period of more formal shielding advice is in place again only during national restrictions. For this period only they are advised not attend the workplace.

Further guidance to the clinically extremely vulnerable is available.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

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

Clinically vulnerable staff can attend school. While within the setting they should follow the sector-specific measures in this document to minimise the risks of transmission.

This includes taking particular care to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social distancing in line with the provisions set out in section 6 of the 'Prevention' section of this guidance. This provides that ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from others, and where this is not possible, avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others. While the risk of transmission between young children and adults is likely to be low, adults should continue to take care to socially distance from other adults including older children/adolescents.

People who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace.

Staff who are pregnant

Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category, and are generally advised to follow the above advice, which applies to all staff in schools. For more information, pregnant women can also read guidance and advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) and pregnancy from the Royal College of Gynaecologists. All pregnant women should take particular care to practice frequent, thorough hand washing and cleaning of frequently touched areas in their home and/or workspace.

An employer's workplace risk assessment should already consider any risks to female employees of childbearing age and, in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers (for example, from working conditions, or the use of physical, chemical or biological agents). Any risks identified must be included and managed as part of the general workplace risk assessment.

If a school is notified that an employee is pregnant, breastfeeding or has given birth within the last six months, the employer should check the workplace risk assessment to see if any new risks have arisen. If risks are identified during the pregnancy, in the first six months after birth or while the employee is still breastfeeding, the employer must take appropriate, sensible action to reduce, remove or control them.

While it is a legal obligation for employers to regularly review general workplace risks, there is not necessarily a requirement to conduct a specific, separate risk assessment for new and expectant mothers. However, an assessment may help identify any additional action that needs to be taken to mitigate risks.

We recommend that schools follow the same principles for pregnant pupils, in line with their wider health and safety obligations.

Staff who may otherwise be at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), as set out in the COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes report, which looked at different factors including age and sex, where people live, deprivation, ethnicity, people's occupation and care home residence. These staff can attend their setting as long as the system of controls set out in this guidance are in place. The reasons for the disparities are complex and there is ongoing research to understand and translate these findings for individuals in the future.

People who live with those who may have comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) can attend the workplace.

Employer health and safety and equalities duties

Employers have a legal obligation to protect your employees and others from harm. They should continue to assess health and safety risks and consider how to meet equalities duties in the usual way. Following the steps in this guidance will mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to pupils and staff and help settings to meet their legal duties to protect employees and others from harm.

The Health and Safety Executive published guidance on first aid during coronavirus (COVID-19) which will support local risk assessments and provides guidance for first aiders. It is clear that treating any casualty properly should be the first concern. Where it is necessary for first aid provision to be administered in close proximity, those administering it should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

Supporting staff

Employers should have regard to staff (including the headteacher) work-life

balance and wellbeing. They should ensure that they have explained to all staff the measures that they are proposing putting in place and involve all staff in that process.

All employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their mental health. Settings will already have mechanisms to support staff wellbeing and these will be particularly important, as some staff may be particularly anxious about attending. DfE is providing additional mental health support for both pupil and staff wellbeing during the pandemic. Information about the extra mental health support for pupils and teachers and the Wellbeing for education return programme is available.

The Education Support Partnership provides a free helpline for school staff and targeted support for mental health and wellbeing.

Staff deployment

Settings may need to change the way in which they deploy and use existing staff more flexibly during the autumn term. Managers should discuss and agree any changes to staff roles with the individuals.

We recognise that special settings will need to develop plans for the deployment of staff that account for the below factors.

Education and care for many children and young people with EHC plans often involves specific ratios and specific training, for staff. Many staff in special settings provide interventions or care involving close contact to children and young people who may not be grouped together under the system of controls adopted by a setting. Furthermore, some staff will work across settings. Where possible, these interventions and care should be provided as normal, because they will be important in enabling children and young people to access and benefit from education.

Staff who deliver these interventions will need to be particularly rigorous about hand washing and respiratory hygiene (catch it, bin it, kill it), but additional PPE compared to what they would normally use for those interventions, is not recommended, unless dealing with symptomatic children or young people.

The specialisation and the peripatetic nature of much staffing in special settings also makes the flexible deployment of staff more challenging. For example, in cases where only one member of staff is trained in a particular intervention and that member of staff needs to self-isolate due to coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, it will generally not be possible to move a staff member without the training into that role.

Settings and local authorities may wish to have discussions about these circumstances - for example, whether their usual supply staff avenues are available to them, whether an additional staff member could be trained, or whether 2 settings could work together to offer each other resilience.

It is important that planning builds on the need to avoid increases in unnecessary and unmanageable workload burdens. This could include a review of existing practices in this respect and you may wish to draw on DfE's workload reduction toolkit.

DfE has also published a range of resources, including case studies to support remote education and help address staff workload. This includes case studies on managing wellbeing.

If having pursued all the immediate options available, settings still have concerns about their staffing capacity they should talk to their local authority or trust.

Deploying support staff and accommodating visiting specialists

Settings should minimise the number of visitors where possible, however, visiting specialists such as therapists, clinicians, peripatetic teachers and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual, including moving between settings as required. Such specialists will be aware of the PPE most appropriate for their role.

If support staff are available, settings may consider using them to support catch-up provision or targeted interventions. Teaching assistants may also be deployed to lead groups or cover lessons, under the direction and supervision of a qualified, or nominated, teacher (under the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012 for maintained schools and non-maintained special schools and in accordance with the freedoms provided under the funding agreement for academies).

Setting leaders should be satisfied that the person has the appropriate skills, expertise and experience to carry out the work. Managers should discuss and agree any proposed changes in role or responsibility with the member of staff. This includes ensuring that:

- safe ratios are met
- specific training is undertaken if needed
- only those with appropriate checks are allowed to engage in regulated activity - full guidance is provided in part 3 of keeping children safe in education

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published guidance to help settings make the best use of their teaching assistants.

Recruitment

Recruitment should continue as usual. The government's teaching vacancies service can help settings to list vacancies for both permanent and fixed-term teaching staff quickly. The free national service for searching and listing teaching roles will be directing newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and job seeking teachers to this service.

As DfE guidance advises limiting the number of visitors, it may be appropriate for schools to consider a flexible approach to interviews, with alternative options to face-to-face interviews offered where possible. Interviewing remotely may be a new experience for many schools. The DfE teaching blog provides some information on the experience of implementing interviews remotely. There is also advice that can be sent to candidates on how to prepare for remote interviews.

Where face-to-face meetings are arranged, schools should make clear to candidates that they must adhere to the system of controls that schools have in place. Schools will also have the discretion to require face coverings for visitors where social distancing cannot be managed safely.

When recruiting, settings must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre- appointment checks. We refer schools to part 3 of the statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education. Initial teacher training (ITT) providers have worked flexibly to ensure this year's NQTs are ready and prepared to enter the classroom.

They will also be supported by materials DfE is making available to all schools based on the early career framework reforms to support them as they start their teaching career. Settings in the early roll-out regions (Bradford, Doncaster, Greater Manchester, and the North East) will be able to benefit from the full support package being offered to some 2,000 NQTs from the autumn. In addition, around 3,000 NQTs will be offered a one-year version of the structured support package.

Supply teachers and other temporary or peripatetic teachers

Settings can continue to use supply staff during this period. We recommend that they consider using the Crown Commercial Service's agency supply deal, because this offers a list of preferred suppliers that must be transparent about the rates they charge. They can get direct support from Crown Commercial Services on how to use the agency supply deal by emailing supplyteachers@crowncommercial.gov.uk with the school's details and contact details.

Supply staff and other temporary workers can move between settings but school leaders should minimise the number of visitors to the setting if possible. Supply staff are expected to comply with the settings arrangements for managing risk. To minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering your premises, school leaders may wish to use supply teachers for longer assignments and agree a minimum number of hours across the academic year.

This advice for supply teachers also applies to other temporary staff working in schools such as support staff working on a supply basis, peripatetic teachers such sports coaches, and those engaged to deliver before and after school clubs.

Expectation and deployment of initial teacher trainees

We strongly encourage settings to consider hosting ITT trainees. Demand for teacher training is high this year and while it is understandable that settings will have prioritised other activity, there is a risk that not enough training places will be available. ITT trainees have the potential to play a significant role in supporting schools. Settings should consider how they could host ITT trainees, and discuss with relevant ITT providers how this can be done flexibly and innovatively to help meet both the needs of the setting and the trainee. Deployment decisions will need to take into account the skills and capacity of the trainees in question.

Trainees could:

- take responsibility, with the usual mentor oversight, for small groups of pupils, adapting resources, creating online education materials or delivering catch-up lessons
- be engaged in wider professional activity, for instance tackling pupil, family and school needs by learning about, identifying and addressing challenges such as vulnerability, mental health problems or safeguarding issues
- develop and engage in working groups to share best practice around resilience, commitment and team working
- work in pairs or groups to co-plan, co-teach and co-assess lessons with their mentors or other trainees - paired and group placements, where these are possible, benefit trainees, mentors and teaching staff, promoting a greater sense of team collaboration, ongoing professional learning and reductions in workload

This is not intended to be exhaustive and ITT partnerships will need to ensure they have identified and comply with all relevant legislation and guidance including the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012.

Performance management and appraisals

Maintained schools must continue to adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. We would expect schools to use their discretion and take pragmatic steps to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances. Schools must ensure that teachers are not penalised during the appraisal process or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions as a result of the decision to restrict pupil attendance at schools and where this has impacted on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives.

Appraisals and performance management for support staff should be carried out in accordance with the employee's contract of employment. DfE does not specify pay or terms and conditions of employment for support staff.

Staff taking leave

The government has set a requirement for people returning from some countries to quarantine for 14 days. See the latest guidance on quarantine.

Staff will need to be available to work in their settings during term time. We recommend that leaders discuss leave arrangements with staff to inform workforce planning. There is a risk that where staff travel abroad, their return travel arrangements could be disrupted due to factors arising beyond their control in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19), such as the potential for reinstatement of local restrictions in the place they are visiting. If a member of staff has to quarantine during term time, school leaders should consider whether they could temporarily amend working arrangements to enable them to work from home.

Other support

Volunteers may be used to support the work of the setting, as would usually be the case. It is important that they are properly supported and given appropriate roles. Where settings are using volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in the volunteer section in part 3 of keeping children safe in education. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Mixing of volunteers across groups should be kept to a minimum, and they should remain 2 metres from pupils and staff where possible.

Safeguarding

Settings should consider revising their child protection policy, led by their designated safeguarding lead, to reflect the return of more pupils. They must refer to the statutory safeguarding guidance, keeping children safe in education.

Designated safeguarding leads and deputies should have sufficient time, especially in the first few weeks of term to:

- provide additional support to staff, children and young people regarding any new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals to children's social care and other agencies, if appropriate

Agencies and services should be working together to actively look for signs of harms.

Designated safeguarding leads will be best placed to co-ordinate multi-agency working within a school, including communication with school nurses. This is important for safeguarding and supporting wellbeing, as school nurses have continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in their setting.

Health and safety

Emergency treatment, for example, provision of first aid, should be prioritised and given promptly in the event of an emergency. This means that people do not have to stay 2 metres apart if emergency assistance is required. People involved in the provision of assistance of others should pay particular attention to hygiene measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

The guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings explains the strategy for infection prevention and control, including the specific circumstances in which PPE should be used, to enable safe working during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It applies to staff working in education, childcare and children's social care settings in England as well as the children and young people who attend these settings and their parents or carers.

It includes guidance on:

- how to work safely in specific situations, including where PPE may be required
- what care should be taken in residential settings
- specific steps needed to care for children and young people with complex medical needs, including aerosol generating procedures (AGPs)
- caring for children and young people who regularly spit or require physical contact
- disposal of PPE and face coverings

Catering

We expect kitchens to be fully open during the autumn term and normal legal requirements will apply to the provision of food to all pupils who want it, including for those eligible for benefits- related free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

School kitchens can continue to operate but must comply with the guidance for food businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19).

Estates

Settings should look to maximise the use of their site and any associated available space, such as rooms in an associated place of worship for schools with a religious character, if feasible. We do not consider it necessary for settings to make significant adaptations to their site to enable them to welcome all children and young people back. We also do not think they will need to deliver any of their education on other sites because class sizes can return to normal and spaces used by more than one class or group can be cleaned between use. Following a risk assessment, some settings may decide to make small adaptations to their site, such as additional wash basins. This will be at the discretion of individual settings, based on their particular circumstances.

It is important that, for the autumn term, all the usual pre-term building checks are undertaken to make the school safe. If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, water system stagnation can occur, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. Advice on this can be found in the guidance on legionella risks during the coronavirus outbreak.

Additional advice on safely reoccupying buildings can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on emerging from lockdown. Also see the guidance on keeping settings well ventilated in section 8 of the system of controls.

Educational visits

We continue to advise against domestic (UK) overnight and overseas educational visits at this stage. This advice remains under review.

In the autumn term, settings can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits. These should include any trips or placements connected with a pupil or student's preparation for adulthood, for example, workplace visits. This should be done in line with protective measures, such as keeping children and young people within their consistent group, and the coronavirus (COVID-19) secure measures in place at the destination.

Settings should make use of outdoor spaces in the local area to support the delivery of the curriculum. As normal, they should undertake full risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be done safely and as part of this risk assessment, they need to consider any necessary control measures. They should read the health and safety on educational visits guidance when considering visits and make sure that the appropriate insurance arrangements are in place.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has produced information on travel insurance implications following the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. If settings have any further questions about their cover or would like further reassurance, they should contact their travel insurance provider.

Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity

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

Settings should, where possible, have resumed any breakfast and after-school provision during the autumn term. They should work closely with any external wraparound providers which their children and young people may use, to ensure that as far as possible they can be kept in a group with others from the same bubble they are in during the school day.

Where it is not possible, or it is impractical, to group children in the same bubbles as they are in during the school day, schools and external providers may need to group children with others from outside their school day bubble and / or from a different school. This may happen, for example, if only one or two children are attending wraparound provision from the same school day bubble and / or where multiple schools are attending provision. If schools or external providers need to do this, they should seek to keep children in small, consistent groups with the same children each time, as far as this is possible.

We recognise that settings may need to respond flexibly and build their wraparound provision up over time. This provision however will help to:

- ensure that pupils have opportunities to re-engage with their peers and with the setting
- ensure that vulnerable children and young people have a healthy breakfast and are ready to focus on their lessons
- provide enrichment activities
- support working parents

Settings can consult the guidance produced for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children when planning extra-curricular provision. This includes advising parents to limit the number of different wraparound providers they use as much as possible. Where parents use childcare providers or out of setting extra-curricular activities for their children, settings should encourage them to assure themselves that the providers are carefully considering their own protective measures, and only use those providers that can demonstrate this. DfE has also issued guidance for parents and carers, which they may want to circulate.

Settings may also choose to open up or hire out their premises for use by external bodies or organisations, such as external coaches or after-school / holiday clubs or activities. In doing so, they should ensure that they work with providers to consider how they can operate within their wider protective measures and should have regard to any other relevant government guidance. For example, where opening up school leisure facilities for external use, ensuring that they do so in line with government guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Section 3: curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support

Curriculum expectations

This section sets out the principles and expectations for curriculum planning to ensure that all pupils are given the catch-up support they need to make substantial progress by the end of the academic year. The key principles that underpin our advice on curriculum planning are:

- education is not optional - all pupils receive a high-quality education that promotes their development
- the curriculum remains broad and ambitious
- remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision

Informed by these principles, DfE asks that special schools and other specialist settings meet the following key expectations if considering revisions to their school curriculum for the academic year 2020 to 2021.

Teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content

Up to and including key stage 3, prioritising the most important components for pupils' progress within subjects is likely to be more effective than removing subjects that pupils may struggle to pick up again later. In particular, settings should consider how all subjects can contribute to filling gaps in core knowledge, for example through an emphasis on reading.

Aim to return to the normal curriculum in all subjects by summer term 2021

Substantial modification of the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year to address gaps in pupils' knowledge so teaching time should be prioritised to these. The aim should be to return to the normal curriculum content by no later than the summer term 2021.

Plan on the basis of the educational needs of pupils

Curriculum planning should be informed by an assessment of pupils' starting points and addressing the gaps in their knowledge. Avoid introducing unnecessary tracking systems and instead make effective use of regular formative assessment, such as quizzes, observing pupils in class, talking to pupils to assess understanding and scrutiny of pupils' work.

Integrate remote education into school curriculum planning

Remote education may be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum for some pupils alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local restrictions.

All settings are therefore expected to plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and so make good progress.

They may consider it appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils in exceptional circumstances. They should be able to show that this is in the best the interests of these pupils and this should be subject to discussion with parents during the autumn term. There should also be a coherent plan for returning to their normal curriculum for all pupils by the summer term 2021.

Relationships and health education (RHE) for primary aged pupils and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) for secondary aged pupils are now compulsory. Settings are expected to start teaching them by at least the start of the summer term 2021.

Specific points for early years foundation stage to key stage 3

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

For children in nursery and childminder settings, and pupils in reception, the EYFS education and development requirements now apply as the original disapplications have been lifted (these were lifted on 25 September 2020). New regulations have been put in place to allow the EYFS disapplications to re-apply in the event of further coronavirus (COVID-19) related restrictions imposed by government, for example a local lockdown. Full details are available at Early years foundation stage: coronavirus disapplications.

Teachers and early years practitioners may consider focusing more on the prime areas of education, including communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development, if they think this would support their children to catch up following time out due to coronavirus (COVID-19). For pupils in reception, teachers should also assess and address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary. For nursery and childminder settings, and reception, consider how all groups of children can be given equal opportunities for outdoor education

For pupils in key stages 1 and 2, staff should prioritise identifying gaps and re-establishing good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so children read widely and develop their knowledge and vocabulary. The curriculum should remain broad so that most pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, humanities, the arts, physical education, religious education and relationships and health education.

For pupils in key stage 3, the curriculum should also remain broad from year 7 to year 9 so that most pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, languages, humanities, the arts, physical education, religious education and relationship, health and sex education.

Specific points for key stages 4 and 5

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

As with earlier key stages, it is likely that pupils in key stage 4 and 5 will need extra support to catch up on any content they have missed, but the school curriculum is less flexible because of the qualification specifications.

To ensure exams and assessments next summer are as fair as possible, and to take into account any public health requirements and the wellbeing of students, Ofqual has consulted on proposed adaptations to exams. Their decisions are available at proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021.

We expect most pupils in years 10 and 11 to continue to study their examination subjects. In exceptional circumstances, it may be in the best interest of a year 11 pupil to discontinue an examined subject. Settings may decide that they would achieve better results in their remaining subjects, especially in English and mathematics.

School leaders should make these decisions in discussion with pupils and parents and informed by ongoing assessment of a pupil's progress and wellbeing, using the existing discretion that they already apply on these matters

Key stage 5 has less scope than key stage 4 to drop an examined subject because students take fewer qualifications. Discontinuing a subject is likely to limit choices for further study and employment, so we expect this to be rare.

Physical activity in schools

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

Settings have the flexibility to decide how to provide physical education while following the measures using their system of controls.

Sports whose national governing bodies have developed guidance under the principles of the government's recent sport recovery framework have been approved by the government are permitted. Schools must only provide team sports on the premises if it is in accordance with the government's guidance.

Pupils and students should be kept to coordinated groups, sports equipment should be cleaned regularly, and contact should be minimised.

Outdoor sports should be prioritised. Indoor sports may be played safely outside of school where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors where this is not detrimental to the comfort of those using the space), and following the guidance for performers and those who teach physical fitness. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which exertion can affect the ability of the body to fight infection, and because high-intensity activity can lead to the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities.

Outdoor school visits to the following venues:

- [outdoors or on the closest open or covered sport or recreation](#) and outdoor fitness [Sport England](#) and [Public Health England](#)
- where from organisations such as the [Association for Physical Education](#) and the [Lifelong Fitness](#)
- [outdoor adventure](#) and [outdoor education](#) providers and outdoor activity centres [available at returning to pupils guidance documents](#)

Settings can work with their local authorities and other organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities, as long as they are able to operate in line with the guidance. However, they should not allow any people who are not part of their school or college community to visit their premises, and should not allow any people who are not part of their school or college community to mix with their pupils and students, making break times and lessons active and encouraging outdoor travel.

Music, dance and drama

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

Music, dance and drama build confidence, help children and young people to express themselves, and can be important for their mental and emotional wellbeing. There may, however, be an increased risk of transmission of coronavirus when singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments, dance and drama take place indoors.

Singing, wind and brass instrument playing can be undertaken in line with the guidance for performers and those who teach physical fitness, including Public Health England, Public Health Scotland, Public Health Wales and Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland. These documents have also indicated that it is the duration of exposure to a source of infection, and the number of people to which it is exposed, that is important. Therefore, it is important to develop a detailed understanding of how to mitigate this potential aggregate risk but that certain activities can be undertaken safely if mitigations are in place.

Minimising mixing groups and volume control

Mixing between groups should be minimised where practicable and mixing. The grouping should be consistent, consider limiting the number of instruments between pupils/students and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate, or by ensuring that the number of people in a group is minimised, individuals where possible should be kept to a consistent group, ideally between with fixed, but the balance between them will change depending on the age and stage of the pupil. Where it is safe to do so, the number of people in a group can be increased, such as when teaching a class of pupils. If staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and others as much as practicable, and follow the guidance for performers.

Additionally, they should aim to keep any background or accompanying music playing at a low volume, and should consider the use of PPE, including face coverings, in addition to the mitigations set out in the guidance for those who teach or protected persons of school age or younger, if possible, do not share microphones. If they are shared, they should be cleaned between users.

Performances

Performing at indoor or outdoor face to face performance in front of live audience, settings should follow the latest advice in the DCMS guidance on staging performances, including the use of face coverings, social distancing, planning an outdoor performance, and the guidance for performers and competitors for the [outdoor or indoor sports](#) venues.

Outdoor activities

Settings can continue to engage participants, teachers during this period, including staff from other schools.

Participants teachers can move between settings, for instance, but they should not mix with other participants or members of the public. Participants should be encouraged to consider and minimise their overall exposure to others, including taking precautions when travelling between settings, such as using private transport, or travelling at times when there is less public transport, or using it to a lesser extent than usual, and following the guidance for those who teach physical fitness, including the guidance for those who teach academic year.

A teacher is operating on a participants' basis, and operating across multiple groups or individuals, it is important that they do not attend a lesson if they are showing any of the coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have tested positive for such a fever, a new and continuous cough, or a loss of taste or smell. In addition, they should:

- minimise unnecessary interactions with such group they teach, where practicable
- ensure that enhanced cleaning requirements are broken where possible, for example, disinfecting equipment and surfaces
- make efforts to reduce the number of groups taught and activities worked in, where practicable, to limit the spread

Further information on the Public Education Hub, including contact details for local hubs, can be found on the Public Education Hub Facebook page.

Music teaching in special schools and other specialist settings, including singing, and playing musical wind instruments in schools

When planning music provision, settings should consider additional specific risks associated with the activity, including the number of people in the group and not currently appropriate to hold lessons in groups, and ensure that the volume speaking and breathing at the same volume. There is now some evidence that suggests that singing and playing musical instruments may be a higher risk than other activities, particularly in relation to aerosol transmission. This is particularly evident for singing and shouting, but with appropriate safety mitigation and precautions, it can be made safe to sing and play musical instruments.

Measures to take include:

- staging instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors whenever possible. Settings should consider limiting the number of people in the group
- ensure that a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms, rooms with high ceilings, and ensure good ventilation of enhanced transmission
- ensure good ventilation, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation of the space and the duration of exposure. It is recommended that maximum ventilation. Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on ventilation during and after the coronavirus outbreak
- singing, and playing musical instruments, should be prioritised outdoors, such as choirs and ensembles, or assemblies using significant space, natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors where this is not detrimental to the comfort of those using the space) should be maximised
- the smaller groups where these activities can take place, settings should consider the ability to maintain social distancing between groups, and the between organisations, such as between teaching staff, visitors, other musicians, or accompanists - current guidance is that the activity is liable to be higher risk than other activities, and should be risk assessed
- the number of participants in the group should be reduced or stopped singing (rather than teaching about singing)
- the duration of the activity should be reduced, and the instrument does not blow into another player
- use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly
- consider the use of face coverings, particularly in circumstances, the overall risk will be reduced

Handling equipment and instruments

Measures to take when handling equipment, including instruments, include:

- beginning to manage instruments and other handling equipment, especially if being used by more than one person
- ensure that hand sanitisers are made available wherever possible; place some where as equipment is being used, and ensure that hand sanitisers are accessible, personnel/staff/ users/ children and students
- ensure that instruments are not shared, where practicable, shared instruments should be cleaned between users, including instruments and music stands and always between users, following government guidance on cleaning non-healthcare settings, including schools, and ensure that hands are washed or hands sanitised before and after handling
- limit the handling of music scores, parts and scripts to the individual only where practicable
- consider minimising the number of people handling equipment and instruments and equipment. Settings should agree whose responsibility cleaning hand-held instruments and equipment, and ensure that it is cleaned after each use. Pupils/students should be encouraged to clean their own instruments in a clean location if you take delivery of them before they are needed. Clean hands before and after handling their instruments
- include singing and wind and brass instruments in your risk assessment, and ensure that the control measures in place are proportionate, reasonable and sufficient

Individual lessons and performances in groups

Individual lessons and performances in groups can occur in settings and organisations presenting out of school activities. This may mean teachers travelling to other settings, including other schools, or pupils and students, in particular cases, to travel to the teacher's or other specialist teacher's premises.

Specific safety measures for individual music lessons should include:

- extend social distancing to teachers and pupils and students if it is safe to do so if practicable and without mitigations. 2 metres is recommended, but 1 metre is acceptable if other mitigations are in place. Face masks should be considered by pupils if practicable
- avoid sharing instruments and equipment wherever possible and place name labels on them. Ensure that they are cleaned after each use, and that hands are washed before and after playing
- if instruments and equipment have to be shared, regularly disinfect them between users, including instruments and music stands and always between users, following government guidance on cleaning non-healthcare settings, including schools, instruments should be cleaned by the teacher, or by the pupil or student, after use
- wash the hands before and after playing, and after touching any shared parts
- there is no visitor alternative, music lessons in private homes can resume following the usual guidance for those who teach physical fitness (government guidance for performers, and the guidance for out-of-school settings)

Settings should also ensure that music, dance and drama, social distancing should be maintained wherever possible.

Catch-up support

We have announced a [£650m catch-up programme](#) for schools to have the opportunity to provide additional support to their individual needs, including extra support for those who will have missed.

£650 million of [additional catch-up programme](#) will be allocated to schools to support all children and young people to make up for lost learning and to ensure that all children and young people are on track to achieve their next stage of education, for all state-funded mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision settings, including independent provision, and state-funded hospital education schools. Allocations will be made to mainstream schools and state-funded special mainstream schools with a total of £80 for each pupil in years reception through to year 11.

Special schools, AP schools and hospital schools will be provided with £240 for each place for the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

It will be up to school leaders to decide how to spend the money. The government will publish guidance on how schools can use the funding.

For pupils with complex needs, we strongly encourage you to spend this funding on catch-up support to address their individual needs, including:

- speech and language therapy
- occupational therapy
- physiotherapy
- other small group and individual interventions - the government will publish guidance on how schools can use the funding to support children and young people with this cohort of pupils and students

This funding will be provided in 3 tranches. We will provide settings with an initial payment of £80 for each pupil (£240 for special schools and alternative provision and hospital schools) in the autumn. We will provide a second payment of £80 per pupil (£240 for special and alternative provision and hospital schools) in the spring term, and a third payment of £80 per pupil (£240 for special and alternative provision and hospital schools) in the summer.

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Extending provision set out in an EHC plan

We do not anticipate that children and young people will need to repeat year groups or extend their education beyond the end of the academic year in 2020 to 2021. The area aspire to finish with EHC plans by 31 March 2021. We do not anticipate that young people will need to remain in education any longer than usual because of the impact of COVID-19.

However, in a small number of individual cases, it may be appropriate for a child or young person to remain in education for a further year, beyond the date of their plan extended. In most cases, this would be because they are in a transition programme for a year or had been.

Any decision to do so should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the impact of the disruption caused by COVID-19 on their education.

Parents and young people can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if they disagree with the decision made by their local authority in relation to education, health and care (EHC) needs assessments.

Extending provision in a school setting for those aged 19 and over

School funding agreements do not allow for those aged over 19 to remain in a school setting unless given exceptional approval by the Secretary of State for Education.

In the exceptional circumstances that a school authority decides that a young person should be allowed to remain in a school setting beyond the age of 19, it will be for the school authority to make a formal request to the Secretary of State for Education for approval. Requests for approval should be made to schools.19 and over under the establishing [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) (ESFA).

Pupil wellbeing and support

Particular attention should be given to the wellbeing of students as a consequence of the disruption to their education. Some of the pupils and students returning to school may be particularly acute for vulnerable children and young people, including those who have been victims of abuse, those for whom school is a place of safety, those who are experiencing or at risk of being abused or neglected and those who have suffered or are subject to other educational settings, others may have enjoyed being at home and may find it difficult to return to school, others may have suffered bereavement or depression. Others will be anxious about being back in school, meeting their friends and readily to attend. Attending education settings allows social interaction and peer support, which is important for children's development.

The government has recently announced the [guidance for state-funded schools](#) to support their pupils' wellbeing. Schools will be required to provide a response to the wellbeing survey and to implement the guidance, which includes a focus on people as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). The training promotes practical ways to support the mental health and resilience of children and young people, and it includes a focus on how to support those who have been bereaved or have been affected by trauma and provides ongoing advice and support from the autumn until Christmas.

Settings can prepare by reviewing their pastoral offer to students, and ensure that they are equipped to disseminate the learning and practice to staff and pupils before you return. Schools should also consider how they will identify and support those who have been affected by the pandemic.

Additionally, DfE, PHE and NHS England hosted a free webinar for school and college leaders on 2 September 2020 to discuss how to support pupils' mental health. This included a discussion about how to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing and recovery technique, and education leaders discussing the approach to their school.

Whole School SEND (WSCSEND) co-produced 2 leaflets, funded by the DfE, to support young people with SEND and their families to have conversations with their school or college about their mental health and wellbeing, one for parents, and about [coping and managing school](#) transitions.

WSS have also produced resources to support schools and colleges to prepare for the return, which include a [mental health support toolkit](#), [self-care](#) and [self-care](#) for parents, and a [workbook to support teachers](#) to deal with their own mental health and wellbeing, and a [parent mental health](#) toolkit. Their service MHST (Mental Health Support Teams) are also offering a [training](#) for school and college staff on how to support pupils who have been bereaved, based on lay dates with further information.

We have published the Mental Health Foundation, Jac and Jayden education training modules to support teachers to deliver content on mental health and wellbeing, and the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families has also recently developed the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leadership Programme for confidence in talking and teaching about mental health and wellbeing in the classroom, and Mental Health First Aid England has developed a suite of resources on supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools.

Settings should design pastoral and extra-curricular activities to:

- support the wellbeing of students and promote resilience and agency
- equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- help pupils with bereavement, loss and other coronavirus-related trauma

They should provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified, including pupils who have been affected by the loss of a family member, those who have developed SEMH needs, those who have suffered a significant loss, like those in need, and any newly vulnerable groups. Teachers may wish to refer to the Mental Health Foundation, Jac and Jayden education training modules or use lessons, the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families has also developed a [coronavirus (COVID-19) self-guidance](#) to with advice and guidance for parents, carers, and teachers, and Mental Health First Aid England and young people's and adolescent mental health services have developed a guide to deal with further information.

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Behaviour expectations

Attending education is vital for the education of all children and for their wellbeing. Most children and young people will be keen to return to school, particularly for developmental and emotional reasons. Children and young people place value the structure and routine of regular attendance as well as the opportunity to see their friends and teachers. Children and young people need to be critical that all children have the opportunity to return to school, as it is clearly an educational.

We recognise, though, that the prolonged period of absence from schools and other factors may make this more difficult for some children and young people to school, resulting in anxiety which could lead to an increase incidence in poor behaviour. It is important that we do all we can to manage the transition back to school and the result of some children and young people being anxious about assessment is necessary.

Many parents and students will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and poverty, and some will have been victims of abuse. Schools will need to be aware of this and ensure that their behaviour policies are fair and that they are applied in a particularly vulnerable groups such as children with a social worker, previously looked after children, children with mental health difficulties, children with special educational needs and disabilities and access to services such as educational psychology, social workers and counsellors. Additionally, disadvantaged pupils may be more likely to have been affected by the COVID-19 school closure and they may be at greater risk of poor behaviour. Settings will need to work with local services (such as Health and the local authority) to plan for the additional pastoral support that some pupils will need.

Settings should clearly communicate their behaviour and zero tolerance approach with pupils and students, including any amendments to their behaviour policy, and consider how to communicate any updates clearly and consistently to all members of the school or college. Staff should be trained on the school or college's approach to managing behaviour and be acquainted with the guidance on behaviour and discipline in schools. They should set out clearly the behaviour they expect from pupils, and the consequences of not meeting the school's expectations. Staff should be fair, consistent and reasonable, taking any sanctions. This is particularly the case when considering restrictions on attendance at school, such as those who are self-isolating. Staff should work with pupils and students who have been disadvantaged by the coronavirus to understand and consistently supported, taking account of individual needs and circumstances, including those who have been affected by the loss of a family member.

Above expectations or lack of months of regular attendance and classroom routine, it is important that schools and teachers are able to deal with any behaviour resulting in an unsafe environment for students and staff. Schools should be able to use their behaviour policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Disruptive, including pressing such behaviour, or persistently breaching the expectations of the school, may result in a fixed period or permanent exclusion. Schools should consider how they can support such pupils in the school or off-site, for example, through a managed move or alternative provision. Schools should also ensure that the relevant safeguarding and welfare support is in place for such pupils, and permanently excluding any pupil with a social worker should be a last resort. Schools should also ensure that they are fulfilling their duties to children who are looked after and children who are previously looked after.

Children will continue to consider exclusions, including the rules, systems and reasons for exclusion and to look for any evidence of off-rolling.

Off-rolling is never acceptable.

Ofsted's clear that schools place pressure on parents to remove their child from school, or to home school their child, will be seen as off-rolling. Ofsted will also Deploy home education officers to support local authorities to discuss between parents the school, and the local authority about how the school has made reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of pupils with vulnerable children, children in need, and those at greater risk of harm or exploitation.

Section 4: Assessment and accountability

Inspection

Routine Ofsted inspections of state-funded settings will remain suspended for the remainder of the academic year. Ofsted will continue to carry out a number of settings for reasons, now they are managing the return to education at their pupils. These will be collaborative discussions, taking into account the impact of coronavirus on the school community, and will not result in a grade. Ofsted will not issue a judgement. Ofsted will publish a letter following the visit. The insights that inspection gather will also be aggregated nationally to provide a national picture of the impact of coronavirus on education. In addition, Ofsted has the ability to conduct inspections in response to significant concerns, such as safeguarding or a breakdown in leadership and governance.

Ofsted will continue to carry out Early Years inspections, independent and independent schools inspections suspended. During the autumn term, Ofsted will carry out a number of inspections of independent schools, where appropriate. They will also carry out a proportionate inspection in inspection to follow up on significant safeguarding concerns. These inspections will not result in a judgement or a grade.

Routine Ofsted and SI inspections are expected to restart from January 2021. The exact timing is being kept under review.

Primary assessment

We recognise that pupils will have missed a critical period of their education due to restrictions in 2019 to 2020 academic year. We are postponing national curriculum assessments in the 2020 to 2021 academic year (without disrupting the 2019 to 2020 academic year). We are also postponing the collection of teacher assessments for reading, writing, and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (Year 6) in this cohort of pupils (extending and being target support to local areas, and providing support to schools).

We are planning to the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) in the academic year 2021 to a current 2020. The early years foundation stage profile and assessing pupils' progress (APP) will be statutory for academic year 2020 to 2021 in accordance with their current guidelines. This includes:

- the physical screening check
- key stage 1 tests and teacher assessment
- the year 4 multiplication tables check
- the phonics screening check
- the year 2 and year 6 reading test

The statutory collection of the reception baseline assessment has been postponed until September 2020. The statutory collection of the reception baseline assessment (RBA) will be in the academic year 2021 to a current 2020. The early years foundation stage profile and assessing pupils' progress (APP) will be statutory for academic year 2020 to 2021 in accordance with their current guidelines. This includes:

- the physical screening check
- key stage 1 tests and teacher assessment
- the year 4 multiplication tables check
- the phonics screening check
- the year 2 and year 6 reading test

The statutory collection of the reception baseline assessment has been postponed until September 2020. The statutory collection of the reception baseline assessment (RBA) will be in the academic year 2021 to a current 2020.

In light of the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the 2020 to 2020 academic year will be a transitionary year (subject to the necessary legislation being passed). Schools will be required to administer the statutory assessments in the 2020 to 2021 academic year, but will be given the option to use teacher assessments (TeachMaths) in place. The KS2 pupils working below the standard of national curriculum assessments will be required to sit the KS2 tests.

Exams

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

For the summer 2020 exams, we recognise that pupils in years 11 and 13 have been disrupted in their learning and preparation for exams, and that this will be 2020 another year. It is vital that these pupils are able to sit and take up exam scores that lead to the qualifications they need to progress. We are working with Ofqual and the exam boards to ensure that the summer series 2020 can with adaptations, including those which will be put forward by Ofqual. Ofqual has consulted on proposed adaptations to exams and published its decisions at proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in summer 2020.

On Monday 12 August 2020, Ofqual and the government confirmed that, following the cancellation of summer 2020 exams, students will be awarded the centre assessment grade submitted by their school or college for A and AS level and GCSE qualifications, unless the standardised grade awarded lower than the grade calculated by the exam board, where the calculated grade will prevail.

Both final GCSE grades and revised A and A level grades were issued to schools and colleges on Thursday 13 August 2020. Pupils in year 11 and year 13 will use these grades to move onto their next step. There will also be an opportunity for students to sit exams in the autumn and Ofqual has confirmed that students who want to improve their grades will be able to do so. Further news. DfE is planning a comprehensive catch-up package for autumn GCSE, A level and exam series, sets out that expect the centre that entered them for the qualification in summer 2020 to be responsible for ensuring that responsibility for ensuring that they are available to students and pupils in exam series are ready. Our exam support service launched at the start of the autumn term to provide advice and guidance to schools and colleges. We will be sharing with schools exam series information and guidance including information on catching up during the pandemic is available at Responsibility for autumn exams.

Accountability expectations

Performance tables are suspended for the 2019 to 2020 academic year. No school or college will be judged on the basis of exam and assessment results in 2020. Until the new data release is available, all those working with settings, including governors, Ofsted inspectors, and parents, will need to be clear that the data they have access to is from previous academic years. Ofsted will provide information about support for settings with Ofsted judgements below good. More information is set out in the school and college accountability guidance.

Section 5: contingency planning for remote education

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

Contingency plans

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, remote education plans should be in place. Schools should meet the same expectations as those for pupils who cannot get attend settings at all due to coronavirus (COVID-19). See section on remote education expectations.

In local areas, where restrictions have been implemented for certain sectors (then national lockdown), we anticipate that schools will usually remain fully open to all. There is an additional requirement that has to coverage should be in place for those who are required to self-isolate. Schools should work with local authorities to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

In developing these contingency plans, settings should ensure that pupils and students can continue to benefit from the education, care and wider support and cares the support that their children are receiving and discuss the plans for returning to settings. They should support this and any additional needs they might need.

Special schools and specialist settings have an experienced, expert workforce including:

- special educational needs co-ordinators
- educational psychologists
- speech and language therapists
- qualified teachers of deaf and visually impaired children
- other therapists
- teaching assistants, often with specialist knowledge

Designing at home learning and support for children and young people with EHC plans could minimise any of the disruption, ensure that pupils receive interventions or learning materials. For example, it might involve designing a home environment, providing a sensory diet or other forms of sensory stimulation or selecting online learning resources.

When developing these contingency plans expect settings to:

- use a curriculum sequence that allows access to suitable high-quality online and offline resources and activities to support the teaching of the school's curriculum expectations for access to high quality appropriate resources and education resources.
- give clear guidance to pupils that will be consistently used across the school in order to deliver lessons assessment materials, and ensure that pupils are trained in their use
- provide suitable online lessons, such as textbooks and workbooks, for pupils who do not have suitable access online.

When teaching pupils remotely, we expect schools to:

- set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built cumulatively, and ensure that the curriculum is adapted to be taught and assessed online, as required
- provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher in the setting or through pre-recorded or live-streamed lessons
- gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, using assessment tools such as online quizzes, and ensure that teaching staff regularly check on how well pupils are engaging with their work, and are trained in their use
- provide suitable feedback on pupils' work, as feedback and workshops, for pupils who do not have suitable access online.

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Remote education expectations

In a place, may some number of pupils need to self-isolate or a local restrictions require pupils to remain at home, settings should have the capacity to offer a broad and balanced curriculum. Schools and colleges continue to improve the quality of their remote learning offer and have a strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision. This planning will be supported by the guidance and tools that the government has put in place. Schools and colleges should be able to deliver education remotely to pupils at home. We recognise that some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education at home independently. Settings should work with families to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

When developing these contingency plans expect settings to:

- use a curriculum sequence that allows access to suitable high-quality online and offline resources and activities to support the teaching of the school's curriculum expectations for access to high quality appropriate resources and education resources.
- give clear guidance to pupils that will be consistently used across the school in order to deliver lessons assessment materials, and ensure that pupils are trained in their use
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Sharing your risk assessment

Settings should share the results of their risk assessment with their workforce. If possible, they should consider publishing it on their website to provide transparency of approach to parents, carers and pupils (DSE would expect all employers with over 50 staff to do so).

Monitoring and review of risk controls

It is important that employers have fully effective their risk controls are. They should monitor and review the prevention and protective measures regularly to ensure the measures are working, and taking action to address any shortfalls.

Roles and responsibilities

All employers are required by law to protect their employees, and others, from harm. Under the Department of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum employers must do is:

- Identify what could cause injury or illness in the organisation (hazards).
- Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risks).
- Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risks.

Given the employer (and/or in special educational settings is varied, we have set out here what the school and college should do. Schools should ensure that the roles and responsibilities for health and safety in settings.

Settings should undertake a risk assessment for all settings staff and pupils. The day-to-day running of the settings is usually delegated to the headteacher or principal, who is responsible for ensuring that they are responsible for ensuring that risks are manageable. They include health and safety matters. Settings must appoint a competent person to ensure they meet their statutory duties. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of headteachers and competent persons. Settings should also ensure they have a competent person (other 'Who is health and safety in your workplace?').

References to actions by employers in this guidance may in practice be carried out by headteachers or leaders. The employer will need to ensure themselves that they have been carried out, as they retain the accountability. Settings should ensure that they have a competent person in place. Coronavirus (COVID-19) has accentuated the need for settings to undertake as one possible. Where pupils are already attending their setting, the employer is responsible for ensuring that the risk assessment is carried out and implemented. Those employers can this document to identify any further improvements they should make.

Wider guidance on the risk assessment process

Health and safety risk assessments identify measures to control risks during education and activities settings activities. Health and safety law requires the employer to assess risks and put in place measures to reduce the risks so far is reasonably practicable. The Health and Safety Executive provides guidance on risk assessments and the measures. Schools reduce these risks and education outcomes. Settings need to record significant findings of the assessment by identifying:

- the hazards
- how people might be harmed by them
- what they have in place to control risk

Records of the assessment should be recorded and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

Risk assessments consider what measures settings need to protect the health and safety of:

- staff
- pupils
- visitors
- contractors

Settings will need to think about the risks that may arise in the course of the day. This could include anything related to the premises or delivery of its curriculum/activities, whether on-site or in relation to activities offsite.

Consulting employees (general)

It is important that employers must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative of their choice. Small or micro-businesses may cannot have who the representative will be.

At its most effective, Ask Involvement of staff creates a culture where relationships between managers and staff are based on collaboration rather and joint problem solving. As a normal practice, staff should be involved in discussions about health and safety risks and how they are managed. Health and safety policies in settings with the employer. Consultation does not remove the employer's right to manage. They will still make the final decision but taking employees in an important part of successfully managing health and safety.

Resolving issues and raising concerns

Employers and staff should always come together to resolve issues. As a normal practice, staff should be involved in discussions about health and safety. Issues should only be escalated if they are not resolved. Employers should encourage employees to raise concerns and give them proper consideration. If they do not resolve the issue, the employee can then consult with HSE. Where the HSE identify employers, who are not taking action to manage risks properly, they can issue improvement or prohibition notices to the employer. They will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. The actions the HSE can take include the provision of advice and guidance, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

Approach to risk estimation and management

Some types of controls are more effective in reducing risks than others. Risk reduction measures should be assessed in order of priority as set out below. Schools should not assign higher priority to lower effective measures. Controls should be practical to be implemented and, ideally, should be able to be implemented with little or no disruption to education. Controls should be flexible to eliminate risks without causing new complications. The combination of controls introduced should aim to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable. Schools should consider the hierarchy of control when introducing individual ones. This does not just mean considering risks in isolation, but also balancing these against risks to wider health and well-being and to education. Schools should also ensure that the risks to staff, pupils and others from circumstances which compromise safety under health and safety legislation. Schools should work through the following steps to address their risks. Schools should consider the hierarchy of control when introducing individual ones. Schools can adopt before moving onto the next step:

- Elimination: stop an activity that is not considered essential if there are risks attached.
- Substitution: replace the activity with another that reduces the risk. Case in point: is essential introducing new bubbles due to the substitution.
- Engineering controls: design measures that help control or mitigate risk.
- Administrative controls, identify and implement the procedures to improve safety (for example, marking out the floor, signage).
- Wearing gear through this process, PPE should be used in circumstances where the guidance says it requires.

1. Pay 9.24 of the SEND Code of Practice states that, where parents want their child or young person to go to a school or college which is further from home than the nearest one that could meet their child's or young person's needs, then the local authority can pose to an agreement with the parents that the parents pay all or part of the costs of the transport if the local authority agrees to name the parents' preferred school or college. 2.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

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