Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Department for Education

Guidance

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

Updated 27 November 2020

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National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this guidance.

About this guidance

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

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

We are aware many providers have reopened and put safety measures in place. This document sets out national guidance to support them and advise on practical steps they can take to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of the virus for children, staff and parents who attend their settings. Currently, supervised activities, training and education for children can continue to operate at all restriction tiers both inside and outdoors.

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

For older children, there is not enough evidence yet to determine whether susceptibility to clinical disease is different to adults. Children and young people aged over 13 are still able to use out-of-school settings, but where older children are likely to attend, providers should be especially mindful of how to manage the risk of infection and transmission of the virus by putting in place the protective measures as outlined in this guidance.

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

Who is this guidance for?

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

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

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

What is an out-of-school setting?

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

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

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

Venue-specific guidance

The guidance in this section applies from 2 December.

National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

Out-of-school settings can occur in many kinds of venue, from a person's home to much larger and more formal places such as community and youth centres, sports clubs, and places of worship.

Specific protective measures guidance has been released for different types of premises. If you run your club, tuition or activity out of one of the premises listed, it is important that you understand and follow this guidance alongside the:

- guidance for places of worship
- guidance for community centres, village halls and other multi-purpose community facilities

- guidance for providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities
- guidance for outdoor sport and recreation
- guidance for full opening of schools
- guidance on working safely during coronavirus in other people's homes

Providers operating out of these premises should work with all the relevant parties (for example, the owner or voluntary management committee) to identify, agree on and distribute responsibility for protective measures to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). See carrying out a risk assessment for more information.

Home education

The guidance in this section applies from 2 December.

National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

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

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

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

Parents and providers should be aware that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children. Further information on safeguarding and managing the wellbeing of children is included in this guidance. Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Providers should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.

Carrying out a risk assessment

There are important actions that providers should take during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, to help prevent the transmission of the virus. Before restarting your provision, we strongly recommend that all providers consult advice set out by the Health and Safety Executive on coronavirus (COVID-19), including:

- Managing risks and risk assessment at work
- First aid at work
- First aid cover and qualifications during the coronavirus outbreak

Where premises may have been closed for some time, there are increased risks related to building, occupancy and water safety. You should ensure that all health and safety compliance checks, including a fire risk assessment, have been undertaken before opening by checking with the owner of the premises. As part of your risk assessment, you should identify protective measures to put in place, such as those listed in the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

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

You should share any significant findings of the risk assessment with your staff and on your website, if you have one. You should, as a minimum, be able to explain to parents and carers the reasonable steps you have taken to reduce the health and safety risks in your setting, and outline the protective measures you have in place. Where parents and carers will also need to be aware of protective measures that have been put in place by the owner of the premises that you are operating your provision out of, for example, you should outline these to them or direct them to the relevant website.

Considering group sizes

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

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

- the size or layout of your premises

To reduce the risk of transmission within a setting, providers should aim to minimise the number of different people each child comes into contact with.

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

Where it is not possible or it is impractical to group children in the same bubbles as they are in during the school day - for example, if you only have one or two children attending your provision from the same school or school day bubble - you may need to group children with other children from outside their school day bubble, or from a different school.

If you need to do this, you should seek to keep children in small, consistent groups of no more than 15 children with the same children each time, as far as this is possible (do not mix groups unless absolutely necessary) and have at least one staff member, depending on the type of provision or size of the group. This means that at the first session children should be assigned to a particular class or group and should then stay in those consistent groups for future sessions, that is on consecutive days or if attending one day per week, from one week to the next.

You should frequently review these groups to minimise the amount of 'mixing' (that is, the number of different people each child comes into contact with). For example, when new children register for your provision, you may wish to first determine whether they attend the same school or early years setting as other children in your setting and group them together if appropriate.

Potential challenges to achieving consistent groups may include:

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

To overcome such challenges, providers must use their best judgement in creating and frequently reviewing groups in order to minimise the amount of 'mixing'. To help you review your groups, you should also keep up-to-date records of the children attending your setting for at least 21 days, including the schools or early years setting that they attend and the specific groups and members of staff they have been assigned to in your setting.

Dependent on the factors listed, you may need to have groups of less than 15 children. As always, any decisions should be taken with full consideration of any ongoing welfare needs or safeguarding concerns.

Providers that are operating in areas where local restriction tiers are in place can continue to care for children within the same bubbles as they are in during the school day. If this is not practical then, as far as possible, in small, consistent groups of no more than 15 children and at least one staff member.

Operating with multiple groups

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

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

Group sizes for children under 5

Early years settings are not required to keep children in small, consistent groups within settings. This is based on attendance being more consistent than in other provision, early years settings typically being smaller than schools, and the risk levels relating to the youngest children. Settings should still consider how to minimise mixing. Therefore, if you are only caring for children under the age of 5 you should refer to the guidance for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak instead of this guidance.

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

Social Distancing

Providers should encourage children and young people to maintain social distancing where possible, and particularly:

- where young people will be in close proximity for a prolonged period
- where they are indoors
- for secondary age children where evidence suggests the risk of transmission may be higher than for younger children, and who are more able to maintain distance

It is particularly important that social distancing is observed by parents at pick up or drop off, by staff members, and as far as possible between staff members and children and young people attending the setting.

Social distancing reduces risk of transmission and infection, but there will be some situations where it is not possible. This is likely to occur:

- between younger children, who will find preserving consistent distance more challenging (whether indoors, or outside)
- in outdoor activities and sports where young people may come into fleeting but not sustained contact

Where it is not possible for children and young people in the setting to maintain social distancing, it is even more important that providers implement the other protective measures outlined in this guidance, such as frequent cleaning and hand-washing.

Educational visits and trips

The guidance for full opening: schools, sets out the department's position in relation to educational visits.

Overseas educational visits

We continue to advise against overseas educational visits. This advice remains under review.

Domestic (UK) overnight educational visits

We continue to advise against domestic (UK) overnight educational visits.

The department recognises the enormous benefits overnight residential educational visits can provide for children.

In February 2021, we will review the possibility of changing our advice for overnight residential education visits to resume from Easter 2021 on the proviso the scientific evidence supports any such change.

This advice will therefore be reviewed and updated again in February 2021.

Non-overnight domestic educational visits (day trips)

During the autumn term out-of-school settings have been able to take pupils on non-overnight domestic educational visits or trips. This includes visits for children with SEND connected with their preparation for adulthood (for example, workplace visits or travel training).

Providers offering non-overnight domestic trips should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they are planned and carried out safely and in line with relevant local and national restriction tier guidance, protective measures, such as keeping children within their consistent group and any coronavirus (COVID-19) secure measures on transport and at the destination.

Providers should consult 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 providers have any further questions about their cover or would like further reassurance, they should contact their travel insurance provider.

Effective infection protection and control

You must ensure that you have effective infection protection and control measures in place in your setting to reduce the risk of transmission, such as those outlined in the list below.

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

System of controls

Prevention

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

2) cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are

covered

3) ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

4) cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often than usual using standard products, such as detergents and bleach; see the guidance COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside the home

5) minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as layout) and timetables (such as allowing for sufficient changeover time to clean the area between different classes or groups of children and ensuring areas do not become overcrowded)

6) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

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

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

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

Response to any infection

7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the out-of-school settings community

9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

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

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

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

Indoor provision

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

If you operate your setting in a shared space, you should have regard to relevant guidance for operators of shared spaces, such as the guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities and the guidance for places of worship. It is the responsibility of providers that operate from these shared spaces to ensure that they are implementing the protective measures as set out in this guidance.

However, you should also discuss infection protection and control measures with the owner of the space, such as what measures are in place to clean the space between different groups of people using it and be clear on who is responsible for taking action if, for example, the timetable changes to more groups using the setting more frequently or government advice on cleaning changes.

The owners of these shared spaces must continue to meet all existing health and safety obligations with regard to ensuring that their premises are safe for providers to hire and to operate from.

Providers of music, dance and drama or sports provision

Particular care should be taken to observe social distancing in the case of a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe more heavily and more rapidly during exercise. In addition to referring to guidance for indoor sports providers and guidance for providers of outdoor facilities, providers of sports activities may also wish to refer to guidance from Sport England, and advice from organisations such as the Association for Physical Education and the Youth Sport Trust.

Additional social distancing mitigations were previously required for singing, wind and brass given concerns that these were potentially higher risk activities when droplet transmission was considered. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport commissioned further scientific studies to be carried out to develop the scientific evidence on these activities, which has allowed us to reconsider appropriate mitigations.

Children and young people can now engage in singing, wind and brass in line with the protective measures outlined in this guidance and paying strict attention to the working safely in performing arts guidance to mitigate any cumulative risks of aerosol transmission. Although singing and playing wind and brass instruments do not present a higher risk than speaking, for example, studies have indicated that there may be a cumulative risk that can build in particular contexts. As such with appropriate safety considerations, singing, wind and brass teaching can take place.

We are continuing to develop more detailed risk understanding but in that context, out-of-school settings providers should look to mitigate the potential aggregate risk of aerosol transmission. Providers could do this, for example, by ensuring that:

- they are limiting the number of children singing or playing together as far as possible and ensuring that children attending are in small groups of no more than 15, with the same children each time wherever possible and at least one staff member
- children are socially distanced (2 metres apart), are outside or in a well-ventilated room
- they are not singing loudly

Therefore, in summary, providers should ensure the following measures are put in place when children are singing or playing wind or brass instruments:

- social distancing is observed at all times whilst playing wind or brass instruments or singing (2 metres, wherever possible, or 1 metre with robust risk mitigation where 2 metres is not viable)
- children should use seating where practical to help maintain social distancing
- back-to-back or side-to-side positioning (rather than face-to-face) is used whenever possible
- position wind and brass players so that the air from their instrument does not blow into another player
- activities which can create aerosol are discouraged, such as shouting or singing loudly - we advise providers to use microphones where possible or encourage children to sing quietly
- singing or playing wind or brass instruments outdoors, wherever possible
- if playing wind or brass instruments indoors or singing indoors, you should limit the number of children attending to account for ventilation of the space and the ability to social distance
- take steps to improve ventilation as far as possible and whenever possible, either through the use of mechanical systems and/or opening windows and doors
- if hosting a performance, limit as far possible the number of performers and audience members
- steps are taken to encourage audiences to support the overall safety of the event, including seating individuals rather than allowing them to stand (to help maintain social distancing) and the other mitigations outlined in this guidance
- limit the duration of activity as far as possible, including considering the need for breaks and intervals
- continue to take the other vital steps outlined in this guidance, including preventing unwell people from attending, maintaining cleanliness, supporting contact tracing and other mitigating measures

By considering and adopting these cumulative risk mitigation measures, the overall risk will be reduced.

Providers in 'very high' local restriction tier areas should not host performances with an audience. In these cases, providers should use alternative methods such as live streaming and recording performances, subject to the usual safeguarding considerations and parental permission.

Providers in other local restriction tier areas planning an indoor or outdoor performance in front of an audience should follow the latest advice in the DCMS performing arts guidance, implementing events in the lowest risk order as described. If planning an outdoor performance they should also give particular consideration to the guidance on delivering outdoor events.

Use of shared resources

Equipment and resources are integral to many types of out-of-school activities. For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff, children and young people attending your settings have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble or small, consistent group; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between groups or bubbles, such as sports or art equipment should be cleaned frequently and always between groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different groups.

Outdoor playground equipment should be cleaned more frequently than usual, and where possible, between use by different groups of children. It is still recommended that children and young people limit the amount of equipment they bring into your setting to essentials such as hats, coats, and mobile phones as well as books, stationery or lunch boxes where required. Bags are allowed. Children and young people attending your setting and staff can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to education and development. Similar rules on hand cleaning, cleaning of the resources and rotation should apply to these resources.

Managing toilet usage

Different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered but is not a requirement if the site does not allow for it. However, you should consider how you can limit the number of children using the toilet at any one time. You should promote good hand hygiene and encourage all children to wash their hands thoroughly, with soap and running water for 20 seconds, after using toilet facilities.

As with all frequently used surfaces, toilets should be cleaned thoroughly using standard products such as detergent and bleach. The frequency of cleaning required will depend on usage but is advised to be more frequently than might have been previously considered appropriate. In most cases, we expect cleaning of toilet facilities to take place at least twice a day, and in particular between use by different classes and groups.

See COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance for advice on general cleaning of facilities when no one has symptoms of or is confirmed to have coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as advice for cleaning facilities after they have been used by someone suspected of having, or confirmed to have coronavirus (COVID-19).

Reviewing staff availability

As part of your risk assessment, you should consider appropriate staff:child ratios for your setting. You should have at least one staff member per school bubble or small, consistent group. More detail is outlined in the section considering group sizes.

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

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

> The guidance in this section applies from 2 December.
>
> National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

Since the introduction of shielding, many new measures have been introduced in communities, including the rule of 6, COVID-secure workplaces, and the widespread use of face coverings, all of which have reduced the need for restrictive shielding advice.

The government also has better data on new infections and has introduced local restriction tiers, with rules and advice based on the level of risk in a local area. As such, Public Health England have published updated guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19. It sets out the steps clinically extremely vulnerable people can take to protect themselves at each local restriction tier.

In most cases, staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable can still attend your setting as all workplaces should be COVID-secure. If you operate in an area where the local restriction tier is 'very high', then more restrictive formal shielding measures may be put in place for the clinically extremely vulnerable. This will only apply to some 'very high' restriction tiers and will be based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

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

As for all staff, this includes continuing to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social distancing in line with the latest staying alert and safe guidance.

When working out staff ratios you should consider how many staff you have available to work in your setting, as well as:

- Do you have at least one person with first aid training available to work in your setting?
- Do you have at least one person with up-to-date Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training available to work in your setting? You may want to consider a deputy DSL to cover in the event of the DSL being unwell or otherwise unavailable.
- Do you have a caretaker and / or cleaning staff available to work in your setting?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then you should find a solution to this before going further. If you are seeking a suitable person to temporarily cover these roles, it is important that you carry out the appropriate pre-employment checks to assess their suitability to work with children before allowing them to take up their post, such as taking up references and the appropriate level of criminal records checks (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks), including a 'children's barred list' check where relevant for the role.

In terms of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, a person is engaging in regulated activity if they frequently teach, train, instruct, supervise or care for children. If an individual is barred by the DBS but is engaging in this activity, including in out-of-school settings, they would be committing a criminal offence.

An unsupervised person undertaking these activities on a regular basis would also be eligible for an enhanced DBS check with barred list information, as part of this process. To understand which kind of check is right for your staff, DBS provides an eligibility tool which tells you which roles or activities could be eligible for a basic, standard or enhanced DBS check.

You should ensure that new staff members and volunteers understand and implement the protective measures you have identified while carrying out a risk assessment to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), such as those outlined in the section effective infection protection and control'.

Who can attend your out-of-school setting

The guidance in this section applies from 2 December.

National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

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

Out-of-school settings should not be used as a replacement for school or early years attendance.

When carrying out a risk assessment for your setting, you should consider disease transmission risks outside your specific location, such as the tendency for older children to mix with other community groups outside your setting or to use public transport to attend your setting.

Attending out-of-school settings can have a positive impact on the wellbeing of children and young people. However, it is crucial that we ensure we are minimising the risks to the nation's health. It is for this reason that parents and carers are being encouraged to limit the number of settings their children attend as far as possible, and ideally to ensure their children attend the same setting consistently. Providers are encouraged to consider measures they can put in place to reduce the extent to which children are mixing with others, such as by ensuring that children who attend your setting are assigned to a particular class or group when they return and stay in those consistent groups for future sessions, as far as it is possible. Children and young people from different schools can attend the same out-of-school setting, but providers, where possible, are encouraged to work with the schools that they attend to ensure they are, as far as possible, kept in the same consistent groups or bubbles that they are in throughout the school day.

You should also discourage attendance from children who live outside the local area. Ideally, children who attend your setting should live within walking or cycling distance.

Children who are clinically extremely vulnerable can attend educational settings in all local restriction tiers. However, the government may reintroduce more restrictive formal shielding measures for the clinically extremely vulnerable in the worst affected areas, based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer.

This will only apply to some very high local restriction tier areas, and the government will write to families separately to inform them if clinically extremely vulnerable children are advised to shield and not attend school. Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, can still attend education settings.

Local restriction tiers

The guidance in this section applies from 2 December.

National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

On 12 October the government introduced a system of local restriction tiers. If you live, work or volunteer in an area that has a 'high' or 'very high' restriction tier, there are additional restrictions. Read the local restriction tiers guidance to find out what tier your area is in and the additional restrictions that apply.

Currently, supervised activities, training and education for children can continue to operate at all restriction tiers both inside and outdoors. At the 'very high' restriction tier, the government may seek to agree additional interventions in consultation with local authorities to drive down the transmission of the virus.

Face coverings

The guidance in this section applies from 2 December.

National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings when children are participating in out-of-school settings activities. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required during out-of-school provision as children and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education. Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (except children under the age of 11), when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient, or when in a shop or a supermarket.

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

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

Out-of-school settings providers should also have a process for removing face coverings when children and staff who use them arrive at the setting and communicate it clearly to them. Children and staff must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all children and staff), dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered 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 group within the setting. Guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care provides more advice.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The majority of staff in out-of-school settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work.

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

- children, young people and learners whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way
- PPE should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from any child, young person or other learner displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

The Department for Education has published guidance on Safe Working in Education, Childcare and Children's Social Care Settings, including the use of Personal Protective Equipment which may be helpful for providers to refer to in order to understand when PPE should be used.

Providers should use their local supply chains to obtain the very limited amounts of PPE required. Providers may also be able to source PPE and cleaning products through The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) 'Safer Working Supplies' Portal. We have assurance that the suppliers and products listed on this portal have met standards set out by DHSC and that this route does not detract any supply from medical settings. In addition, Public Sector Buying Organisations (PSBOs) have pre-existing experience and relationships across our sector. Some of these organisations have e-catalogues offering PPE and cleaning products, including: ESPO, YPO, and NEPO.

Test and trace

The NHS Test and Trace service will help to manage the risk of the virus re-emerging as restrictions on everyday life are eased, as far as it is deemed safe to do so. The service:

- provides testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) to find out if they have the virus
- gets in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to gather information about any close recent contacts they have had
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus

It is vital that out-of-school setting providers play their part by:

- making their settings as safe as possible for staff, children and parents
- promoting the need to get tested if anyone is symptomatic
- requesting that workers self-isolate if they have been asked to do so
- supporting their workers when in isolation
- keeping records of which children and staff are in which groups and saving this information securely for at least 21 days
- where required, displaying an official NHS QR code poster from 24 September 2020, so that staff, visitors and other relevant setting attendees can 'check in' using this option as an alternative to providing their contact details

For more information, read NHS Test and Trace in the workplace.

If anyone in your setting becomes unwell with one of:

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

they should be sent home and advised to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

If a child in your setting has become unwell with any of these symptoms and is awaiting collection, they should:

- move, if possible, to a well-ventilated room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision
- move to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people, if it is not possible to isolate them or you offer provision outside
- use a separate bathroom if possible - this should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products and following the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance before being used by anyone else

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

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

If a member of staff has helped a child with symptoms, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, they should be tested) or the child subsequently tests positive (see 'What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting'). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area of the setting with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

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

Following the launch of the NHS COVID-19 app in England, out-of-school settings and wraparound providers may find it helpful to refer to the guidance on the use of the app in schools and further education colleges for more information on how the app can be used in settings that provide education or activities for children.

The app is a key part of the country's ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) response, aiming to extend the speed, precision and reach of NHS Test and Trace in England. The app will complement the overall service by automating some aspects of the process of contact tracing. Working together, NHS Test and Trace and the app are designed to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by alerting people who may have been exposed to infection so that they can take action.

The app is available to download for anyone aged 16 and over if they choose to do so. Staff members will also be able to use the app.

You should understand how the app relates to your setting's process for managing a positive case or an outbreak. The agreed process for ensuring a setting is aware of a positive case, as set out in What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting, is still in place and is not changed by the introduction of this app.

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

Where a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19) but tests negative, they can return to the setting. If they remain unwell, they should not return to that setting until they are recovered.

Where a child, young person or staff member tests positive, NHS Test and Trace will speak directly to those they have been in contact with to offer advice. This advice may be that the rest of their class or group within the setting should be advised to self-isolate. To support NHS Test and Trace in reaching close contacts, settings should keep a record of:

- children and staff in specific groups/rooms
- close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups/rooms and
- the timing of the activities/interactions

This should be a proportionate recording process but detailed enough to support the Test and Trace process and records need to be kept for at least 21 days.

If you become aware that a student or member of staff has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) in your setting, you can contact the new Public Health England service, delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority, if you need support on the action you should take. Call our existing coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline number on 0800 046 8687 and select option 1. The advice service is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm. The call will be with a dedicated team of advisors who will inform your setting of what action is needed based on the latest public health advice. They will work through a risk assessment to identify close contacts.

Depending on your setting's local arrangements, you may also want to inform your local authority of a positive case in your setting. Where more detailed local arrangements are in place with the local authority, and are working, your setting can continue to receive support through that route to take action in response to a positive case.

Communicating safe working measures with staff

You should familiarise yourself with the government guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure that you have put in place measures to create a safe environment for the staff and children attending your out-of-school setting.

Before reopening your provision, you should talk to staff about your plans and safety measures, including discussing whether training would be helpful.

If you employ cleaning contractors or staff then you should communicate additional cleaning requirements and agree additional hours to allow for this.

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

The Department for Education's guidance for full opening of schools includes information on principles for staff that you may also be able to apply to your own setting, and will be especially relevant if you offer classroom-based provision.

Communicating with parents

The guidance in this section applies from 2 December.

National restrictions are in place until 2 December. Read how the national restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

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

Consider these steps:

- use technology to communicate with parents and carers digitally where possible
- tell children, young people, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter your setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (following the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection)
- encourage parents to avoid using public transport to get to your setting. Ideally, they should walk or cycle where possible or use a private vehicle (provided they are only travelling with those from within their household)
- when allocating drop off and collection times to parents, avoid scheduling these during peak hours for public transport, this will be particularly important as more people return to work and school
- tell parents and young people their allocated drop off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use or limiting drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family and staggering timings)
- avoid the need for parents and carers to wait, but where they have to, consider whether physical distancing markings could be used and make clear they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors

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

Safeguarding and child protection

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children and they may be at increased risk of harm or abuse. Due to the current circumstances, vulnerable children may be particularly isolated, meaning that the family, community and professional networks they usually rely on may be unavailable or hard to access. Therefore, it is important that you and your staff are aware of the safeguarding issues that can put children at risk, such as abuse and neglect, and the signs to look out for.

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

- unusual injuries, including bruises, burns, fractures, bite marks or signs of

- unusual injuries, including bruises, burns, fractures, bite marks or signs of self-harm
- consistently poor hygiene, poor living conditions or inappropriate clothing
- communicating aggressively or using sexual language
- appearing withdrawn, guarded, anxious or frightened, particularly around certain individuals

If safeguarding issues come to light, they should be addressed using your setting's child protection and safeguarding policy, which you should consider updating ahead of reopening your setting.

If you have one or more employees or volunteers in your setting, then it is important to write down your child protection procedures to ensure that all staff members understand their responsibilities and know what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern, including what to do if a child makes a disclosure to you or your staff.

These should include details of your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL (if you choose to have one), and how to contact them, as well as contact details for local safeguarding services such as local authority children's social care, the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the police.

In addition, you may want to include details of Barnardo's recently launched See, Hear, Respond Service, which is a programme created to help children and young people in England who are experiencing harm and increased adversity during lockdown by providing support to those who are not being seen by schools or other key agencies.

You should review whether you or your staff need to refresh or undertake additional training on child protection and safeguarding issues before reopening your setting.

It will be especially important for providers to ensure that:

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they should act immediately
- appropriate designated safeguarding lead arrangements are in place
- unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- any volunteers are appropriately supervised. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Supporting children and young people's wellbeing

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

- individual children and young people who have found the long period at home hard to manage
- those who have developed anxieties related to the virus

Some children may also have experienced bereavements in their immediate family or wider circle of friends or family or had increased or new caring responsibilities.

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

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

Equality

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

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

When applying this guidance, organisations should be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers and individuals. Providers should be aware that some parents and carers may look to holiday clubs and out-of-school settings to offer respite childcare for children with special educational needs or with an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Parents or carers of disabled children may continue to access respite care to support them in caring for their disabled child. Further information on this is available in guidance for children's social care services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr Dog explains coronavirus.

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

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1. ‘School’ means all schools whether maintained, non-maintained, or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies, and pupil referral units. It includes maintained nursery schools. ↩
2. ‘College’ means further education colleges and sixth-form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and institutions designated as being in the further education sector. ↩
3. Most providers caring for children under eight years old must register with

Ofsted (on The Early Years Register or The Childcare Register) or a childminder agency, unless the law states otherwise. Exemptions are set out in the Childcare (Exemptions from Registration) Order (SI 2008/ No 979) and are summarised in the Registering with Ofsted guidance for childminders and childcare providers. Providers who are exempt from compulsory registration may still apply to register on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register if they meet its requirements. ↩

4. Full-time is not defined in law. Further information on institutions that must register at schools is contained in the department's guidance on registration. ↩

5. If a child meets the definition of disabled child within the meaning of s.17(11) of the Children Act 1989, the LA must provide short break services to the individuals who provide care for such children under paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989. If a child with SEND does not meet the s.17(11) definition, the LA can carry out an assessment of the child's needs and offer short break services if appropriate under s.17 (1). ↩

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