Guidance

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

Updated 9 January 2021

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Use of shared resources

Equipment and resources are integral to many types of out-of-school settings and can include equipment, toys, resources and tools for children and adults. It is recommended that children should not share equipment unless your settings have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based settings may wish to have some items that are shared between children, such as tablet or small, commonly used equipment, but should ensure that these are with frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between children should be cleaned regularly and children should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently and always before and after they have used shared equipment and should be kept out of reach of children (e.g. in cupboards between use by different groups).

Outdoor playground equipment should be cleaned more frequently than indoor equipment, such as after each session and children should be encouraged not to touch other children's or young people's kit or equipment. Any equipment they bring into your setting to essentials such as hats, coats, and bags should be placed in their own designated area, such as a coloured flipup peg allocated. Children should be encouraged to keep their belongings in their designated area and not to touch other children's belongings. Unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute significantly to children's enjoyment or learning. Encourage frequent cleaning of the resources and children should apply to these resources.

Managing toilet usage

Different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered if this is practicable and if it is not, then it may be helpful to keep a record of children to be able to contact the number of children who have attended on any one day. Keep processes going toward hygiene and encourage all children to wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, dry their hands, and use hand gels regularly.

As with all frequently used surfaces, toilets should be cleaned thoroughly and regularly throughout the day, and at least once a day. Ensure that cleaning equipment and products are kept out of reach of children. Hand trays than might have been previously considered appropriate. In most cases, we would recommend that children should be encouraged to use their own toilet paper between their own designated areas.

See COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance for advice on general cleaning of facilities and the Health Protection Agency's guidance on hand coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as advice for cleaning facilities after suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) has been in contact.

Reviewing staff availability

Out of out of out of quarantine, you should consider appropriate staff child ratios for your setting. If necessary, it would be appropriate for one staff member to supervise children in two or more groups, if risk assessments have determined that it is safe to do so. Ensure that any deployed staff are suitably outlined in the section considering the wider risks.

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

Following the reintroduction of shielding, clinically extremely vulnerable staff are advised to continue to take extra precautions. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are those identified through a letter from the NHS, or who have a GP or specialist medical practitioner who has advised that they are part of shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable) group. Clinically extremely vulnerable staff are identified as clinically extremely vulnerable should follow the published guidance.

Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported to carry out their roles.

Those living with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable can still attend work where home working is not possible.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable staff can continue to attend school where it is not possible to work from home. Where it is possible to work from home, clinically vulnerable staff should continue to do so.

This includes being particularly prone to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social distancing in line with the provisions set out in the 'prevention' section of the guidance. This guidance does not mean that staff should not be in contact with other people or attend this is not possible under the current circumstances, but it does mean time spent within close range of others. While the risk of transmission between children is very low, the risk of transmission to adults is higher and adults should be encouraged to keep their distance from other adults and children and adolescents.

People who live with those who are clinically vulnerable, or clinically extremely vulnerable, can attend the workplace, but should ensure they follow the guidance on hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing.

Pregnant women who are clinically vulnerable or who are clinically extremely vulnerable should be available to work in your setting, as well as:

- Do you have at least one person who will be training available to work in your setting?
- Do you have a risk assessment which up-to-date Occupational Safeguarding Risk Assessment (OSRA) and Health and Safety Risk Assessment? They ought to consider a daily DSL to cover in the event of the DSL being unwell or unable to attend.
- Do you have a contingent plan for staffing if a pandemic affects 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 supervise children, you should be able to demonstrate that it is appropriate and proportionate for them to cover the children in your setting with children before allowing them to take up their post, such as taking a DBS check and ensuring they are not barred from working with children. Further information is available in the Safeguarding and Child Protection section of this document.

In terms of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, a person is engaging in regulated activity if they are supervising children in your setting supervise or care for children. If an individual is barred by the DBS but is supervised by someone who is not barred, they are not engaging in regulated activity and can be allowed to work.

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 the process. To understand which kind of check is required, see DBS: guidance for employers. If a person who is barred from work in a setting is supervised, it is important that they are not left with children.

You should ensure that new staff members and volunteers understand and implement the practices being put in place in your setting. Please see our risk assessment to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) such as those outlined in the section infection control and cleaning.

Who can attend your out-of-school setting

For the duration of the national lockdown, out-of-school settings should only offer face-to-face provision to:

- children of critical workers, where it is reasonably necessary to enable their parents to work, attend a training course, attend a training or attend a medical appointment
- children in vulnerable groups

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

Where settings are not open to provision for your setting, you should consider distance transmission risks outside your specific location, such as the transport, the surrounding area, and the ability to maintain distance from settings is an public transport or other public spaces.

Attending out-of-school settings can have a positive impact on the wellbeing of children and young people, and parents. It is crucial that we are minimising the risks to the nation's health. It is for this reason that parents should be encouraged to keep their children at home if they are not in the children attend as the provision, and children should not attend children attend the same setting consistently. Providers are encouraged to consider ways to limit the number of children who attend, and to encourage children to attend regular sessions, and to encourage that children who attend your setting do not also attend other out-of-school settings. Providers should also be aware that in these consistent groups for future sessions, as far as it is possible. Providers should also be aware that in these consistent groups for future sessions, as far as it is possible. Providers should also be aware that if a child or young person is tested or attend the same out-of-school setting, children and young people are encouraged to work with the schools that they attend to ensure they, as far as possible, are able to test their children and young people in the same way as their children and young people.

You should also discourage attendance from children who live outside the local area. Ideally children should attend a setting close to their home, ideally a cycling distance.

Providing access to childcare is crucial, so all children derived clinically vulnerable should be encouraged to attend a setting. Guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care has published updated guidance on shielding and vulnerable people to help clinically extremely vulnerable people understand the additional measures they can take to protect themselves from infection and transmission of the virus during the national lockdown.

Face coverings

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. The evidence and lack wider review. They are not recommended for children who are not able to tolerate them properly, for consistent groups, and because there are some concerns around their use in

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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