Part of Education, universities and childcare during coronavirus

Guidance

What parents need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19

Updated 30 March 2022

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Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for parents and carers of children at:

- registered nurseries and childminders[Footnote 1]
- maintained and academy schools (including special schools and alternative provision)[Footnote 2]
- further education colleges[Footnote 3]
- independent children and youth residential settings

This guidance is for parents and carers of children in:

- the Reception to Year 6 bubble
- the changes to GCSE assessments, as of 14 April 2022
- the changes to A level assessments
- secondary school and college bubbles
- wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity
- Year 7 catch-up
- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable
- information on confirmatory PCR tests in the Asymptomatic testing, secondary schools and college clusters section

Overview

As of 24 March, all children and students should be attending school and college (secondary school children and students who are self-isolating). All nurseries and childminders remain open. Face coverings are no longer required in schools.

The Prime Minister and the Education Secretary announced that **masks** will be no longer mandatory requirements of children and young people visit have to symptomatic or very high risk of transmission. Face coverings are no longer required in schools and colleges.

To continue to manage the risks, nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will carry on implementing the range of practical measures they have been using throughout the autumn term. We have further strengthened these measures to help manage the risk from Omicron. We will keep under review the need to implement further these measures as we did last year to follow.

Your child's nursery, childminder, school or college can give you more information about the measures they have in place.

Nursery and childminders

Whether your child attends nursery, a childminder or another early years setting in your district, but we do encourage you to take up a place for your child. Attending childcare is important for your child's development and for their future education.

Your child's setting is eligible for up to five free childcare entitlements through Childcare Choices. These are worth an average up to £2,500 a year for parents of some 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds, and up to £5,000 a year for parents of 2 year olds, who are eligible for 30 hours free childcare.

School and college

Front-R Parent attendance at school is once again mandatory. Mandatory attendance means that parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children of compulsory school age fully attend school every day they are registered at one. Local authorities and schools have a range of legal powers to enforce attendance if a child or young person is not attending school regularly.

There is not a compulsory age for your child to attend school. It is mandatory for children to attend. Their college may believe they have left the course. We expect that every 16 and 17 year old, and most 18 year olds, will be participating in education or training in some form.

We know some parents will be feeling anxious about their children returning to school or college. If you have concerns about your child attending, you should discuss these with your school or college. You should also be able to explain ways they are changing things to reduce risks.

Self-isolation and shielding

A small number of children and young people may be unable to attend in line with public health advice for self-isolation. You should not send your child to school or college if they:

- have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or live in a household with someone who has coronavirus
- have tested positive for coronavirus, even if they do not have symptoms
- live in a household with someone who has tested positive, even if that person does not have symptoms
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- are required to self-isolate for travel-related reasons

Shielding advice is being paused nationally from 26 March. Until this date all clinically extremely vulnerable people should continue to follow the shielding advice. Further guidance for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19) is available.

From 1 April, all clinically extremely vulnerable children should attend their nursery, school or college. Children who are clinically extremely vulnerable are at high risk of any severe impact of COVID-19 infection. Some people under shielding advice are special cases and have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend.

If you are anxious about your child's attendance you should speak to their nursery, childminder, school or college about your concerns and discuss the measures that have been put in place to make your child's setting as safe as possible. Your child's setting will be put in place to ensure that your child can regularly attend.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable should still attend school or college.

If your child is unable to attend school or college for these reasons, your school or college will be able to provide education remotely. Your child's school or college will offer you additional support and enable them to be prepared for your child's return to school or college and systems in place to keep in contact with them. The education setting will also be able to provide information on how your child can be kept safe and what the best way to maintain contact and offer support to your child. The Department for Education has place procedures to check that your child is able to access remote education support. This support from schools and colleges will be provided and to regularly check in with your child.

If your child is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), he may be asked to self-isolate, you do not need to self-isolate unless your child tested positive. This also applies to other members of your household (including any other children in the same school or college).

If your child has been a close contact of someone who has tested positive, and then develops symptoms but has a negative test result, they will still need to self-isolate for the full 10 days from the day after contact with the person who tested positive.

Alternative provision, special schools and special post-16 provision

From 8 March, school attendance is mandatory for all pupils. Sick children and young people should be provided with education, including those in alternative provision settings, unless they receive a positive test result or have been isolated.

Special post-16 institutions should continue to allow students to attend as per their usual timetables.

Your child's school or college should continue to work collaboratively with you to agree an approach that is your child's needs.

Elective home education

We encourage you to send your children back to school and consider home parents may choose to home school their children. Elective home education (EHE) is a parental decision and should not be entered into lightly. Of course, it should only be made if it is in the best interests of your child. You can find out more about EHE on the GOV.UK site.

Parents who are considering home education due to concerns around safety should discuss these with their school, to see what safety measures have been put in place.

If your child is not currently enrolled at a school and you want them to be admitted to a school, you should contact your local authority. Your local authority will be able to tell you which is suitable for your child and facilitate a place. Your local authority website will be a useful place to find information about local schools. Your local authority website will be a useful place to find information about local schools.

Schools are not required to provide any support to parents who have withdrawn their children. Your local authority is responsible for ensuring your child is safe. Your local authorities can provide support and guidance to families who seek to home educate but this is discretionary.

Boarding and residential schools and colleges

Some of Parents pupils can return to boarding and residential schools and colleges.

Nine guidance has been issued on the quarantine arrangements for boarding school students travelling to attend a boarding school in England when their home country requirements and have travelled from a through a 'red list' country in the previous 10 days.

Anyone who is not a British or Irish national, or who does not have the right to live in the UK (this includes those with long-term visas), who has travelled from or through a 'red list' country in the previous 10 days, is not permitted to enter the UK and should not travel.

If your child needs to travel from abroad to return to boarding school, you will need to confirm if you are able and can travel to the UK under the current rules. You should not travel unless the school has confirmed that they have appropriate arrangements in place for your child.

Students who are coming from an approved country or area (green or amber on the traffic light list) should be able to travel and continue in their school's boarding facility. They will need to follow the quarantine package, with coronavirus (COVID-19) testing to be taken on arrival in the UK.

If your child needs US entry requirements and has travelled from or through a 'red list' country in the previous 10 days, the requirement to quarantine in a government-approved quarantine hotel applies. Students who are coming from a red list country will need to confirm that they have arrangements in place that allow for transport, accommodation, and testing that meet these requirements, then your child should not travel.

Holidays

You should plan your holidays within school and college holidays as usual. Avoid seeking permission to take your children out of school or college during term time. You should make sure any travel is in line with the national travel guidance.

Keep in mind that you and your children may need to self-isolate when you return from a trip overseas.

Helping make nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges as safe as possible

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges have their own health and safety risk assessments, and keep them under review.

As part of this, there are certain approaches that we have asked nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to implement that are essential to keep children safe. They will continue to carefully implement these measures. The way to control the risk from Omicron is the same as the way to control the risk from other variants. We strengthened some of the measures to support the return of all pupils and students.

Actions for nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges

We have asked nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to continue to:

- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the nursery, childminder school or college, and their close contacts, in line with public health advice, including contacts with people who are not expected to self-isolate by recording that they do not attend the setting. Your child should not attend if they have tested positive or we have identified your child as a close contact of someone who has tested positive. Your school will contact them the day of contact with an individual who tested positive and the next full 10 days. If they have been in close. Nurse face contact with someone who has tested positive.
- ensure that everyone follows their hands thoroughly and more frequently than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms or when they return to the classroom, and before the 30 people and after using shared running water or hand sanitiser
- ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- maintain enhanced cleaning and ventilation, including ventilating classrooms and surface more often

Schools and colleges will minimise contact and encourage maintaining distance as far as possible. It will be different for each school or college. This will involve setting children and young people by

- stay within specified separate groups or bubbles
- maintain distance between individuals

We know that primary school children and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) find it harder to maintain distance. We know that for these children the emotional will be disruptive and harmful.

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group.

Maintaining distinct groups, or bubbles, that do not mix makes it quicker and easier to trace and control any outbreaks. Children who may need to self-isolate and to keep that number as small as possible.

Face coverings

In schools and colleges where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by everyone (unless exempt) when moving around the school or college and in communal areas. In corridors and communal areas, we recommend physicing cannot easily be maintained.

In these schools and colleges, we are also recommend that face coverings should be worn in classrooms and during activities, unless social distance has been agreed. This will not apply in situations where a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in education or other activities. Face coverings will not be required for those who need to be seen by pupils or students when speaking or signing.

The wearing of face coverings in classrooms is being introduced for a limited time until Easter. It will be kept under review and our guidance will be updated if need.

This does not apply to children in nurseries, childminders and primary schools, who should not wear face coverings. We also recommend that face coverings in other settings or situations where social distancing between adults is difficult. They will therefore are you and other visitors to our face coverings if you come on site.

In colleges, students may be asked to wear face coverings when:

- the teaching setting is more similar to an, or a workplace environment
- it is a requirement in the workplace or in other environments they may visit as part of their course, such as healthcare or childcare settings

It is important that face coverings are worn correctly. Schools and colleges will let you and your children know the expectations for making sure face coverings are fitted, worn, stored and disposed of properly.

Public Health England (PHE) has published guidance on how to make a simple face covering.

Some pupils, students and adults may be exempt from wearing face coverings. These exemptions will be kept to a minimum and colleges, so any requirement to wear a face covering does not apply to someone 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 communicate with a hearing, clear sound or facial expression to a communicate
- would be unable to see, or would be very difficult to see, a face covering

Transparent face coverings which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, facial expressions or mouth movements to see the face of the speaker. We are currently limited evidence regarding the effectiveness or safety of transparent face coverings, but they may be more effective in reducing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) than wearing a face covering at all.

Asymptomatic testing

Most nurseries, schools and colleges will participate in the asymptomatic testing programme. This testing is in addition to the measures in place to reduce the spread of the virus face-to-face education by helping to identify people who are infectious but do not have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. Regular testing in schools and colleges is intended to reduce transmission of the virus and keep everyone safe. It will also contribute to face-to-face education. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged.

Nurseries and primary school children

Pre-school children and primary aged pupils do not need to be regularly tested. Testing of this age group is not as effective at identifying cases and is not likely to reduce transmission of the virus and keep everyone safe. PCR tests have shown to be currently limited public health benefits attached to testing primary pupils with LFDs. Nurseries and primary schools will not be asked to offer children. Very few PCR testing processes unless and are unable to self-isolate.

Secondary school pupils and college students

Secondary aged pupils and students in school and college (year 7 and above) have been offered on site testing.

Secondary aged pupils and college students have now been given home test kits and asked to regularly test themselves twice a week at home and report results to NHS Test and Trace. Regular testing at home will find those who are infectious but do not have any symptoms, meaning that they can be isolated and prevent further transmission of the virus.

Home testing is also now available for independent training providers and adult community learning providers. The home tests will include instructions for testing and reporting results. Schools and colleges will retain their own small testing sites so that pupils who are unable to test themselves at home can be supported.

Students aged 18 and over should self-test and report the result, with assistance if needed, to NHS Test and Trace. Students should be encouraged to report their results to report. You or another adult may contact the test if necessary. If you are a student and attending a secondary school, you are another adult should contact the test.

If your child test positive, they will need to:

- self-isolate with the rest of their household members (if they test positive at school, you will be contacted to collect your child)
- book a PCR test to confirm the result (unless they have recently had coronavirus (COVID-19) and tested positive in the last 90 days)

If the PCR test is taken within the 2 days after the positive LFD result, and is negative, it overrides the LFD test and your child can return to school or college.

Testing is voluntary and we will not be tested unless appropriate consent is given. We strongly encourage anyone who can (that is) to take part to help a test chain of transmission and keep their school or college open. If your child is a close contact of someone who has tested positive, they should be tested as soon as they can and for 7 days.

Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in this programme or not, should still book a PCR test. The Government will publish updated guidance and results of their test and trace.

If you have any questions about the asymptomatic testing programme, please speak to your school or college.

Asymptomatic testing for parents and adults in households with children at school or college

About 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms but can still pass it on to others. Regular testing helps to find people who are infectious but do not have the support children of young children, nursery, primary and secondary schools and colleges, without symptoms can also have access regular lateral flow tests (LFD) to identify and isolate.

Children of primary school age are not asked to test and they are not tested.

There are different ways for a household, childcare or support bubble to collect their test to take at home twice weekly:

- through an employer, if they offer testing to employees
- at a local test site – you may need to book an appointment
- by collecting a home test kit from a local test site – anyone aged 18 or over can collect a test for someone else
- by ordering a home test online – do not order online if you are able to collect testing through other routes, this frees up tests delivery for those who need it most

Testing and protective measures in secondary schools and colleges

Secondary asymptomatic testing, secondary schools and colleges should continue to put in place a range of protective measures to minimise the risk of infection spread and existing protective measures set out in actions for nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges. Face coverings are no longer required in schools and colleges. Face coverings, however, remain important for those in high contact settings.

A negative antigen (LFD result) should not be read as a means to relax or ignore social distancing or other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission. Asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the government's testing policy for those with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or those that contribute to reducing risk in nurseries, schools and colleges.

Managing cases in nurseries, schools and colleges

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Your child's school or college will contact parents/carers directly.

- have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) among pupils or staff within 10 days
- see an overall rise in child or staff absence rates where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected

The local health protection team will advise and support actions as required. Closure will not usually be necessary, but some groups may need to self-isolate.

A better will be sent by your from your child's school if your child is asked to self-isolate. If your child is a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, we will allow you to apply to your local authority for financial support under the Test and Trace support payment scheme.

Actions to take if your child has symptoms

Do not send your child to their nursery, childminder, school or college if:

- they are showing one or more symptoms (COVID-19 symptoms)
- someone in their household is showing symptoms
- they have been in contact with someone who has tested and they have been in close contact with them since the symptoms started or during the NHS test and trace 10 day period
- they or someone in their household has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- they are required to follow travel-related quarantine requirements

Book a test if you or your child develop symptoms. Inform your nursery, childminder, school or college of the results.

If the test is positive, follow guidance for households with a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test. Your nursery, childminder, school or college will be in touch.

Other household members (including any siblings) should self-isolate for the day your child's symptoms started (or the day they took a test if they did not have symptoms), and the next 10 full days.

If your child or someone in your household has tested positive while not experiencing symptoms, other household members should self-isolate for the rest of the day they took the test and the next 10 full days.

If your child displays symptoms, or has a positive test, while at school or college, they should not use public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a household member or other adult who is able to follow the guidance. If your child is not able to be collected and they cannot walk, cycle or scooter home, alternative arrangements may need to be organised by the nursery, childminder, school or college.

Your child does not need a test if they:

- have a runny nose, are sneezing or feeling unwell, but do not have a temperature, cough or loss of, or changes in, sense of smell or taste
- have been vaccinated against coronavirus (COVID-19) or have recently had coronavirus (COVID-19), for example, they are unlikely to pass on coronavirus (COVID-19) to others
- have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), for example, they have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and is asked to self-isolate, you do not need to self-isolate unless your child tested positive. This also applies to other members of your household (including any other children in the same school or college).

If your child has been a close contact of someone who has tested positive, and then develops symptoms but has a negative test result, they will still need to self-isolate for the full 10 days from the day after contact with the person who tested positive.

Financial support to care for a child who is self-isolating

If your child has been advised to self-isolate by their education or childcare setting (and where they have not been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace) and you are on a low income, unable to work from home and need to take time off work to care for your child, you may be eligible for a payment. You may be eligible for a payment of £500 from your local authority.

You do not require an NHS Test and Trace 10-day isolation notice to claim and your school's risk assessment or letter advised you to self-isolate with NHS Test and Trace 10-day isolation.

To be eligible, you must be either:

- the parent or carer of a child that is aged 15 and under
- the parent or carer of a young person aged 16 or 17 with an Education Health and Care Plan

Further information on claiming financial support under the Test and Trace support payment scheme is available.

Your nursery, childminder or school should provide you with a template letter, detailing the dates your child was asked to self-isolate. Your local authority may also request other evidence of supporting documents as part of your application to qualify for a payment. Apply for the Test and Trace support payment scheme. You will not be able to apply for financial support without this letter.

When you apply for the Test and Trace support payment scheme your local authority will need to check your National Insurance number and your benefit entitlement to verify your eligibility. This includes your child's name, your National Insurance number. This is a standard check against fraudulent claims, and may take place before or after a payment is made.

Arriving at and leaving nursery, the childminder, school or college

Some nurseries, childminders, schools or colleges may need to stagger or adjust their start and finish times to avoid large groups of people gathering at the entrance of a nursery, schools or colleges choose to do this it should not reduce the amount of time children and young people spend in school meaning that your child's start or finish times change.

We are encouraging parents and any school transport providers to use active travel to coordinate, as necessary.

Your nursery, childminder, school or college will be in touch to set out any changes they are making. They might also include:

- new processes for drop-off and collection
- not allowing parents at the school gates
- not being allowed onto the site without an appointment

Help nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges manage these arrangements, for example by leaving your distance from others when dropping off and picking up your child.

Dedicated and public transport should continue to be in place to enable children and young people to travel to school or college.

Using public transport

Everyone needs to play their part in reducing the demand for public transport. If possible, please use other modes of transport between lessons, especially walking or cycling or scooting, particularly at peak times.

We will keep to ensure that there is enough public transport capacity to allow those who need to use it to travel safely. It will also benefit your family's health. See the guidance from:

- Living Streets on walking to school
- Sustrans on travel by cycle or the school run

Your child's school or college will be expected to get to their nursery, childminder, school or college (the 'child care facility') by assuming it will apply. In some areas, local authorities may be providing extra dedicated school or college transport services to help children and young people get to school or college.

You and your children must not travel to nursery, childminder, school or college if you or your children have been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19) or have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Free home to school transport for eligible children

Local authorities' duties to provide free home to school transport for eligible children is unchanged. This is set out in the Series 1 to school travel and transport guidance

Your local authority might ask you to accept a personal travel budget or mileage allowance instead of free home to school transport. This is only if they think there is enough dedicated transport capacity for everyone who needs it.

You should accept that offer if you can. It will not affect your child's eligibility for dedicated transport in the future. The local authority cannot make you accept if you do not want to or can not do it.

Local authorities will not expect you to commit to accepting a personal budget or mileage allowance for the remainder of the academic year. It will be reasonable for remote home to school transport after year.

Using dedicated school or college transport

Local authorities, schools, colleges and transport providers will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport, on dedicated school or college transport. This means:

- dedicated school or college transport offers carries the same number of passengers on a regular basis, this limits the number of contacts children have
- children and young people on dedicated school or college transport do not mix with members of the public

Local authorities, schools and transport providers will do all that is reasonably practicable to maintain social distancing where possible and minimise the risk of transmission. What is practicable is likely to vary according to local circumstances. This might include:

- asking your child to use a regular seat and sit within their bubble or with the same people they have been sitting next to
- making sure boarding and disembarking is orderly and in manage
- making sure vehicles are cleaned regularly
- making sure there is good ventilation, encouraging fresh air when travel
- ensuring that transport operators maximise the flow of fresh air

It is important that you follow any local advice provided and that your child knows and understands the importance of following any rules that are in place.

Wearing face coverings when travelling to and from school and college

Most children and young people aged 11 and over are now required to wear a face covering on school transport. This is also now required to apply to children and young people who are learning from home or in a bubble.

The Department of Health and Social Care has advised on when to wear a face covering. If your child is aged 11 or over, they must wear a face covering on school transport or dedicated transport to secondary schools or college, unless they are exempt. It's important that children and young people who are required to do so do so safely. They will need to ensure that they have a suitable face covering.

If your child needs to share a car to school or college with someone outside of their support bubble or household, they should:

- share with the same people each time
- wear a face covering
- wear a face covering if they are aged 11 or over

It is really important that face coverings are worn correctly. Schools and colleges will let you know their policy for making sure face coverings are put on, removed, stored and disposed of properly.

Curriculum

Schools will continue to teach a broad and balanced curriculum in all subjects, and will use their professional judgement to plan and teach the curriculum that best suits their content. In some exceptional circumstances, schools may consider it appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils, but only where this is the best interest of the pupil and in discussion with parents.

Colleges are expected to continue delivery so that students of all ages can benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum.

There may need to be changes to some subjects, such as sport and performing arts subjects, so that schools and colleges can teach these subjects as safely as possible. Schools and colleges will need to decide how subjects will be provided to pupils attending school. Find out more in Nursery, schools, childminders, schools and colleges in safe as possible.

Catch-up support

We know that extended schools and colleges closures have had a substantial impact on children and young people's learning.

We have made available £1.7bn in funding to support education recovery.

In June 2020 we announced a £1bn catch-up package including the National Tutoring Programme and Catch-up Premium for schools and colleges. In February 2021 we announced a £200 million package including the Recovery Premium, the Covid Tutoring programme and a Recovery Premium for non-academies.

Funding will support pupils across early years settings, schools and colleges.

Remote education

Schools and colleges have been working hard to implement remote education effectively.

Schools

Since 8 March, attendance has once again been mandatory for all school-aged pupils. Schools and local authorities cannot direct children to stay away from school for any government guidance or law relating to coronavirus (COVID-19), for example if they are shielding or isolating. Under-fives/all schools have a duty to provide education for them.

Independent schools also need to provide remote education in these circumstances for meet the necessary standards.

Where is needed, schools should provide remote education equivalent in length to the teaching your child would usually get in school. This will include live teaching and direct teaching time, as well as time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. Schools should use their judgement to plan a broad and balanced curriculum, and should provide remote education to them learning and progress.

3 hours a day for key stage 1 (years 1 to 2) on average, with time for younger children
4 hours a day for key stage 2 (years 3 to 6)
5 hours a day for key stages 3 and 4 (years 7 to 11)

Schools should also provide a broad and balanced education offer on their website. It should include details of the amount of quality of the remote education they are receiving, you should take to their school or headteacher. If you have used the school's remote education offer, you should let your child's teacher know which Choices School will consider the complaint and take action where appropriate.

Colleges

For students aged 16 to 19 or under, Ofsted expect that every 16 to 19 provider will be able to offer a full-time education of at least 15 hours per week to the majority of their planned hours of use.

Where students are unable to attend on site for coronavirus (COVID-19)-related reasons, providers should offer a full-time education of at least 15 hours per week. Ofsted provide remote education to minimise disruption to their learning and progress.

Colleges will use their best endeavours to deliver as much of students' planned hours, recognising this may not be possible in the case of students undertaking a course requiring practical teaching and training which necessitates the use of specialist equipment and supervision or with respect to work experience and placements.

You can find out more about your college's remote education offer on their website.

Education health and care (EHC) plans

If you're child has an EHC plan they should receive the support they need in usual school when they attend their nursery, childminder, school or college. Mandatory attendance has applied again since 8 March 2021.

There may be circumstances in which early years providers, schools and colleges cannot fully meet the provision in your child's EHC plan because of the impact of COVID-19 on staff with the right training available. In these cases they will still make every effort to provide to your child's most provision as soon as possible.

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will be in touch with you to discuss the right support for your child. Any decisions taken should be reviewed regularly.

Ofsted inspections

Ofsted will not return to a full programme of graded inspections until September. Ofsted will carry out a programme of inspections to ensure that children and young people stuck in need of support. These support 'monitoring' and some their 'deep dives' inspections. These inspections, which are not graded, have a strong focus on remote education.

If you have concerns about the quality of education being provided by your child's nursery, childminder, school or college, or about the wellbeing and safety of pupils, you can contact Ofsted to let them know your concerns. Ofsted will not take action against you for you can raise them with Ofsted. Ofsted will consider whether it is appropriate to take action.

Access to devices

If your child needs more support to access remote education, you should speak to your school or college about what they are doing to provide access to devices and connectivity. A number of devices and distributing these to the children who need them most. If your child does not have access to a device, or needs support with internal access for their remote education, they should let their school or college know as soon as possible. You can contact your school or college who should be able to allocate them a device.

Find out more about remote education and how you can support your child when they are learning from home.

Online safety

It is important to have regular conversations with children and young people about staying safe online. Encourage them to talk to you if they come across something worrying online.

Find out how to talk to your child about online safety issues and set up age-appropriate parental controls with the following guidance:

- coronavirus (COVID-19): support for parents and carers to keep children safe online
- coronavirus (COVID-19): staying safe online

Assessments

Primary schools

Statutory key stage 1 and 2 tests and teacher assessments planned for summer 2021 are cancelled.

Schools will continue to use assessment during the summer term to:

- inform teaching
- give you information about your child's attainment in their annual report
- support your child's transition to secondary school if they are in year 6

GCSEs and A levels

GCSE, A level and Extended exams will not go ahead this summer as planned.

Students taking GCSE, AS and A levels, will receive grades based on centre assessment. These will be based on evidence. Teachers will be asked to assess students by providing guidance and training.

Read the response to the DfE and Ofqual consultation on alternative assessment arrangements to find out how your child will be assessed this year.

Year 11 to 13 exam cohort attendance and provision for the 2021 summer

Many schools usually incentivise a period of independent study leave in the summer term for year 11 and 13 pupils as exams approach. However this year the majority of the cohort will be different and a period of independent study leave may not be applicable.

The 2021 exams approach will require students to submit grades by the 18 June. Schools will need to be open for students and be accessible to their teachers. Students should be in school or college as much as possible, in line with the Y11 Y13 guidance.

Schools have been asked to engage pupils in valuable activities during this time. You can find the guidance to schools on what should be offered.

School admissions

Admission processes

Admissions are not suspended during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. You can apply in the usual way and admissions authorities will consider your applications. They will either offer your child a place or, if they refuse to offer a place, offer an appeal.

Admission appeals

If you have applied to a school and it does not offer your child a place, you have the right to appeal this decision. Admission appeals can now be held by telephone, video conference or in writing, instead of face-to-face hearings.

Entry tests for selective schools

Selective schools [illegible] will already have run their selection tests for children whose parents have applied for a place in September 2021 and will expect the first school year to secondary applications, 24 October.

Where school admissions authorities still need to assess some tailor or prior applicants for ability or aptitude, you should find that they choose to assess pupils using a test that is similar to the tests they would have used if the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak not occurred. This may include allowing children to take the selection test in their own home or at a different school, nursery, or primary school based on the same or similar tests this is a suitable venue.

They can, however, choose to hold a prior assessment (at a school or other venue). The school accepted the process to.

Travelling to attend a test is considered to be essential travel, but if you need to travel to take the test in person, you should follow the policy transport advice. Only the person should accompany the child and children outside the family bubble should not attend the test or accompany.

On arriving at a learning centre, parents and children should take the 3 coronavirus actions we must all take to keep us protecting each other: wash hands, cover face and keep 2 metres apart. Parents should follow the centre's instructions and others such as their family bubble, and follow government guidance on face covering.

Find out about the coronavirus (COVID-19) changes to assessment processes for selective school admission.

Parents should not wait if their care outside the test centre and neither parents nor children should enter the test venue before, during or after the test.

Neither parents nor their children may attend the test if they are quarantining, showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or have been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19) or any other pre-existing illness, disability or condition, or if they reasonably suspect that they have had a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test result within the past 5 days, contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or is shielding and shielding. The medical or social authority will make alternative arrangements to assess your child.

School uniform

Schools decide their own uniform policy.

Uniforms do not need to be cleaned:

- more often than usual
- using different methods

Schools will let parents know if parents may have difficulty obtaining uniform items.

Do not need sanitising or deep clean school/college uniform that usual when months. Therefore, your child may need additional, suitable indoor items of clothing to maintain a comfortable temperature. Where this occurs, schools should ensure that extra financial pressure is placed on parents.

School and college food

Schools will continue to provide meals options for pupils who are in school. Meals should be provided free of charge to those who are entitled to free school meals, or who are related free school meals. The meals served should meet the nutritional standards and be healthy and balanced. Schools should be able to provide packed lunches.

Schools should also continue to provide free school meal support for pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home during term time. The guidance on providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak sets out how schools and colleges eligible for free school meals can be supported at home.

Colleges will continue to provide free meals for eligible students, including those who are studying remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

If your family needs support during the Easter break, you should contact your local authority to access free through the COVID Winter Grant Scheme.

Mental health and wellbeing

Some children and young people may be experiencing feelings of anxiety, stress or low mood as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Schools and colleges will continue to offer pastoral support to any pupils who need to work remotely.

Support for children and parents

There are a range of online resources to help you support your child with mental health and wellbeing, including:

- Youtube, a free education resource on children and young people's mental health
- Every Mind Matters, an online tool and email journey to support everyone in taking practical steps to improve and protect their mental health
- Bereavement UK and the Childhood Bereavement Network, information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff

PHE's advice and support for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing includes key actions you can take to support your child's mental health and wellbeing, including how to talk about difficult feelings and how to recognise and seek help for mental health issues and difficulties of daily physical activity. Youth Sport Trust and Sport England have advice and support on physical activity and participation for children.

Visit the CYP Hub for mental health resources for children, parents, carers and professionals.

NHS mental health services, learn mental health services are still open and are helping and provide ongoing support. Please use your local Children and Young people's mental health service also needed.

Support for children and young people

Get Free, confidential support at any time by:

- texting SHOUT to 85258
- texting CONNECT to 85258
- calling the Mix on 0808 808 4994

Find help online through:

- Young Minds, information on coronavirus (COVID-19) and mental health
- Child Bereave, a free app for 10 to 18 year olds to help build resilience and stay well
- Bereavement UK and the Childhood Bereavement Network, information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff

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Wraparound childcare, extra-curricular, and out-of-school or college activities

We have published separate guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school or college activities during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This guidance explains what school clubs and other out-of-school activities are and the measures in place, and the position for the future.

Vulnerable children and young people are a priority for provision in any circumstances.

If eligible, you should try to:

- send your child to the same setting(s)
- limit the number of settings they attend
- ensure your child does not mix with other bubbles in addition to school or college
- ensure your child does not mix with pupils in a school or college, such as settings within wraparound childcare

From 29 March, we are able to access provision for the vulnerable children and young people:

- where the provision is taking place outdoors - your child may access outdoor provision regardless of circumstances
- where the provision is taking place indoors and is attending provision as part of the holiday activities and food programme

As part of step 2 (no earlier than 12 April) of the COVID-19 response roadmap, we may access wraparound and extra-curricular provision, without any restrictions on the reasons for which they may attend.

Contingency planning

If your child is self-isolating or shielding in line with government guidance, your school or college will provide remote education.

If restrictions in nurseries, childminders, schools or colleges are again needed to help manage the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the DfE expects nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will prepare for the return of children and young people who are vulnerable or children of key workers.

If there does need to be any restrictions in childcare or education, decisions will be made by the government on a case-by-case basis.

1. Nursery and childminder or nurseries and childminders refer to registered nurseries, registered childminders, pre-schools, playgroups and maintained nursery schools. 2. Schools refer to maintained schools, academies (including free schools), independent academies, free schools, offshore schools, special schools and middle schools. 3. Colleges refers to sixth form colleges, general further education colleges, independent training providers, designated institutions, adult community learning providers.

providers and special post-16 institutions. ↩

4. Selective schools include grammar schools (which select all their children based on their high academic ability), partially selective or 'bilateral' schools which select a proportion of their intake by ability or aptitude, schools which 'band', that is they test all children for ability but admit children of all abilities (equal numbers of high and low ability children) and schools which admit 10% of their intake based on aptitude in the performing or visual arts, sport, modern foreign languages, design and technology or IT. ↩

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