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[Department
for Education](#)

Guidance

Out-of-school settings: COVID-19 guidance for parents and carers

Updated 27 September 2021

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Changes to the previous version

Changes to the guidance since its 27 August 2021 publication include:

- general update to remove retrospective content about summer 2021
- update to set out the latest policy on [asymptomatic testing](#)
- update to reflect changes to advice around [clinically extremely vulnerable individuals](#)
- update to set out the latest policy on [vaccination of 12 to 17 year olds](#)

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Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for parents and carers of children who attend:

- wraparound childcare - for example, breakfast and after-school clubs
- holiday clubs
- tuition
- community activities

This guidance explains steps parents can take to help minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19, when using these settings for their children.

Who can attend wraparound childcare and out-of-school settings

Out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare providers can accept all children, without restriction on the reasons for which they may attend.

Out-of-school settings include:

- tuition and learning centres
- extra-curricular clubs - for example, sports, dance, art and drama clubs
- uniformed youth organisations - for example, Scouts, Guides and cadet forces
- supplementary schools
- private language schools
- religious settings offering education - for example, madrassahs, yeshivas and Sunday schools

Providers should follow the relevant [protective measures guidance](#).

Vaccinations

All children aged 12 and over are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Those aged 12 to 17 are eligible for 1 dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, although 12 to 17 year olds with certain medical conditions that make them more at risk of serious illness, or who are living with someone who is immunosuppressed, are eligible for 2 doses. These children will be contacted by a local NHS service such as their GP surgery to arrange their appointments. All other 12 to 15 year olds will be offered the vaccine via the school-based programme.

Young people aged 16 to 17 will be invited to a local NHS service such as a GP surgery or can access the vaccine via some [walk-in COVID-19 vaccination sites](#).

You can find out more about the in-school vaccination programme in [COVID-19 vaccination programme for young people: guidance for parents](#)

Children with health concerns

Clinical studies have shown that children and young people, including those previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), are at very low risk of serious illness if they catch the virus. The UK Clinical Review Panel has recommended that no children and young people under the age of 18 should be considered CEV and under-18s should be removed from the Shielded Patient List. The chief executive of the UK Health Security Agency and head of NHS Test and Trace has written to parents of these children to inform them.

Children and young people previously considered CEV may attend out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare and should follow the same [COVID-19 guidance](#) as the rest of the population. However, if a child or young person has been advised to isolate or reduce their social contact by their specialist, due to the nature of their medical condition or treatment, rather than because of the pandemic, they should continue to follow the advice of their specialist.

Choosing after-school clubs and out-of-school activities for your child

You should:

- keep a record of where and when your child attends a setting to help [NHS Test and Trace](#) identify contacts
- check with the provider that they are following the [relevant after-school clubs guidance](#) to reduce the risk of infection

For more information on choosing a setting for your child, please read the [guidance for parents and carers on safeguarding children in out-of-school settings](#).

Group sizes

Wraparound childcare and other organised activities for children may happen in

groups of any number. Children are no longer advised to be kept in consistent groups.

Parent attendance at out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare

We no longer advise that providers limit the attendance of parents and carers at sessions. You should continue to ensure that the provider has your most up-to-date contact details in case of an emergency.

Performances

Providers can host sports events, performances and other events with an audience.

If attending an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance or event in front of a live audience, you should follow the measures which providers have put in place to manage audiences and carry out performing arts safely.

Providers should follow the latest advice in the [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\): events and attractions guidance](#).

Educational visits

Out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare providers may undertake educational visits in groups of any number and children no longer need to be kept in consistent groups.

Out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare providers can also go on international visits that have previously been deferred or postponed and organise new international visits for the future. You should refer to the [guidance on international travel](#) before booking and travelling.

Face coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for children, parents, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law. Face coverings should be worn in crowded and enclosed spaces where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.

If there is an outbreak in a setting, a director of public health might advise the setting that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas or classrooms (by children, staff and visitors, unless exempt).

Tracing and self-isolation

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the person to identify close contacts. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. As parents or carers, you may be contacted to help identify close contacts.

Children under the age of 18 are no longer required to self-isolate if they're contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case or they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19. Instead, NHS Test and Trace will:

- contact the child
- inform them they have been in close contact with a positive case
- advise them to take a PCR test

We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Eighteen year olds will be treated in the same way as children, until 6 months after their 18th birthday. This will allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated, at which point they will be subject to the same rules as adults. They will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact, if none of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, can continue to attend settings as normal. They do not need to wear a face covering within their setting, but it is expected and recommended that these are worn when travelling on public or dedicated transport.

Asymptomatic testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection.

Staff and secondary aged children should continue to test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3 to 4 days apart.

There is no need for primary age children (those in year 6 and below) to test.

Testing remains widely available for everyone, with home test kits available by either:

- collecting them from your local pharmacy
- ordering online: [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests](#)

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms.

Confirmatory PCR tests

Anyone with a positive lateral flow (LFD) test result should self-isolate in line with the [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#).

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test. In this situation, your child can return to their setting, as long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

What to do if your child is displaying COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Do not send your child to their out-of-school or wraparound childcare setting if:

- they are showing one or more [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- they have had a positive test
- there are other reasons requiring them to stay at home (for example, they are required to quarantine)

If your child becomes unwell while at a setting, the provider should call you immediately to collect them. When you collect your child, you should take them straight home. Avoid public transport.

You should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#), or contact NHS 119 by phone if you do not have internet access.

If your child tests positive, [NHS Test and Trace](#) may contact you or your child directly to ask for information on where your child has been recently and who they have been in close contact with. They may then speak directly to those that have been in contact with your child to offer advice, subject to the details provided to NHS Test and Trace.

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