



Department
for Education

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

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Changes to the previous version

Changes to the guidance since its 2 January 2022 publication include:

- Updated section on [confirmatory PCR tests](#)
- Additional advice in the section on when an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test about the [return to settings](#)

Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for parents and carers of children (those who were under the age of 18 on 31 August 2021) 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 [COVID-19: Actions for Out-of-school Settings guidance](#).

Vaccinations

We recommend all adults and eligible children and young people take up the offer of a vaccine.

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

Children with health concerns

Following expert clinical advice and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, people previously considered to be particularly vulnerable, clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), and high or higher-risk are not being advised to shield again. Children and young people who were previously identified as being in one of these groups, are advised to continue to follow the guidance contained in [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#).

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. In some circumstances, a child or young person may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and they should continue to follow that advice.

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. We do not recommend that it is necessary for children to be kept in consistent groups.

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.

We recommend that you consider whether to go ahead with planned international educational visits at this time, recognising the risk of disruption to education resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK. You should refer to the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice](#) and the [guidance on international travel](#) before booking and travelling.

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](#).

Mandatory Certification

Out-of-school settings are not required to use the NHS COVID Pass, unless they are holding a specific event (such as a reception) that meets the attendance thresholds. Where applicable, out-of-school settings should follow guidance on mandatory certification for events. Under 18s are exempt from showing their COVID Status but should be counted towards attendance thresholds.

Education and childcare settings should not use the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry for education or related activities such as exams, teaching, extra-curricular activities, or any other day-to-day activities that are part of education or training.

Face coverings

Face coverings help protect the wearer and others against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of COVID-19.

It is a legal requirement that face coverings must be worn in a wide range of indoor public places, and on public transport. This legal requirement does not apply in education or childcare settings, or on dedicated school transport.

However, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by children who were aged 11 or above on 31 August 2021, staff and adult visitors when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms or activity rooms, such as in corridors and communal areas. This is a temporary measure.

From 4 January, we also recommend that face coverings should be worn in classrooms or during indoor activities by adults and children aged 11 and above. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example during sports. This will also be a temporary measure. Health advice continues to be that children under 11 should not wear face coverings.

Adults and children aged 11 and above attending out of school settings or wraparound childcare in community premises where there is a mandatory requirement to wear a face covering (for example community centres, youth centres, public libraries, and places of worship) must also comply with any legal requirements on the use of face coverings in these premises where these apply. These requirements may not apply if a child or staff member is exempt or they have a reasonable excuse – see below “[Circumstances where people are not able to wear face coverings Exemptions](#)”. The [guidance on Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own](#) provides a list of indoor settings in England where you must wear a face covering.

Adults and children aged 11 and above in these settings must wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and should wear it on dedicated transport to and from the setting.

See [Circumstances where people are not able to wear face coverings](#) for exceptions.

Face coverings do not need to be worn when outdoors.

Circumstances where people are not able to wear face coverings

There are also some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Some people are less able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

In relation to education and childcare settings, this includes (but is not limited to):

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- people for whom putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
- people speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others
- you are also permitted to remove a face covering in order to take medication.

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.

Adults who are fully vaccinated and all children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 are strongly advised to take a LFD test every day for 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result. Daily testing of close contacts applies to all contacts who are:

- fully vaccinated adults – people who have had 2 doses of an approved vaccine
- all children and young people aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccination status
- people who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons
- people taking part, or have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine

Children under 5 years are exempt from self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily testing of close contacts.

Children with SEND identified as close contacts should be supported by their school and their families to agree the most appropriate route for testing including, where appropriate, additional support to assist swabbing. For further information please see [SEND guidance](#).

Further information is available in [NHS Test and Trace: what to do if you are contacted](#) and in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

Eighteen years olds are 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. If they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Children can return to wraparound childcare and out-of-school settings as soon as isolation rules allow.

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.

Further information on Daily Rapid Testing can be found in the [Contact Tracing Section](#).

There is no need for primary age children (those in year 6 and below) to regularly test, unless they have been identified as a contact for someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and therefore advised to take lateral flow tests every day for 7 days.

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.

Parents and visitors are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before entering wraparound childcare or out-of-school settings.

Confirmatory PCR tests

You should follow the latest government guidance on confirmatory PCR tests following a positive LFD test in [Stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

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 due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19

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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