

COVID -19 – Frequently asked questions for Early Years – Issue 2 (April 28 2020)

Like you we continue to respond to the government guidance issued daily in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All government guidance can be found on the gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

All of the government guidance should be used by schools/EY providers to make informed decisions regarding partial opening/closure and supporting the children and families of their school/setting in these unprecedented times. We highly recommend that schools/EY providers keep up to date with the guidance as it is issued.

*The key message within all the guidance issued is clear that the government has **asked parents to keep their children at home wherever possible**, and for schools, early years and childcare settings to **remain open only for children who are vulnerable and for those children of workers critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response who need to attend.***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

In addition any additional information/guidance that has been issued by Derbyshire can be found on the website - <https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/administration-services-and-support/coronavirus-information/early-years-covid-19-updates.aspx>

We understand how difficult it can be reading all the updated guidance and responding accordingly, so in response to the high volume of queries and questions we are currently responding to, we have issued some further frequently asked questions you might find useful based on the updated guidance issued to date (April 28 2020)

| FAQ | Government guidance |
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| Staying open for critical worker and vulnerable children | |
| <p>Who should I inform about my school/provision open/closed status?</p> <p>Do I need to keep registers for the children who are attending my school/EY provision during this time?</p> <p><i>Answer: The DfE have requested that data is collected from schools and EY providers regarding open/closed status and child attendance.</i></p> <p><i>We would advise that you keep a clear and accurate register of all the children in your setting on a daily basis.</i></p> | <p>The Department for Education (DfE) have launched a data collection process to gather information from schools and EY providers on their status. This is to ensure that DfE has up-to-date information on available provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, which children are accessing it and if there are sufficiency issues in particular areas</p> <p>If you are a school you have been asked to complete and submit a short daily return, reporting if they are open and how many children and staff are in school. This is to be returned to the DfE.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing#attendance</p> <p>In addition from week commencing 27th April, Derbyshire County Council has also launched a short weekly data return from schools to request key information about the attendance of vulnerable pupils.</p> <p>For early years provision the LA is required to submit a return to the DfE on a Monday and a Thursday. To meet this deadline for any early years provision, including schools, we will be asking you to submit your return as soon as you can on the Monday and Thursday - The return is now live and can be found here - New Data Return</p> |
| <p>I have been closed since lockdown, can I now reopen my setting?</p> <p><i>Answer: Yes, the government has asked that schools/EY providers remain open only for children who are vulnerable and for those children of workers critical to the coronavirus response.</i></p> | <p>As part of the response to coronavirus (COVID-19), educational settings have been asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children and young people; those who are vulnerable and those whose parents/carers are critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision</p> <p>In addition the government guidance issued April 28th states that in exceptional cases, the Coronavirus Act 2020 created a number of powers available to the Secretary of State for Education (or Local Authority if required), including the power to direct registered childcare providers to close, and the powers to direct them to alter how they operate.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak?utm_source=c3c49a1e-7e12-495b-9a77-347af5500acb&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate</p> |

| FAQ | Government guidance |
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| <p>I've received a 'risk mitigation' form what should I do?</p> <p><i>Answer: You need to complete and return this form for all children with an EHCP in your setting.</i></p> <p><i>Please return 'risk mitigation' form via email to the SEND admin officer for your locality.</i></p> | <p>The government guidance states – Local authorities are to work with educational providers, families and the child or young person to carry out a risk assessment to judge whether the child or young person's needs cannot be met safely at home.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>High Peak and North Dales</u> Edith Olvez-Wilshaw: editha.olvez-wilshaw@derbyshire.gov.uk - <u>Chesterfield</u> Tracey Gascoyne: tracey.gascoyne@derbyshire.gov.uk Natalie Tucker: natalie.tucker@derbyshire.gov.uk - <u>North East Derbyshire & Bolsover</u> Liz Boyes: liz.boyes@derbyshire.gov.uk - <u>Amber Valley</u> Judith Hind: judith.hind@derbyshire.gov.uk Sue Bannister: sue.bannister@derbyshire.gov.uk - <u>Erewash</u> Shirley Ewart: shirley.ewart@derbyshire.gov.uk - <u>South Derbyshire & South Dales</u> Amanda Shelton: amanda.shelton@derbyshire.gov.uk |
| Implementing the EYFS during the coronavirus outbreak | |
| <p>Do I still need to adhere to EYFS staff – child ratios while my school/setting remains partially open?</p> <p><i>Answer – Yes, ratio requirements stay the same in the majority of cases. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, exceptions can be made to the qualifications that staff hold to be counted in ratio requirements.</i></p> | <p>EYFS ratio requirements remain in the majority to cases. Paragraph 3.30 of the EYFS states: 'Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made.' The guidance states the extent of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to be an exceptional temporary circumstance in which the staff to child ratios set out in the EYFS can be changed if necessary. However, childcare settings or schools remain responsible for ensuring the safety and security of children in their care - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#early-years-foundation-stage</p> <p>To support the sector in these unprecedented times, on April 24th amendments to these regulations came into force to allow for further exceptions to be made to the qualification staff hold to be counted in ratio. Schools/EY providers should use 'reasonable endeavours to ensure staff ratio/qualification requirements are met. - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications#eyfs-section-3</p> |

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| <p>Do I still need to adhere to all of the EYFS statutory Safeguarding and Welfare requirements?</p> <p><i>Answer – On April 24th temporary changes to the EYFS came onto force, to support schools/EY providers who remain open to vulnerable and key worker children during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.</i></p> <p><i>Temporary changes will allow greater flexibility to respond to the changes in workforce availability & potential fluctuations in demand, while still providing high quality care & keeping children safe.</i></p> | <p>The government published details of the temporary disapplication and modification of the EYFS Statutory Framework, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications#eyfs-section-3</p> <p>The disapplication and modification only refer to the following sections of the EYFS;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning and Development requirements - Assessment - Staff qualifications required to be counted in ratio - Paediatric First Aid <p>Government guidance suggest that schools/EY providers should familiarise themselves with these changes to ensure they understand the flexibilities available during the coronavirus (COVID -19) outbreak. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#prioritising-children</p> |
| <p>My paediatric first aid expires in April, will my certificate still be valid during these times?</p> <p>Do I still need to have a paediatric first aider on site?</p> <p><i>Answer: The requirements in the EYFS on paediatric first aid have been modified. Further detailed guidance has been published for schools/EY providers to follow during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.</i></p> | <p>The government guidance, states that the existing requirement for ‘at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings’ remain. This applies to all EY providers where children aged 0-24 month are on site and all childminders.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Executive has announced a 3-month extension to the validity for all certificates due for renewal on or after 16 March 2020.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#prioritising-children</p> <p>For schools/EY providers where children aged 2-5 are on site (no children below 24 months) the requirements have been modified. Where providers are unable to fulfil this requirement to their ‘best endeavours’ then they must carry out a written risk assessment and ensure someone with a current first aid at work or emergency PFA certificate is on site and available at all times. Further details on the modification to this requirement is listed in the EYFS coronavirus disapplication document published April 24th. The government guidance suggest that schools/EY providers should familiarise themselves with these changes to ensure they understand the flexibilities available during the coronavirus (COVID -19) outbreak.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications#eyfs-section-3</p> |

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| <p>Have safeguarding arrangements changed during the coronavirus outbreak?</p> <p>What should I do if I have concerns about the welfare of a child?</p> <p>Answer: All other aspects of the safeguarding and welfare section of the EYFS framework still apply, including requirements relating to child protection arrangements.</p> <p>You must continue to have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DLS) to take lead responsibility for safeguarding.</p> <p>Under no circumstances should any person without a valid DBS check be left alone with children</p> | <p>The Secretary of State for Education announced the suspension of routine Ofsted inspections on 17 March 2020. The safeguarding responsibilities of schools/EY providers have not changed, and Ofsted inspections triggered by safeguarding concerns will continue.</p> <p>The government issued guidance to schools/colleges/education settings advising that they need to update their child protection and safeguarding policy in light of COVID-19, or develop an addendum to their existing policy summarising any key COVID-19 related changes.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers</p> <p>The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership, through its education sub-groups, has developed templates for schools/EY providers to use in developing an addendum to their existing child protection policy:</p> <p>For schools - https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/administration-services-and-support/coronavirus-information/safeguarding-covid-19.aspx</p> <p>For EY providers - https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/administration-services-and-support/coronavirus-information/early-years-covid-19-updates.aspx</p> |
| <p>I am concerned about the health and well-being of my staff and children attending, how can I obtain PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)?</p> <p>We have high numbers of vulnerable and critical worker children, do my staff need PPE?</p> <p>Answer: <i>The government guidance states scientific advice indicates that PPE is not required for education/EY provider staff.</i></p> | <p>The government has issued guidance regarding social distancing measures to be implemented in education and childcare setting during the coronavirus outbreak –</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures</p> |

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| Supporting and engaging with children and their families during the Coronavirus outbreak | |
| <p>Should I be asking parents to complete 'work' at home?</p> <p>How can I support parents with 'home learning' during lockdown?</p> <p>I am a school/EY provider that is currently closed, should I be contacting parents/carers/families and their children during the current COVID-19 outbreak?</p> <p>How can I support children and families to stay connected to the setting during closure?</p> <p><i>Answer: The government guidance suggest that schools/providers should be supporting 'home learning'</i></p> | <p>Schools and EY providers are expected to continue working with parents to ensure children can continue to learn at home. Like you we continue to promote the national Early Years campaigns such as Hungry Little Minds and the BBC's Tiny Happy People. These features tips and practical activities that parents can do at home with children to support their early learning.</p> <p>The DfE have issued guidance for parent to support 'home learning' this includes guidance specifically for children aged 2-4 and reinforces an early years approach to learning at home, through play. It includes activity suggestions, advice on routines and physical activity, guidance on using TV and digital devices, and advice on staying connected with others while social distancing.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19</p> |
| <p>We have children that will be going to school in Sept, how can I support children and families during this time to be 'ready for school'?</p> <p><i>Answer: Derbyshire County Council confirmed Primary school places for children starting school Sept 2020, on April 16th 2020. There are many way you can support children and their families at this time to be 'ready for school'.</i></p> | <p>There is no confirmed date for when schools/EY providers will be open to all children, so supporting parents with activities to support children develop their social and emotional, communication and language skills and physical development, will support all children at the point of transition. Derbyshire 10 keys to school readiness focus on the developmentally typical expectations for children by the time they start in reception class.</p> <p>https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/early-years-childcare/ready-for-school/ready-for-school-in-derbyshire.aspx</p> <p>https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/early-years-childcare/ready-for-school/tips-for-parents/tips-for-parents.aspx</p> <p>The BBC have launched lots of useful resources to support parents wanting to support their child be ready to start school, these are all useful tips and ideas which reinforce Derbyshire's 10 Key to school Readiness.</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1</p> |

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| <p>We know that lots of our children have tablets and access to online materials should we share hints and tips with parents and carers about how to Safeguard their children on- line?</p> <p><i>Answer: Yes, the DfE have identified useful links and support that is available to keep young children safe online. You should consider how you can share this effectively with parents/carers to help safeguard children.</i></p> | <p>The government have issued guidance for parents/carers to support online safety for children - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online</p> <p>Here are some useful links and support –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinkyouknow (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online) • Internet matters (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online) • Parent info (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online) • Net-aware (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC) • UK Safer Internet Centre (tips, advice and guides) • https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/administration/online-safety-for-children.pdf (YouTube clips for parents to support online safety) |
| <p>I know that lots of our children will feel worried during these unprecedented times, how can we help our parents/carers? How can we continue to support families to stay safe during these times?</p> <p><i>Answer: The government have issued guidance to support mental health and wellbeing during coronavirus outbreak. Consider how you can share this and reinforce these messages with your parents/carers</i></p> | <p>During this time, it's important to support and take care of your mental health. The government have issued guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak</p> <p>We all respond differently, the guidance has lots of things you can do and links to additional support available if needed, including age specific examples, links to books and stories to support children during this time.</p> <p>Further advice and support for parents can be found on Derbyshire County Council website -</p> <p>Support and advice for parents Features a 'mental health support' for children section plus 'how to talk to your child about coronavirus' with lots of links to trusted and checked sources of mental health support: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/schoolsandparents</p> <p>Emotional and mental health Support and advice for anyone feeling anxious, worried or overwhelmed including links to trusted and checked sources of mental health support: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellness</p> |

| FAQ | Government guidance |
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| Funding, financial and business support | |
| <p>I have additional critical worker/vulnerable children attending my school/setting, will I get the funding for these children?</p> <p><i>Answer: Yes – Early Years Entitlement Funding will follow the child as per the Provider agreement.</i></p> | <p>The government announced March 17 2020 they will continue to pay funding for the Early Years Entitlement funding for 2, 3 and 4yr olds - https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-childcare-offers-to-continue-during-coronavirus-closures</p> <p>Derbyshire County Council emailed all schools/EY providers on April 3rd 2020, to outline all Early Years Funding arrangements for 2, 3 and 4yr olds – https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/administration-services-and-support/coronavirus-information/early-years-covid-19-updates.aspx</p> |
| <p>How will my insurance be affected during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?</p> <p><i>Answer: Providers are advised to check their terms and conditions with their insurance company. Further reference to insurance can be found in government guidance.</i></p> <p><i>If you are a maintained school then cover is included as part of your Derbyshire insurance.</i></p> | <p>The government guidance states – “for providers with public liability insurance, the Association of British Insurers’ members continue to offer cover for settings, whether open or closed, with no change to terms and conditions to existing policies”</p> <p>Government guidance regarding business interruption insurance states – “for providers that have a policy that covers government –ordered closure and unspecified notifiable diseases, the government’s social distancing instructions are sufficient to allow businesses to make a claim” Providers are advised to contact insurers for further details on terms and conditions.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures</p> |

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| <p>I am a private business I am concerned if I remain open for key workers and vulnerable children only, this could have an impact on my sustainability in the future.</p> <p>How do I find out about how I can access financial help and support?</p> <p>I understand that the LA will continue to fund children that are eligible for 2, 3 and 4yr old Early Years entitlement funding. What about the loss of earnings from fee paying children?</p> <p>I have furloughed staff, however I am not sure how to access this support?</p> <p><i>Answer – Government has issued guidance for Education and Early Years providers on how they can access financial support during the Coronavirus outbreak. LA cannot advice on private arrangements for childcare.</i></p> | <p>The government announced March 17 2020 they will continue to pay funding for the Early Years Entitlement funding for 2, 3 and 4yr olds - https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-childcare-offers-to-continue-during-coronavirus-closures</p> <p>Derbyshire County Council emailed all schools/EY providers on April 3rd 2020, to outline all Early Years Funding arrangements for 2, 3 and 4yr olds – https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/administration-services-and-support/coronavirus-information/early-years-covid-19-updates.aspx</p> <p>Please see the link below to the Governments website detailing support available: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses#support-for-businesses-who-are-paying-sick-pay-to-employees</p> <p>On April 17th the government released specific financial support guidance for education and early years providers - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care</p> <p>On April 20th the government opened the national job retention scheme for employers to claim wages for furloughed staff - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-step-by-step-guide-for-employers</p> <p>The government guidance states – ‘we urge all childcare settings to be reasonable and balanced in their dealings with parents, given the great uncertainty they are also facing’ – https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures</p> |
| <p>If you have any further queries please contact:</p> <p>Sarah Bryan – sarah.bryan@derbyshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Amanda Gordon – Amanda.gordon@derbyshire.gov.uk</p> | |