

COVID -19 – Frequently asked questions for Early Years – Issue 6 (Aug 2020)

Government guidance outlines the necessary steps and protective measures providers should implement to enable further re-opening of out of school and holiday provision, along with government plans to welcome all children back to early years provision and schools in the autumn term.

The key message within all the guidance is, due to the fact that the prevalence of the virus has fallen, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and the scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults, it is the Government's ambition that we **welcome back all children** to schools, early years and childcare providers, including childminders. The government states that the guidance will be kept under review and they will monitor the situation over the summer.

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 EY providers, out of school/holiday clubs and schools to make informed decisions, risk assess and plan to welcome back all children. We highly recommend that schools, early years and childcare providers familiarise themselves and keep up to date with the guidance as it is issued.

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

<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/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Further information and support can be found on the website – [Derbyshire Early Years COVID-19 Updates](#)

Follow us on Twitter for up to date links and information - **@DerbyshireEYFS**

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 additional frequently asked questions you might find useful based on the updated guidance issued to date (5 Aug 2020)

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
Welcoming more children back to Early Years provision including childminders from July 2020	
<p>Can children now attend more than one setting?</p> <p>What about staff, can staff work at more than one setting?</p> <p>Answer: <i>The government guidance states; parents and carers <u>should be encouraged to limit the number of settings their child attends</u>, ideally ensuring their child only attends the same setting consistently. <u>This should also be the same for staff.</u></i></p>	<p>Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak Parents and carers should be encouraged to limit the number of settings their child attends, ideally ensuring their child only attends the same setting consistently. This should also be the same for staff.</p> <p>Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out of school setting during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak As these settings reopen, it is crucial that they are minimising the risk of transmission of the virus due to increased mixing between different groups of children. For this reason, you should consider sending your child to the same setting consistently.</p> <p>What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term In order to minimise risks, parents should consider sending your child to the same setting consistently and limit the number of different providers you access.</p>
<p>Can I now have parents coming into my setting?</p> <p>I have 'new' parents can I invite them in to look around my setting?</p> <p>Answer: <i>Wherever possible, settings are encouraged to avoid visitors entering their premises.</i></p>	<p>The government guidance states - Wherever possible, settings are encouraged to avoid visitors entering their premises.</p> <p><u>Parents and carers should not be allowed into the setting unless this is essential</u>, and children should be dropped off and collected at the door if possible.</p> <p><u>Settings should consider providing virtual tours for prospective parents and carers wishing to visit the setting for September admissions.</u></p>

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
<p>I am an EY provider, how do I group my children from 20th July? Do my children still need to be in bubbles?</p> <p>Answer: <i>From 20 July, early years settings are no longer required to arrange children and staff in small, consistent groups so can return to normal group sizes.</i></p> <p><i>Settings should still consider how they can minimise mixing within settings.</i></p>	<p>Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</p> <p>From 20 July, early years settings are no longer required to keep children in small, consistent groups within settings but can return to normal group sizes. Settings should still consider how they can minimise mixing within settings, for example where they use different rooms for different age groups, keeping those groups apart as much as possible.</p> <p>Minimising contact between groups can reduce the number of children and staff required to self-isolate in the event of children or staff testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). NB. It is recommended that providers keep a record of how they group children/staff to enable swift action and identification of children/staff who may need to self-isolate in the event of a confirmed case COVID-19.</p> <p>Returning to normal group sizes is based on the fact that the overall risk to children from coronavirus (COVID-19) is low. It also recognises that early years settings are typically smaller than schools. Adopting the ‘system of controls’ set out here in a robust way will ensure there are proportionate safeguards for children as well as staff and reduce the chance of transmission.</p>
<p>Can we take children on outings? We are keen to take our children on an outing, is this allowed?</p> <p>Answer: <i>Yes, this should be restricted to small groups and should be done in line with wider government guidelines</i></p> <p><i>Providers should not take larger groups of children to public outdoor spaces at one time.</i></p>	<p>Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</p> <p>Settings should maximise use of private outdoor space. Early years providers, including childminders, may take <u>small groups of children to outdoor public spaces, for example parks, provided that a risk assessment demonstrates that they can stay 2 metres away from other people wherever possible.</u> This should be restricted to small groups and should be done in line with wider government guidelines on the number of people who can meet in outdoor public places. Providers should not take larger groups of children to public outdoor spaces at one time.</p>

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
Out of School and Holiday Care	
<p>We provide wrap around childcare, can we open?</p> <p>Which guidance should we use if we provide out of school/wrap around childcare?</p> <p>Answer: <i>All providers of wraparound childcare, and other out-of-school settings, are able to operate for both indoor and outdoor provision, provided they have safety measures in place.</i></p> <p><i>Providers caring for children under the age of 5 should refer to the guidance for Early Years and Childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</i></p> <p><i>Providers caring for children over the age of 5 should refer to the guidance for organisations or individuals who provide community activities, tuition, holiday clubs or after-school clubs for children (up to age 18).</i></p>	<p>All providers of wraparound childcare, and other out-of-school settings, are able to operate for both indoor and outdoor provision, provided they have safety measures in place.</p> <p>Wraparound providers which are only registered with Ofsted on the early years register should continue to follow this guidance, and implement the protective measures set out for early years settings.</p> <p>Where wraparound providers are caring for children over the age of 5, they should ensure that they are also following the Protective measures guidance for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, including on group sizes. Providers caring for children over the age of 5 should ensure, as far as possible, that they are keeping children over the age of 5 in small consistent groups every time they attend.</p> <p>In cases where providers care for both children under the age of 5 and over the age of 5, they may choose to apply the measures outlined in this guidance to those children under the age of 5, and the measures outlined in Protective measures guidance for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to those children over the age of 5. However, where providers have mixed age groups together, they will need to, as far as possible, keep all children irrespective of age in small consistent groups of no more than 15 with at least one staff member or with more staff members to meet relevant ratio requirements.</p> <p>If you are unable to keep children in your setting in small consistent groups for future sessions, you should only operate your provision outside and follow the government guidelines on the Phased return of sport and recreation in England, which allow up to six people from different households to meet outdoors.</p>

Supporting vulnerable children in your school/setting

Do we have to offer a place to a child with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in September?

Answer: *As part of the vulnerable children group, children with an EHCP have been able to access nursery provision throughout the lockdown. Even if parents have chosen not to send their child to their early years provider an offer of placement must continue to be made. A risk assessment must be completed by the provider (please contact the Early Years helpline for a copy of this) whether the child has attended or not.*

This should be updated as circumstances change. Funding for children with an EHCP has continued through the lockdown.

(Individual) Risk assessments may prove useful now and over the autumn term, in identifying what, if any additional support children and young people with EHC plans need to make a successful return to full education.

Whether individual risk assessments are used to help plan for the autumn term or not, education settings should, in the spirit of coproduction, contact parents and involve them in planning for their child's return to their setting **from September**.

If you are not open or are unable to meet the requirements of the EHCP and parents want a nursery place for their child, please contact the SEND locality team and they will advise you. The LA have a responsibility to make provision for the child through the EHCP.

Where a setting has closed, and a vulnerable child moves to a different early years setting, the closed provider should do whatever it reasonably can to provide the receiving setting with any relevant welfare and child protection information. The receiving setting should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, the receiving setting should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan.

Over the past few months the government have given some flexibility in the processes surrounding the Education, Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) and EHCP. This has now expired and all duties are as prior to lockdown.

For further information and advice contact The Early Years SEN Helpline:
earlyyears.senhelpline@derbyshire.gov.uk

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
<p>We don't have the staff to offer all our SEND children places, what do we do?</p> <p>Answer: <i>Children with SEND should be offered places in line with other children accessing your provision. As usual, reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act might be needed.</i></p> <p><i>Any Early Years Inclusion funding (EYIF) suspended at the point of lockdown will be re-instated when the child returns to setting. Please follow usual procedures for claiming this funding.</i></p>	<p>All children who normally access childcare are strongly encouraged to attend so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of early education.</p> <p>Children with SEND should be offered places in line with other children accessing your provision. As usual, reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act might be needed. Any Early Years Inclusion funding (EYIF) suspended at the point of lockdown will be re-instated when the child returns to setting. Please follow usual procedures for claiming this funding.</p> <p>Settings will need to ensure they have the staffing needed to support children with SEND at safe ratios and that they have a member of staff designated as a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), interim SENCO or a named individual with oversight of special educational needs provision for children with SEND.</p>

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
<p>We have lots of support from NHS and LA support services. When will visits resume?</p> <p>Should I allow visits from support services into my nursery?</p> <p>Answer: <i>the EYSEN service do not anticipate resuming face to face visits before and more likely not until after Oct half term. - Autumn term 2. However the EYSEN Service will continue to offer support remotely. Other support services may resume nursery visits depending on the nature of their advice as needed.</i></p> <p><i>Your nursery risk assessment should take into account procedures for visitors into nursery. Please discuss how this might work practically with these advice givers.</i></p>	<p><u>Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</u></p> <p><i>Wherever possible, settings are encouraged to avoid visitors entering their premises.</i></p> <p><i>In instances where settings need to use other essential professionals such as social workers, speech and language therapists or counsellors, or professionals to support delivery of a child's EHC plan, settings should assess whether the professionals need to attend in person or can do so virtually. If they need to attend in person, they should closely follow the protective measures in the setting, and the number of attendances should be kept to a minimum. Where possible to do so, social distancing should be maintained.</i></p> <p><i>A record should be kept of all visitors where this is practicable.</i></p> <p>As part of planning for full return in the autumn term, it is a legal requirement that education settings should revisit and update their risk assessments (building on the learning to date and the practices they have already developed), to consider the additional risks and control measures to enable a return to full capacity in the autumn term.</p> <p>Where it is necessary to use supply staff and to welcome visitors to the setting such as peripatetic teachers, those individuals will be expected to comply with the setting's arrangements for managing and minimizing risk.</p> <p>If children need the advice of a support service due to an additional need which may restrict their access to the setting, staff should contact the support service specialist teacher. This is most likely to be for children with a physical, hearing or visual impairment.</p>

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
<p>Now that I have more children back will safeguarding arrangements change, do I need to update my policy and procedures?</p> <p>What should I do if I have concerns about the welfare of a child?</p> <p>Answer: <i>The safeguarding and welfare section of the EYFS framework still apply, including requirements relating to child protection arrangements.</i></p> <p><i>You must continue to have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DLS) to take lead responsibility for safeguarding.</i></p> <p><i>Under no circumstances should any person without a valid DBS check be left alone with children</i></p> <p><i>The safeguarding responsibilities of schools, childminders and early years and childcare providers remain.</i></p>	<p>The government guidance states all providers are advised 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>Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</p> <p>Settings must continue to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well during this period and have regard to the government’s statutory guidance on Working together to safeguard children. The safeguarding and welfare sections of the EYFS still apply, including requirements relating to child protection arrangements. Settings should work closely with local authorities.</p> <p>Settings must continue to have a designated lead for safeguarding. It is acceptable for the safeguarding lead not to be based on-site if this is not practical, as long as they are still available to provide support, advice and guidance to staff. It is important that all childcare staff and volunteers have access to a designated safeguarding lead practitioner and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.</p> <p>The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental health or well-being difficulties for some children and they may be at increased risk of harm or abuse. Due to current circumstances vulnerable children may be particularly isolated meaning that the family, community and professional networks they usually rely on may be unavailable or hard to access.</p> <p>The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, through its education sub-groups, has developed templates for schools/EY providers to use in developing an addendum/annex 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>Training</p> <p>Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) – https://ddscp.org.uk/training/additional-resources/#d.en.101148</p> <p>Services for Schools (S4S) - http://www.services.derbyshire.gov.uk/Training</p>

Implementing protective measures to keep children and adults safe?

What do I do if a member of staff tests positive for COVID-19?

What do I do if a parent tells me their child has tested positive for COVID-19?

What do I do if a parent tells me they or a member of their household has tested positive for COVID-19?

Answer: *If a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 the setting must immediately contact their [local health protection team](#) who will advise on what actions need to be taken and who must be sent home.*

*In addition, **any confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the setting (either child or staff member), and if the setting has been advised to close as a result, should be swiftly reported to Ofsted through the usual notification channels.***

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

If someone tests positive or has symptoms of COVID-19, they should follow [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#) and should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to the setting only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell or taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The at least 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

Settings must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Settings should contact the [local health protection team](#). This team will also contact settings directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the setting – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The [local health protection team](#) will work with settings to carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. They will work with settings in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take and provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, we recommend settings keep a record of:

- children and staff in specific groups/rooms (where applicable)
- close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups/rooms

This should be a proportionate recording process. Settings do not need to ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

Household members of those who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms.

Settings should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Notify Ofsted - Any confirmed cases of coronavirus (Covid-19) in the setting (either child or staff member), and/or if the setting is advised to close as a result, should be swiftly reported to Ofsted through the usual notification channels.

EYFS

My paediatric first aid certification will soon expire – is this still a legal requirement?

My paediatric first aid expired in April, when do I need to have accessed further training?

Answer: *The existing requirement remains unchanged.*

*If PFA certificate requalification training is prevented for reasons associated directly with coronavirus (COVID-19), or by complying with related government advice, the validity of current certificates can be **extended to 25 November 2020 at the latest.***

This applies to certificates which expired on or after 16 March 2020.

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

The existing requirement remains in place where children aged 0 to 24 months are on site. Paragraph 3.25 and Annex A of the EYFS set out the requirements, including that “*at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings.*” The existing requirements also remain unchanged for childminders, as they are already required to have full PFA certification.

The requirement is modified where children aged 2 to 5 are on site (with no children aged below 24 months) to a best endeavours duty to have someone with a full PFA certificate on site. If all steps set out in the guidance have been exhausted and settings cannot meet the PFA requirement, they must carry out a written risk assessment and ensure that someone with a current First Aid at Work or emergency PFA certificate is on site at all times. New entrants (level 2 and 3) do not need to have completed a full PFA course within their first 3 months in order to be counted in staff to child ratios.

If PFA certificate requalification training is prevented for reasons associated directly with coronavirus (COVID-19), or by complying with related government advice, the validity of current certificates can be extended to 25 November 2020 at the latest. This applies to certificates which expired on or after 16 March 2020.

The [EYFS: coronavirus disapplications](#) guidance states - If asked to do so providers should be able to explain why the first aider has not been able to requalify and demonstrate what steps have taken to access the training. Employers or certificate holders must do their best to arrange requalification training at the earliest opportunity. The practical elements of PFA courses should be delivered face to face, so that competency can be properly assessed.

Providers remain responsible for ensuring all children in their care are kept safe at all times.

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
Funding, Financial and Business Support	
<p>Can parents continue to claim for the 30hrs extended entitlement?</p> <p>Are there any changes to the 30 hours extended entitlement funding?</p> <p>Do parents/carers need to get a code to access the extended entitlement funding?</p> <p>Answer: <i>All parents eligible should be encouraged to apply for, and reconfirm their 30 hours entitlement codes, even if they choose to keep their child away from their early years setting, to help them prepare for their transition back into childcare in September.</i></p> <p><i>Parents will need a valid code for the autumn term, so must apply for a code or re-confirm by 31 August 2020 at the latest.</i></p>	<p>All eligible parents should continue to apply for, and reconfirm, their 30 hours and Tax-Free Childcare entitlement, even if childcare settings are closed or children are not attending. This will ensure a smooth transition back into childcare when possible. Please see the guidance Check if you can get Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare during coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> <p>The government made some temporary changes to the 30 hours free entitlement and Tax-Free Childcare so that all eligible parents, including critical workers, are not disadvantaged during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.</p> <p>Specifically, parents who will not meet the minimum income threshold (16 hours per week at National Minimum/Living Wage) due to lower earnings as a direct result of coronavirus (COVID-19) will be treated as meeting that test during the outbreak. This will apply only to parents who need to apply for, or reconfirm, their 30 hours and Tax-Free Childcare place during the outbreak this year.</p> <p>The government have approved temporary amendments The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to ensure that critical workers who exceed the maximum income threshold (of £100,000) set out in the Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016, due to increased income mainly attributable to earnings from work undertaken directly or indirectly as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, can continue to take up 30 hours free childcare. The government have set a new upper threshold of £150,000. The change will only be effective for the tax year starting with 6 April 2020 and ending with 5 April 2021. The regulations came into force on 31 July 2020.</p>

FAQ	Government guidance and additional information
<p>I am a private business, I am concerned about the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on my sustainability in the future.</p> <p>How do I find out about how I can access financial help and support?</p> <p>Currently our staff are furloughed and if we are having limited children we wouldn't require staffing are these still able to continue being furloughed?</p> <p>Answer: <i>Government has issued guidance for Education and Early Years providers on how they can access financial support during the Coronavirus outbreak.</i></p> <p><i>The local Authority have emailed all Early Years providers in July to outline the autumn term funding arrangements.</i></p> <p><i>LA cannot advise on private arrangements for childcare.</i></p>	<p>On 17 March 2020, the Chancellor confirmed that the government would continue to pay local authorities for free early years entitlement places for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.</p> <p>From the 2020 autumn term, the government expect the demand for childcare to increase, and it will become increasingly important for local authorities to ensure sufficiency of childcare and delivery of the early years entitlements for all children - not just vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Further information about funding for providers in the autumn term is included in the guidance: Use of free early education entitlements funding.</p> <p>The government expect nurseries and childminders to bring staff off furlough and back to work as demand increases. In practice this will mean that, for example, if they have furloughed 6 members of staff, and they need three back at work in order to meet demand for childcare, then they should bring three staff off furlough and back to work, and reduce their claim on the CJRS accordingly.</p> <p>The Chancellor announced July 8th, as part of the plan to support jobs, a Job Retention Bonus to be introduced to help businesses keep furloughed workers. UK Employers will receive a one-off bonus of £1,000 for each furloughed employee who is still employed as of 31 January 2021. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rishis-plan-for-jobs-will-help-britain-bounce-back</p> <p>Some early years settings may also be eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF), or the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund. The details and eligibility criteria for these funds can be found in the guidance for the SBGF and the guidance for the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund. For more information and to find out how to apply for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme, please refer to the Financial support for businesses during coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance.</p> <p>DfE is considering appropriate measures to monitor the use of these schemes in order to detect any duplication of funding, and will be considering potential options to recover misused public funding as required.</p>

Further Information

If you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact

Sarah Bryan: Early Years Quality Manager - Sarah.bryan@derbyshire.gov.uk

Amanda Gordon: Early Years Sufficiency Manager – Amanda.gordon@derbyshire.gov.uk

DfE coronavirus helpline

Telephone: 0800 046 8687

Email: DfE.CoronavirusHelpline@education.gov.uk

If you have a query about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to schools and other educational establishments, and children's social care, in England you can contact the helpline. Lines are open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, and 10am to 4pm at weekends. If you work in a school/EY Provider, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the helpline.