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Guidance

# Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak

Updated 18 May 2020

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As part of national social distancing measures to limit the spread of coronavirus, we have had to limit the numbers of children and young people attending educational and childcare settings, to ensure that pupils and staff attending could do so safely. That is why, since 23 March, education and childcare settings have only been open to priority groups (children of critical workers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>) and vulnerable children (<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>)).

Throughout this document there is a distinction made between ‘vulnerable children’, which has a wide definition as described in Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (<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>) and in the relevant section below, and those who are ‘clinically vulnerable’ to coronavirus.

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus has decreased. We therefore anticipate, with further progress, that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June, to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings.

We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by the government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing. As a result, we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

Education and childcare settings are already open to priority groups. Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus we are encouraging all eligible children to attend – it is no longer necessary for parents of eligible children to keep them at home if they can.

This guidance sets out the actions and principles we would like all schools to follow, and should be read alongside:

- guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>)
- guidance on critical workers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>)
- guidance on vulnerable children and young people (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>)

## 1. Vital role of schools

Those who work in and with our schools rightly take their place next to our NHS staff and other critical workers as central to our efforts in battling this virus.

School leaders around the country are taking the lead in supporting families through this difficult time, and we are keenly aware that the extraordinary measures that have been taken to prevent the spread of coronavirus present an unprecedented challenge for schools, trusts, and local authorities, as well as the communities they serve.

We appreciate the selfless dedication that school, trust, and local authority staff, demonstrate in their work every single day. During this difficult time, we are asking you to go further still so that we can collectively address the challenges we face. You are vital to the country's response to this outbreak, and we offer our full support and gratitude during this difficult time. As this outbreak progresses, we will aim to provide you with as much certainty and flexibility as possible, and will do all we can to support the vital service you are providing.

We expect schools and local authorities should work together to ensure that different settings are supported to stay open wherever possible, taking into account their circumstances and cohort (for example, special settings and alternative provision). And, we want local authorities to help coordinate what this means, working with education settings to deliver the services required. That includes academies, the independent sector, and boarding schools.

## 2. Preparing for the wider opening of education settings from 1 June

### 2.1 Which pupils can attend school?

From the week commencing 1 June at the earliest, we will be asking primary schools to welcome back children in nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups. We will ask secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges to offer some face-to-face support for year 10 and year 12 students (and equivalents) who are due to take key exams next year, alongside the full time provision they are offering to priority groups.

Alternative provision settings should mirror the approach being taken for mainstream schools and also offer some face-to-face support for years 10 and 11 students (as they have no year 12). Special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools will work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups.

The following principles will apply to this phase of wider opening by schools:

- children and young people in eligible year groups are strongly encouraged to attend (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending
- vulnerable children of all year groups continue to be expected to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so (for children with education health and care (EHC) plans this will be informed by a risk assessment approach)
- children, young people and staff who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-on-protecting-people-most-likely-to-get-unwell-from-coronavirus-shielding-young-peoples-version>) have been advised to shield. We do not expect people in this category to be attending school or college, and they should continue to be supported to learn or work at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Few if any children will fall into this category, but parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category. Staff in this category should work from home where possible, and refer to the detail in our protective measures guidance
- a child/young person or a member of staff who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend their education or childcare setting
- if a child/young person or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the guidance on shielding (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>), it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, if they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young

children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to learn or work at home

- staff and children or young people should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household
- protective measures will be put in place for staff and pupils, as far as is possible, to ensure that the risk of transmission is reduced

## 2.2 Can schools operate a staggered return or a rota system for pupils returning from 1 June?

Schools should not plan on the basis of a rota system for pupils returning from 1 June, either daily or weekly. We are asking schools to welcome back eligible pupils full-time, and do not expect schools to implement flexible approaches, such as rota systems.

## 2.3 What public health advice should schools follow?

Keeping children and staff safe is our utmost priority. [DfE's guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>) settings contains detailed advice for settings on:

- cleaning, including supplies of cleaning and handwashing products
- testing and tracing
- PPE (personal protective equipment)
- what settings should do in response to a case of coronavirus being confirmed

Schools should refer to this guidance and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>). These measures, along with handwashing, cleaning, and self-isolation, will lower the risk of transmission.

Alongside good hygiene and cleaning, one of the main protective measures we can take to reduce transmission is to have small group and class sizes. By returning pupils gradually settings can initially reduce the number of children and young people in classrooms compared to usual and put protective measures in place to reduce risks.

Children will need to stay within their new class/group wherever possible and we will ask settings to implement a range of protective measures including increased cleaning, reducing 'pinch points' (such as at the start and end of day), and utilising outdoor space.

Settings should also consider ways to minimise use of public transport to get to and from school at peak times, in consultation with local authorities. Further guidance on safer travel for passengers, including children, can be found at [Safer travel guidance for passengers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>).

Staff and pupils in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households. A negative test will enable children to get back to childcare or education, and their parents to get back to work. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting.

Those who are clinically vulnerable, or are living with someone who is, should follow our protective measures guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>).

## 2.4 How will schools be supported in preparing for wider opening?

Schools, and all childcare providers, have been serving a vital role by continuing to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the coronavirus response.

We have worked closely with the sector, and will continue to do so over the coming weeks to support the wider opening of schools, colleges and childcare settings. We have published guidance on actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>), which sets out the overarching aims and principles of this next phase, including information about protective measures which will be in place. We will work with the profession to produce more detailed guidance ahead of 1 June 2020.

All schools are different, and it is not possible for government to set specific national guidelines that could be universally applicable. Instead, we have created an initial planning framework

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/opening-schools-for-more-children-and-young-people-initial-planning-framework-for-schools-in-england>) to help school leaders and trusts to start to think through the steps they might need to take to enable them to open their schools for more pupils. This framework can be seen as a starting point from which schools and trusts may choose to develop their own plans, providing operational guidance to support school and trust leaders in agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances.

## 3. Responsibilities

### 3.1 What are schools responsible for?

Between 23 March and 1 June, educational and childcare settings are responsible for providing places only to priority children (vulnerable children, and children of critical workers).

While as many schools as possible should try to stay open for priority pupils at this time, this will not be possible for all settings, and the local authority should oversee arrangements so that pupils are able to access provision elsewhere.

We are also asking that schools prepare for wider opening on the assumption that eligible year groups can return to schools from 1 June.

From the week commencing 1 June at the earliest, we are asking that schools welcome back eligible year groups as part of the wider opening of educational settings, alongside priority groups.

Maintained, academy and independent schools should work with local authorities to ensure provision is available for priority and eligible groups.

### 3.2 What are local authorities responsible for?

Local authorities are responsible for co-ordinating a response to the coronavirus arrangements. Working with education settings (including academies and the independent sector), they should use the critical worker list (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>), and the definition of vulnerable children (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>), to support schools and trusts to ensure that there is sufficiency for these priority groups, and for those groups eligible for return to settings from 1 June.

Local authorities are also responsible for monitoring demand and capacity. This may involve working with schools to provide places in alternative settings if necessary, and supporting residential special schools, alternative provision, and other special settings to remain open, wherever possible.

They are also responsible for supporting trusts and schools to assess the risks for children and young people whose education, health and care (EHC) plans they maintain, and ensuring those children are safely cared for whether at school/college or at home.

## **4. What arrangements should schools and local authorities maintain throughout the remainder of May?**

We are asking schools to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children where they can, but we understand that some may be unable to do so especially if they are experiencing severe staff shortages.

Local authorities should therefore work with maintained, academy and independent schools to identify temporary places for any children affected whilst their normal schools are closed.

### **4.1 Will it be mandatory for all schools, colleges and early years settings to remain open in some form?**

We are asking all schools and early years settings to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

We acknowledge that some schools and early years settings may be unable to do so, and will support them to work with local authorities, regional school commissioners, and neighbouring schools and settings, to continue to support these children.

### **4.2 Are schools opening on the May bank holiday?**

Schools should decide, in consultation with the parents of children who are currently attending school, whether it is necessary for them to continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children over the May bank holiday.

### **4.3 Are schools opening during May half term?**

We trust schools to make arrangements that work for their school community, in consultation with parents and carers of vulnerable children and those who are critical workers

### **4.4 Are schools expected to share resources?**

If some schools are experiencing high demand for places, or severe staff shortages, local authorities will co-ordinate support from other schools in the area. Schools are expected to be flexible and work together where required.

### **4.5 Can provision be shared across local authority areas?**

If a school is unable to open, local authorities should try to co-ordinate provision for pupils in other schools in their area. If this is not possible, local authorities should consider working with neighboring local authorities, while keeping in mind the impact on children. Regional school commissioners (RSCs) can support conversations between local authorities where necessary.

Some multi-academy trusts operate across different local authorities, and can assist in making arrangements between their schools if appropriate.

#### **4.6 Schools and early years settings in some areas are operating in 'hubs' - for example, groups of schools/settings operating at a single site. Is this permitted?**

With significantly reduced pupil numbers, and risks of understaffing due to illness, we understand that shared provision through multi-school or early years hubs and clusters is an option being considered in some areas. In some cases, arrangements are already in place.

Please see guidance on Using clusters and hubs to maintain provision in educational settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-clusters-and-hubs-to-maintain-educational-provision>).

#### **4.7 If education and care for vulnerable children, and the children of critical workers is being provided by a school or setting that is not the child's normal school or setting, where should they be registered?**

Where another school provides education and care for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers whilst their normal school is temporarily closed because of coronavirus, these children should not be registered as pupils. We have used powers to temporarily relax the requirement to register them (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modification-notice-school-registration-legislation-changes>). These children should return to their normal school once it reopens.

Children that temporarily attend another school are still considered as pupils at the host school for all other purposes other than registration. Host schools do not have to apply their normal admission policies in order to educate and care for these children, on a temporary basis, alongside their registered pupils.

However, they will still need to fulfil their safeguarding, medical, special educational needs (SEN), and other duties in relation to these children. Schools will not be able to charge for the education of these children and will be able to apply their normal behaviour policy.

#### **4.8 Do schools which remain open have to accept temporary attendees?**

We encourage schools which remain open for their own registered pupils who are vulnerable or the children of critical workers to support the country's response to the coronavirus outbreak by also providing temporary education and care for children whose own schools are closed.

We have used legal powers to modify the definition of 'pupil' in law for such children in relation to registration requirements. This means there is no expectation that they will remain permanently at any school they attend temporarily because of measures taken in response to coronavirus.

Schools should not apply their admission arrangements in temporarily offering places to such children and they should not register them as pupils. These children should return to their normal school as soon as it reopens.

#### **4.9 What else needs to happen if a child is attending a different setting than usual?**

Important information should be provided on day one, including emergency contact details, dietary requirements and medical needs to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children.

#### **4.10 If children are attending an alternative setting, will transport be provided?**

Home to school transport provided or organised by schools, trusts or local authorities varies widely. Schools, trusts and local authorities should work together and with relevant transport providers to put in place arrangements which fit the local circumstances, including the measures being put in place to reduce contact.

#### **4.11 What is expected of schools in terms of opening hours?**

We expect schools to operate for their normal hours. Where possible, we would encourage breakfast club and after school provision, to help support the children of workers critical to the coronavirus response.

## 4.12 Can schools flex on legal requirements in order to deliver this service?

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows for the temporary disapplication or modification of some requirements on schools, including within the early years foundation stage (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>), to enable them to focus on this core new ask. Schools should focus on safeguarding duties (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>) as a priority. Where schools and trusts have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as their designated safeguarding lead or first aiders – they should discuss immediately with the local authority or trust.

## 5. Prioritising pupils

### 5.1 Is it necessary to prioritise children?

The first aim of the partial school closure measures was to reduce the overall population of children moving around local areas, in order to further reduce the number of social interactions, and thus flatten the upward curve of the coronavirus outbreak.

However, the second aim was to continue to care for children whose parents are critical to the coronavirus response, so that they can continue to work where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made, and for children who are vulnerable.

Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus we are encouraging all eligible children to attend – it is no longer necessary for parents of eligible children to keep them at home if they can. These priority groups remain eligible to attend as schools open to more students.

In the first phases of wider opening, we will prioritise younger children, for several reasons. Firstly, because there is moderately high scientific confidence in evidence suggesting younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with coronavirus; and secondly because evidence shows the particularly detrimental impact which time spent out of education can have upon them.

The three year groups within mainstream primary have been prioritised because they are key transition years – children in Reception and year 1 are at the very beginning of their school career and are mastering the essential basics, including counting and the fundamentals of reading and writing, and learning to socialise with their peers. We know that attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's social and emotional development. Year 6 children are finishing Key Stage 2 and are preparing for the transition to secondary school, and will benefit immensely from time with their friends and teachers to ensure they are ready.

From 1 June, as more children return to schools, we appreciate that each setting's circumstances will be slightly different. Any setting that cannot achieve the small groups recommended as part of the protective measures guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>) should discuss options with their local authority or trust. If necessary, settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then, to support children's early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children as follows:

- early years settings - 3 and 4 year olds followed by younger age groups
- infant schools - nursery (where applicable) and Reception
- primary schools - nursery (where applicable), Reception and year 1

## 5.2 How are critical workers defined?

Children with a parent or carer who is listed as a critical worker

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>) are eligible for a school place.

We will monitor closely the experience of schools in identifying critical workers and their capacity to respond to the needs of critical workers. Government is working with representatives of school leaders to ensure they have the clarity they need in identifying critical workers. We will publish updates to guidance should it prove necessary to provide further points of clarification over the identification of critical workers.

We can confirm that:

- researchers are included if their work is critical to the coronavirus response
- pharmacists are included in the list of health and social care staff that are essential to the coronavirus response
- staff who work for the embassies of other countries, and who are essential to the coronavirus response, are included in the definition of local and national government
- parliamentarians and essential parliamentary staff are also included in this list

## 5.3 How are vulnerable children defined?

During the coronavirus outbreak vulnerable children and young people are defined as those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following a risk assessment, that their needs can be met as safely or more safely in the educational environment; or
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by education providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who are therefore in need of continued education provision - this might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers, and others at the provider and local authority discretion

Read the guidance on how schools should continue to support vulnerable children

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>).

## 5.4 Is it compulsory for critical workers to send their children to school?

We strongly encourage children and young people in priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions).

## 5.5 What are our expectations regarding vulnerable children and young people attending educational settings?

Vulnerable children and young people's attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (i.e. where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending. Vulnerable children and young people – regardless of year group – that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to school where this would now be appropriate for them to do so. A brief summary of attendance expectations across the different groups of vulnerable children and young people is as follows:

- for vulnerable children and young people who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>), and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>)).
- for vulnerable children and young people who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance>), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment. Read further guidance on temporary Changes to education, health and care (EHC) needs and assessments (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-guidance-on-temporary-legislative-changes-relating-to-coronavirus-covid-19>)
- for vulnerable children and young people who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school, college or local authority discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>), and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>)).

## 5.6 How do we identify pupils who are the children of critical workers?

Refer to the critical worker list (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>).

Schools should speak to parents/carers to identify who requires a school place.

If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip.

## 5.7 Should schools only offer places to children of single-parent critical workers and children where both their parents are critical workers?

Children with at least one parent/carer who is critical to the coronavirus response can go to school if required.

## 5.8 Can support and teaching staff send their children to school?

Teachers and school staff are critical to the coronavirus response, so can send their children to school.

## 5.9 Can schools, trusts and local authorities take a flexible approach to the vulnerable children definition depending on their local circumstances?

We know that schools and trusts will have some knowledge of children they consider vulnerable, who have not yet been formally recognised as such, for example, children who have been referred to children's social care but not yet appointed a social worker. It is reasonable for schools and local authorities to take a judgement on including those pupils, although they should take care to balance this with overall numbers of pupils going to school in their local area.

Eligibility for free school meals should not, in and of itself, be a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

## 5.10 Do children in foster care come under the definition of vulnerable children?

Yes, all children who are looked after by the local authority are eligible. For all looked after children, local authorities will be well placed to identify them and ensure that foster carers know that they will be eligible for a temporary school place and how to access support.

## 5.11 Why have you prioritised the return of certain year groups from 1 June?

We will prioritise younger children in the next phase of wider opening, for several reasons. Firstly, because there is moderately high scientific confidence in evidence suggesting younger children are less likely to become unwell with coronavirus and secondly because evidence shows the particularly detrimental impact which time spent out of education can have upon them. In addition, older children are more likely to have higher numbers of contacts outside of school so pose a greater transmission risk, and they are typically better able to learn at home.

The 3 year groups within mainstream primary have been prioritised because they are key transition years – children in Reception and year 1 are at the very beginning of their school career and are mastering the essential basics, including counting and the fundamentals of reading and writing, and learning to socialise with their peers. We know that attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's social and emotional development. Year 6 children are finishing Key Stage 2 and are preparing for the transition to secondary school study, and will benefit immensely from time with their friends and teachers to ensure they are ready.

The 2 year groups in mainstream secondary schools and colleges have been prioritised because they are preparing for key examinations next year, and are most at risk of falling behind due to time out of school or college. From 1 June, secondary schools and colleges will offer some face to face support with year 10 and year 12 pupils (and equivalent) to supplement their remote education.

## 6. Funding

### 6.1 Will state-funded schools receive funding support?

State-funded schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year, as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. That will ensure that they are able to continue to pay their staff, and meet their other regular financial commitments, as we move through these extraordinary times.

We know that schools may face additional costs as a result of the coronavirus and have published Coronavirus (COVID-19): financial support for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools>).

## 7. Attendance

### 7.1 Is attendance compulsory?

Eligible children – including priority groups – are strongly encouraged to attend their education setting, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable.

No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, children should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Families should notify their nursery, school or college as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together.

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

## **7.2 Will parents be penalised if their child does not attend school?**

Parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school. We expect schools and other relevant partners to work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school.

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, we have relaxed the law, so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

## **7.3 Can the children of critical workers and vulnerable children still attend school, even if they are not in priority years?**

Yes. Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus we are encouraging all eligible children to attend settings (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household), even if parents are able to keep their children at home.

Vulnerable children and young people of all year groups are expected to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so. Further guidance on vulnerable children at Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>).

## **7.4 How can schools encourage pupils to attend and maintain good attendance?**

For those pupils eligible to attend, schools should address absence by sensitively exploring parents' and pupils' concerns and what is preventing attendance and work with them to re-engage pupils where appropriate. Families should notify their nursery/school/college as normal if their child is unable to attend. Schools should also continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

Schools should work together with local authorities and other relevant partners to support parents and children in their return to regular attendance. When working to improve attendance, schools and other partners should consider the individual circumstances of each child and parent in order to ensure that they are appropriate to the child's needs. Schools may wish to focus support particularly on pupils who were previously persistently absent or at risk of being so.

No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the guidance on shielding (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>), they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Schools and colleges should continue to inform social workers where children with a social worker do not attend.

## **7.5 What should educational settings, local authorities and social workers be doing to track and encourage the attendance of vulnerable children and young people?**

There is an expectation that vulnerable children and young people will continue to attend educational provision, where it is appropriate for them to do so.

In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an educational setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker (where appropriate) and educational setting should explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting

the virus, the school or social worker should talk through these concerns with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England (<https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>). Educational settings should notify the child's social worker (where relevant) where the child does not attend school.

Where applicable, designated safeguarding leads and/or equivalent staff should keep under review their lists of vulnerable children and young people who should be attending provision. Providers are encouraged to share their lists of vulnerable children and young people who should be attending provision with their local authority. Education providers, social workers, local authorities and other professionals will want to work together to ensure adequate and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep in touch with vulnerable children and young people (whether they are attending provision, or not attending for an agreed or non-agreed reason), such as by letter, phone or visit. To support this, education settings should take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Local authorities and educational settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes. To minimise the burden on educational settings, the Department for Education is collecting data on the attendance of vulnerable children differently. Further guidance is available at Attendance recording for educational settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>).

## **7.6 Do schools need to take an attendance register?**

Between 23 March and 1 June, schools do not need to take an attendance register. For administrative purposes, Code # (planned whole or partial closure) should be used.

However, we are asking schools to submit a short daily return (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>), reporting whether they are open, and how many children and staff are in school. This should include any children attending temporarily during the coronavirus outbreak. This will allow for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes, and allow schools to provide accurate, up to date data to the government. This will also help the Department for Education to track capacity in the system, enabling the department to feed into wider tracking of the impact of the virus to support scientific advice.

When more pupils return to schools from 1 June, schools should resume taking the attendance register. We will provide further guidance shortly on how to record attendance in the register during this time.

From 1 June, we are still asking schools to submit the Educational Setting Status form (<https://form.education.gov.uk/service/educational-setting-status>) via the online portal reporting whether they are open and how many children and staff are in school.

## **7.7 Can the attendance register be taken at different times to accommodate for staggered start times?**

Schools should have a policy on how long the register should be kept open but where a school implements staggered start times, they may wish to consider temporarily extending this period.

## **7.8 Will schools be held to account for their attendance data at this time?**

Schools and colleges will not be held to account for attendance levels at this time.

## **7.9 Is there any responsibility on local authorities to keep monitoring vulnerable children's attendance?**

Yes. Local authorities should continue to work with schools to monitor the welfare of vulnerable children who are not attending school, and other pupils they might wish to keep in touch with, for safeguarding purposes. Further information is set out in the vulnerable children (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>) guidance.

## 8. Working with parents

Read further guidance for parents and carers about wider opening of schools and educational settings from the 1 June (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>).

### 8.1 How should schools identify which pupils are the children of critical workers?

Refer to the critical worker list (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision#critical-workers>).

Schools should speak to parents/carers to identify who requires a school place.

If required, we recommend asking for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as confirmation from their employer on what their job is and how it is critical to the coronavirus response.

If any problems occur, schools should speak to their local authority.

### 8.2 What if my school is closed, but parents bring their children in?

Once schools have assessed their demand and capacity, any schools that are unable to stay open should liaise with their local authority, and communicate with parents regarding whether their child needs to attend an alternative setting.

### 8.3 What are the expectations on schools regarding staying in touch with parents whose child is at home?

Schools and colleges should use best endeavours to support pupils attending school as well as those remaining at home, making use of the available remote education support (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>).

We want to support schools and parents to ensure children and young people's education can continue. To help our most disadvantaged young people access online learning, devices will be ordered for children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for exams (in year 10), receive support from a social worker or are a care leaver.

Where care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and children in year 10, do not have internet connections, we are providing 4G routers to them so that they can learn at home. And, the country's major telecommunication providers will make it easier for families to access selected educational resources by temporarily exempting these sites from data charges.

We recognise that many schools have already shared resources for children who are at home and are grateful for this. Further support includes:

- a list of educational online resources (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>) which have been identified by some of the country's leading educational experts to help pupils to learn at home

- enhanced education provision from the BBC (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach>) to include daily lessons, starting from 20 April 2020
- resources from Oak National Academy (<https://www.thenational.academy/>), a sector led initiative to support teachers educating their pupils remotely during the summer term

Schools should work with local authorities to monitor the welfare of vulnerable children who are not attending school, and other pupils they might wish to keep in touch with, for safeguarding purposes.

## 9. Safeguarding

### 9.1 Should my school still have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)?

The optimal scenario for any school providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. Where this is not possible schools should either arrange for a trained DSL or deputy from the school to be available to be contacted via phone or online video (for example working from home) or share trained DSLs or deputies with other schools. Further advice on DSL arrangements can be found at Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>).

### 9.2 Does my school still have to follow Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)?

Yes. KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools should continue to have regard to. Advice to support schools to do this is available at Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>).

### 9.3 How does my school support parents and carers keep their children safe online?

In their regular communications with parents and carers, schools should emphasise the importance of parents and carers securing any online support for their children from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Further guidance is available at:

- Further information for parents and carers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>).
- Safeguarding in schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>).
- Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>)

### 9.4 What about children with mental health issues?

Leaders of educational settings and designated safeguarding leads know who their most vulnerable children and young people are and will have the flexibility to offer a place to those children and young people.

All NHS mental health trusts are setting up 24/7 helplines and seeking to use digital and virtual channels to continue delivering support during the outbreak.

Social connections, alongside exercise, sleep, diet and routine, are important protective factors for mental health. Resources to promote and support mental wellbeing are included in the list of online resources (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education/>) we have published to help children to learn at home. Public Health England have also published wider guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance->

on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing) on supporting children and young people's mental health and Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) is providing £5m of additional funding for mental health charities (to support adults and children).

Digital support includes:

- an educational resource (<https://www.minded.org.uk/>) for adults about children and young people's mental health, which is relevant for teachers, other professionals working with children, volunteers, parents and carers
- The Every Mind Matters platform (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>) about looking after your mental health (from Public Health England)
- Rise Above (<https://riseabove.org.uk/>), targeted at young people, which also has schools-facing lesson plans (<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview>)

## 10. Workforce

### 10.1 Who can work in schools during the coronavirus outbreak?

We have published separate guidance on Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>), which includes information on shielded and clinically vulnerable adults.

### 10.2 Should school staff with an underlying health condition stay at home?

Our Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>) sets out that staff with conditions that mean they are clinically vulnerable, meaning that they are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus such as those who are pregnant, are advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. Education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this, for example by asking staff to support remote education, carry out lesson planning or other roles which can be done from home. More advice on this can be found in the Shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>).

We are strongly advising people, including education staff, who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been advised by their clinician or through a letter) to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. Staff in this position are advised not to attend work. More advice on this can be found in the guidance on Shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>).

### 10.3 Should staff who live with someone with a serious underlying health condition, who is taking shielding measures, stay at home?

If a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting.

If a member of staff lives in a household with someone who is extremely critically vulnerable, as set out in the guidance on Shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>).

covid-19), it is advised that they should only attend work if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, they should be supported to work from home.

## 10.4 Are education and childcare workers eligible for coronavirus testing?

Yes.

The government has announced that all essential workers, and members of their households who are showing symptoms of coronavirus can now be tested. This list of essential workers includes education and childcare staff, support and teaching staff, social workers and specialist education professionals in addition to social care staff.

Booking is done through a new online system. Employers can register and refer self-isolating staff, and employees are able to book a test directly for themselves or members of their household who are exhibiting symptoms.

Employees can choose to visit one of the drive-through testing sites across the country, or to receive a home testing kit.

To obtain a login to the employer referral portal, employers of essential workers should contact [portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk).

When settings open to the wider cohort of children and young people, all those children and young people eligible to attend, and members of their households, will also have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. This will enable them to get back into childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. To access testing parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5.

For further information, read the guidance on getting tested (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>).

## 11. Staffing levels and deployment

### 11.1 How many teachers and other school staff will be needed to keep schools open?

This will vary on a school by school basis, based on the number of pupils each school is supporting and their individual needs. Schools should make an assessment of the capacity required and, when in doubt, discuss this with their local authority or trust when making decisions.

From 1 June, as eligible pupils return to education settings, one of the protective measures schools can take to reduce transmission is to have smaller group and class sizes.

In mainstream schools and college settings the basic principle is that classes should be halved. Normally one teacher should be allocated to a group but if there are any teacher shortages then support staff may be used to lead groups, under the direction of a teacher. More detail is provided in our guidance on Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>).

Each setting's circumstances will be slightly different. Any setting that cannot achieve these small groups at any point should discuss options with their local authority or trust. If necessary, settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then, to support children's early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children as follows:

- Early years settings – 3 and 4 year olds followed by younger age groups
- Infant schools - nursery (where applicable) and Reception

- Primary schools – nursery (where applicable), Reception and year 1

## 11.2 Should schools be using temporary workers?

If schools think they may struggle to meet demand for places, they should liaise with their local authority or trust over their arrangements.

As schools prepare for the return of eligible groups from 1 June, they will need to know how many teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff are available for work. If schools do not have the staff available to cater for all eligible children they will need to consider possible solutions with their local authority or trust. Possible solutions might include bringing additional teachers in to help, who may be supply teachers, teachers on temporary loan from other schools, or teachers provided by the trust or local authority.

## 11.3 Will teachers and other school staff be asked to work in alternative settings?

Staff may be asked by their employer to work in different locations to help maintain the required provision during this challenging period. In some cases, staff members may be prepared to undertake a different role to their normal role temporarily. We ask all those working in schools to be flexible when considering whether to make or agree to such requests. Whether an individual can be required to work in an alternative setting will depend on their individual contract of employment.

Once schools have assessed their demand and capacity, any schools experiencing problems should liaise with their local authority or trust to establish whether there is a need to move any pupils, teachers or other school staff to an alternative setting.

Schools and local authorities should have regard to [DfE's guidance on Protective measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>) when making these arrangements.

Teachers and other school staff should continue to be paid by their employer as normal, regardless of where they are working.

## 11.4 Do teachers and other school staff require new [DBS](#) checks to work in an alternative setting?

Where members of the school workforce are already engaging in regulated activity, and already have the appropriate [DBS](#) check, there is no expectation that a new [DBS](#) check should be obtained for them to temporarily move to another setting to support the care of children.

The type of setting on the [DBS](#) check for example, a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The receiving setting should risk assess as they would for a volunteer. See paragraphs 167 to 172 of [keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>).

Whilst the onus remains on schools to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks including, as required, those set out in part 3 of [KCSIE](#), in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving setting chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

## 11.5 Will there be changes to the way [DBS](#) checks are carried out as a result of social distancing guidance?

Yes. Please refer to the guidance on changes to [DBS](#) ID checking guidelines (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>).

## 11.6 Will there be enough support staff to provide support for pupils with [EHC](#) plans?

Local authorities and health commissioning bodies are responsible for securing provision for pupils with EHC plans. The Secretary of State for Education has issued a notice to modify this duty (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modification-notice-ehc-plans-legislation-changes>), so that local authorities and health bodies can discharge this by using their 'reasonable endeavours'. Schools will need to consider the support required for individual pupils with an EHC plan on a case-by-case basis, determine the arrangements that might be reasonable to put in place under this modified duty.

We trust headteachers to use their discretion and judgement around the deployment of support staff, in line with guidance on vulnerable children and young people (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>).

### **11.7 What are the expectations on school staff working from home?**

We would expect school staff to continue to support the education of pupils, and wider work of the school, in appropriate ways agreed with their school leadership team, but school leaders should be mindful of staff wellbeing and practical circumstances when designing these arrangements.

### **11.8 Can schools use volunteers to support the care and supervision of children?**

DBS-checked volunteers may be used to support the work of the school, as would usually be the case. It is important that they are properly supported and given appropriate roles.

### **11.9 What advice is available for teachers from overseas?**

Staff from overseas who have immigration concerns should follow government guidance about visas and immigration (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents#inside-UK>).

Staff from overseas who have questions about travelling during the coronavirus outbreak should follow government guidance for education staff (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-advice-for-educational-settings/coronavirus-travel-guidance-for-educational-settings#travel-for-students-over-18-and-staff-organised-by-educational-settings>).

## **12. Recruitment**

### **12.1 Can schools continue to recruit teaching and support staff during coronavirus outbreak?**

Yes, they can. It is important that schools have the workforce they need, and recruitment should continue where it is necessary and practical to do so, in line with social distancing guidelines. We trust schools to use their judgment on whether recruitment is needed and how this can best be done given the circumstances.

DfE is asking publicly funded schools to use the Teaching Vacancies service ([https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/?utm\\_source=guidance&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=name\\_of\\_specific\\_document](https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/?utm_source=guidance&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=name_of_specific_document)). This is a free, national service for searching and listing teaching roles. Listing vacancies here will help save schools money and enable the department to gather information on the impact of school closures on teacher recruitment.

### **12.2 Can schools continue to recruit head teachers during the coronavirus outbreak?**

The recruitment of headteachers is a matter for individual schools and their governing bodies. Schools may wish to refer to the guidance issued by the National Governance Association (NGA) (<https://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/March-2020/Business-continuity-guidance-to-support-boards-thr.aspx>) on how governing boards should recruit headteachers during the coronavirus outbreak.

### **12.3 How can schools recruit during the coronavirus outbreak?**

Social distancing guidelines (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>) may mean it is not possible for schools to hold face to face recruitment processes. Interviews should either happen remotely, for example, via an online video or telephone interview, or be delayed to a later date. Schools will need to ensure that all employment laws are met and that applicants have equality of opportunity throughout the selection process. We trust schools to use their judgment in implementing this.

### **12.4 Will there be changes to the way pre-employment checks are carried out as a result of social distancing guidance?**

When recruiting, schools must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre-appointment checks. We refer schools to part 3 of the statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>). Please note that the following temporary changes have been made to the DBS standard and enhanced ID checking guidance:

- ID documents to be viewed over video link
- scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted
- the applicant will be required to present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role (the change came into effect from 19 March 2020)

In addition, the Home Office guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-right-to-work-checks>) regarding face-to-face interviews when checking the right to work has been revised.

As of 30 March 2020, the following temporary changes have been made:

- checks can now be carried out over video calls
- job applicants and existing workers can send scanned documents or a photo of documents for checks using email or a mobile app, rather than sending originals
- employers should use the Employer Checking Service if a prospective or existing employee cannot provide any of the accepted documents

### **12.5 Can schools extend notice periods during the coronavirus outbreak?**

The terms of employment and notice periods for the school workforce are not determined by the Department for Education and are a matter for schools and responsible bodies to determine. We do not envisage that schools will need to formally change staff notice periods due to coronavirus but schools may wish to operate in a co-operative and flexible manner to facilitate continuity of employment and staffing levels.

### **12.6 Can schools retract offers of employment for new staff due to financial implications of coronavirus closures?**

We do not expect schools to rescind offers of employment for new teaching or support staff due to financial implications relating to coronavirus. Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. This will ensure that they are able to continue to pay for staff and meet their other regular financial commitments.

## **13. Disciplinary and grievance processes**

### **13.1 Are employers able to continue with employment actions such as disciplinary or grievance processes?**

Schools and colleges must continue to follow their legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>).

Schools and colleges should continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral'. During the coronavirus period all referrals should be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

Whilst other employer actions are not a matter for DfE to determine, we would expect that employers are mindful of the unique challenges presented to frontline staff working in schools as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, and use their discretion as to whether or not to proceed with such matters during this period. This should be considered on a case by case basis and in discussion with the members of staff involved. Where a case does continue, employers should consider how best to conduct the process remotely using available technology. Governing bodies of maintained schools should also refer to reg. 7 of the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2009/2680/contents/made>).

## 14. Pay

### 14.1 Will teachers and other school staff continue to be paid?

Yes. Teachers and other school staff will continue to be paid during this period as normal, and we expect schools to continue to fulfill their contractual duties to their staff.

### 14.2 Will teachers and other school staff be entitled to sick pay for an absence caused by coronavirus, including the need to self-isolate if a member of their household has displayed symptoms?

Arrangements for teachers and school staff sick pay are agreed between employers and relevant unions. We have confirmed that schools will receive the same level of funding regardless of any period of partial or complete closure, and so would expect pay to continue as normal.

### 14.3 Should appraisals and performance management processes continue for teachers during this period?

Yes, maintained schools must continue to adhere to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. However, we would expect schools to use their discretion and take pragmatic steps, consistent with the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances, for example, by basing performance on the period schools were open, adjusting, if necessary, for expected trajectory had there been no closures.

### 14.4 Should appraisals and performance management processes for support staff continue during this period?

Appraisals and performance management for support staff should be carried out in accordance with the employee's contract of employment. DfE does not specify pay or terms and conditions of employment for support staff.

## 15. Supply teachers and other contingent workers

For information on supply teachers and other contingent workers in state funded schools, please refer to the guidance on financial support for education, early years and children's social care (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>).

### **15.1 Should schools continue to pay contingent workers that they directly employ?**

We expect schools to ensure any employees funded by public money continue to be paid in the usual fashion, from their existing staff budgets, in line with the HMRC guidance to public sector organisations (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>).

Where schools have live assignments with contingent workers that they directly employ, and where the school is that workers' employer, schools should continue to pay these workers from their existing school budgets and not furlough them.

### **15.2 Should schools continue to pay contingent workers that they directly employ on a zero hours or casual basis?**

We trust schools and local authorities to make appropriate decisions to protect the interests of their staff and workers during the coronavirus outbreak.

Where schools or local authorities use public funding to employ workers directly but on an ad-hoc basis, for instance workers who work on a zero-hours or casual basis, they may continue to engage these workers where they are needed during this period. If these workers continue to be provided with work they should be paid as normal under the terms of their contracts, from existing financial budgets.

Where schools or local authorities had expected to use their public funding to engage such workers and had budgeted for this, but work is no longer needed due coronavirus, we encourage schools to follow the approach for casual workers set out in paragraph 20 of the Procurement Policy Note 02/20 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0220-supplier-relief-due-to-covid-19>) on contingent workers impacted by coronavirus. This will ensure directly-hired casual workers have access to the same levels of support as casual agency workers during the coronavirus period.

Schools should pay the worker at 80% of their typical pay, in a similar way to agency workers who were not on live assignments when schools began closing or reducing capacity. Schools should calculate the 80% by conducting a retrospective review of the previous 12 weeks (or as many weeks as the contingent worker has been on assignment) to determine the average days or hours worked. This average should be used to underpin the calculation of 80% of gross pay for the worker (up to a £2,500 monthly cap to align treatment of casual direct hire workers with casual agency workers). The total amount payable should be limited to the amount the school or local authority had originally budgeted for such workers from their public funding.

Schools and local authorities should not furlough workers unless the circumstances meet the criteria set out in [DfE's](#) guidance for education, early years and children's social care sectors (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>).

### **15.3 What should schools do if they have already ended contracts with contingent workers that they directly employ?**

Where schools had contracts with directly hired staff that have been terminated earlier than the original terms set out due to coronavirus these contracts should be reinstated on the terms previously agreed, as long as the contractor is not already accessing another government support scheme.

### **15.4 Should schools continue to pay agencies for workers on live assignments?**

Schools are advised to refer to all parts of the Procurement Policy Note 02/20 (PPN 02/20) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0220-supplier-relief-due-to-covid-19>), which provides guidance for public bodies on payment of their suppliers for the purposes of ensuring the continuity of critical service during and after the coronavirus outbreak.

Where schools have agency workers on live assignments who can continue to work, they may continue to make previously agreed payments for the supply of workers in line with the approach set out in PPN 02/20. Agencies who receive money for workers in line with this guidance should not furlough these workers, and should follow the open book accounting rules set out in PPN 02/20 to provide schools with proof that workers are continuing to be paid as normal.

Where schools have agency workers on live assignments who cannot continue to work due to coronavirus, schools and agencies should refer to the guidance set out in Procurement Policy Note 02/20 ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/877221/PPN02\\_20-Contingent-Workers-Impacted-by-Covid-19-2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877221/PPN02_20-Contingent-Workers-Impacted-by-Covid-19-2.pdf)).

### **15.5 Does the advice in PPN 02/20 require existing contracts to be extended when they expire?**

The Procurement Policy Note 02/20 advice covers the length of existing live assignments up to the end date that had been previously agreed. It does not require these agreements to be extended further if the resource will not be required.

### **15.6 What support is there for agency workers who are not on a live assignment or whose work has come to an end?**

Where agency workers are not on live assignments with schools, or where a previously agreed assignment is due to end, schools and agencies should discuss any further demand for the worker. If there is no further demand, the employer can apply to furlough the worker via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>).

Once a worker has been furloughed, they become unavailable to work and cannot provide services for their employer for a minimum of 3 weeks. Schools and agencies should bear this in mind when discussing ongoing resource requirements and agencies should keep this under regular review.

### **15.7 How much should temporary workers be paid if they are furloughed?**

Read information about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and how it operates (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>). This includes how payments for furloughed workers are calculated.

### **15.8 What support is there for self-employed workers?**

Self-employed workers who no longer have access to work due to the coronavirus will be able to access support through the Self-Employed Income Scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>).

### **15.9 Can schools start new temporary contracts with agencies and workers?**

We expect schools will draw first on their existing staff to maintain necessary provision, but schools may continue to need supply teachers and other temporary workers throughout this period. We encourage schools and employment businesses (agencies) to continue to liaise on any potential need to ensure workers are available where required.

## **15.10 Will schools receive additional funding to manage the cost of hiring additional temporary workers?**

Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure, and this will ensure they are able to continue to pay for staff, and meet their other regular financial commitments, whilst providing the reduced provision required during this unprecedented period.

We do not anticipate schools will need additional funding specifically to manage the cost of hiring additional temporary workers, as we expect most schools will draw on their existing staff and budgets to provide ongoing provision.

## **15.11 Should schools continue to pay supply teachers supplying their services through a Personal Service Company (PSC)?**

Where the services of the supply teacher are still required and they continue to work, we expect schools to ensure the supply teacher will be paid in the usual fashion, from their existing staff budgets.

Where the school is closed or has reduced capacity and no longer requires the worker, the support available to the worker will depend on whether the PSC is paid directly by the school, or via an employment agency.

Where the supply teacher's PSC is paid by the school directly, schools are advised to follow the guidance set out in the Procurement Policy Note 02/20 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0220-supplier-relief-due-to-covid-19>) (PPN 02/20), which states contingent workers should be paid at 80% of their pay rate up to a maximum of £2,500 per month.

Where the supply teacher's PSC is paid via an agency, it may be appropriate for a claim to be made under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Contractors who are deemed employees according to the off-payroll working rules (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-off-payroll-working-ir35>) might be eligible for this scheme. In this scenario, if the school wished to furlough a contractor, they would have to confirm this with both the contractor's PSC and the agency. The agency would then make the claim for CJRS. It should be formally agreed between these parties that the contractor is to do no work for the school during their period of furlough.

More information on the CJRS for supply teachers who supply their services through a PSC can be found at [Check if you can claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>).

## **16. Delivering education and support to pupils**

### **16.1 Are schools expected to provide education as normal to vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers in attendance?**

We understand that these are extraordinary times. The most important thing is that children of critical workers, and vulnerable children, are supervised and properly cared for in education settings. Schools have flexibility to provide support, activities and education in the way they see fit at this time.

No school will be penalised if they are unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum during this period. The same applies for the Early Years Foundation Stage. No school will be penalised if they are unable to provide learning and development activities across all 7 areas of learning for children in their early years provision.

### **16.2 What are the expectations for children returning to school on 1 June?**

Where year groups are returning to school, we would expect leaders and teachers to:

- consider their pupils' mental health and wellbeing and identify any pupil who may need additional support so they are ready to learn
- assess where pupils are in their learning, and hence what adjustments to their curriculum may be needed over the coming weeks
- identify and plan how best to support the education of high needs groups, including disadvantaged pupils, and SEND and vulnerable pupils
- support pupils in year 6, who will need both their primary and secondary schools to work together to support their upcoming transition to year 7

As has been the case during the partial closure period, no school will be penalised if they are unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to their pupils during this period.

### **16.3 What support is available for children/young people in receipt of SEND support?**

Pupils who would usually be in receipt of SEND support (those without EHC plans) do not automatically meet the definition of 'vulnerable children'. Local authorities and schools/colleges have the flexibility to consider whether other children have vulnerabilities that mean they are safer at school/college than at home. However, we recommend that these decisions are taken based on risk assessment involving education settings, local authorities and parents. Further information can be found in the guidance on supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus outbreak (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>).

Pupils on SEN support who remain at home will continue to have ongoing learning needs. Ensuring there are good communication channels between education settings and parents during this period is essential, as well as aiming to ensure that schools and colleges provide access to appropriate teaching materials wherever possible. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) in particular may be able to act as a contact point for families of children on SEN support. SENCOs will typically lead on ensuring that children and young people with SEN have access to materials they can use to learn and consolidate their learning at home. The government has also published details of (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) remote learning resources (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>), which includes those designed for children with SEND.

### **16.4 How are you going to ensure pupils who are still learning from home access appropriate teaching?**

We want to support schools and parents to ensure children and young people's education can continue.

We've committed over £100 million to boost remote education, including giving children from disadvantaged backgrounds across England, care leavers and those with a social worker, free laptops and tablets to help them learn from home during the lockdown. Additionally, if families of these children do not have good access to the internet, we will provide them with 4G routers so that these children can learn online and access social care services. DfE has also partnered with tech giants to ensure schools can access educational platforms from Google and Microsoft.

Read the department's guidance on Getting technology support for children and schools during coronavirus (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>).

We have worked closely with other key partners to ensure the support is there to help teachers with the huge challenge of teaching remotely. This includes:

- Oak National Academy (<https://www.thenational.academy/>), an online classroom set up by teachers, covering the curriculum (including specialist content for pupils with SEND) for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. By the end of week two, Oak had 1.4 million users who had viewed over 4 million lessons

- BBC Bitesize (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>) which has developed a comprehensive new education package, available on TV, via the red button and iPlayer and online at BBC Bitesize. Bitesize Daily TV shows were watched by over 2m households on iPlayer in the first two weeks of transmission
- An initial list of free online educational resources that the department has published, as well as best practice advice for teachers and parents on gov.uk. We are currently reviewing this list and expect to publish additional resources shortly
- The EdTech Demonstrator schools programme (<https://edtech-demonstrator.lgfl.net/>) which consists of a network of high-performing schools and colleges that will provide peer-to-peer support to help settings make the best use of available technology and teach pupils remotely

DfE is sharing remote learning case studies (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) and advice from across the sector.

2 DfE grant-funded organisations, Jisc and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), are well-placed to advise and support colleges and staff regarding remote education. Support available includes free content, blogs, and community support. The ETF's Enhance Digital Learning Platform offers free training to teachers in how to use technology to support the continuity of teaching and learning. ETF is also running webinars for FE providers (<https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/new-series-of-free-webinars-to-support-online-learning/>) on how to make the most of online learning.

## 17. Practicalities

### 17.1 What will happen to data collections, services or requests this year?

It is vital, at this time, that all educational and care settings, including local authorities, are able to focus on the impact of coronavirus, providing for the children and young people in their care and looking after the wellbeing of their staff.

To help reduce the burden on educational and care settings at this time, the Department for Education and its agencies have cancelled or paused all but the most essential data collections, services and requests from educational and care settings until the end of June 2020.

Data collections which are paused will be reviewed and the pause period extended if necessary. A decision on data collections or services which are not due to go live until later in the year will be made in due course.

For further information, and a full list of data collection changes for the remainder of the academic year, please read the guidance on reducing burdens on educational and care settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reducing-burdens-on-educational-and-care-settings>). If you have any questions, email [managing.burdens@education.gov.uk](mailto:managing.burdens@education.gov.uk).

### 17.2 Are schools still required to have a designated first aider on site?

Under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, employers are responsible for providing adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. These regulations still apply but there is no set ratio of people to first aiders. Instead, educational settings are expected to conduct risk assessments to determine their own requirements.

We strongly recommend schools consult advice set out by the Health and Safety Executive on coronavirus (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>), including:

- first aid at work (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l74.htm>)

- first aid cover and qualifications during the coronavirus outbreak (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>)

For further information on additional first aid requirements in early years settings please read the department's guidance on actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>).

### **17.3 Are schools still required to follow standard procedures for health and safety and general estate management?**

Employers still have a statutory duty and responsibility to ensure the health safety and welfare of their workforce. This includes ensuring that there are proportionate and reasonable measures in place to ensure that their employees (and others) are safe during the coronavirus outbreak.

Employers will be aware that many working environments have changed in light of the current protective measures (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>). Where this is the case, employers will need to undertake and review risk assessments in line with these changes.

Employers may want to review health and safety arrangements for (but not restricted to) online safety, home working, lone workers, working with display screens, stress, and mental health. Schools should also consider how any partial/ temporary closures might impact on specialist and technical work or learning areas, such as science labs. Read further information on how to manage these areas during this outbreak (<http://science.cleapss.org.uk/Resource-Info/GL336-CLEAPSS-Advice-during-the-COVID-19-Coronavirus-Pandemic.aspx>).

DfE has issued guidance on Managing partially open premises (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-school-premises-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/managing-school-premises-which-are-partially-open-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>) to those bodies responsible for the maintenance of school buildings. Schools should consult with these bodies where they have further questions.

### **17.4 Are statutory inspections of equipment still required?**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have confirmed that there is still a requirement for statutory inspection of plant and equipment. Read HSE's guidance on work equipment during the coronavirus (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/work-equipment-coronavirus.htm>).

The Department for Education has also written to all responsible bodies giving additional operational health and safety information. Read guidance on Managing schools premises which are partially open (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-school-premises-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/managing-school-premises-which-are-partially-open-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak#further-information>).

### **17.5 How should schools manage educational visits?**

The government advises against any overseas or domestic visits for children under 18 organised by educational settings and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against all non-essential travel; the Department for Transport's advice to avoid public transport and unnecessary journeys, and Public Health England (PHE) social distancing measures remain in place. Schools affected by these restrictions should work with their tour operator and/or insurance company. DfE will continue to review this position based on FCO and PHE advice.

For more information, read coronavirus travel advice for educational settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-advice-for-educational-setting>).

## 18. Admissions

### 18.1 How will admissions authorities (academy trusts, governing bodies or local authorities, depending on the type of school) manage admissions appeals at this time given the restrictions on gatherings?

We accept that the coronavirus outbreak means admission authorities cannot carry out admission appeals in the usual way. On 14 April, we announced that we will be making regulatory changes that, subject to legislation, came into force on 24 April 2020. The new regulations relaxes some of the current requirements set out in the School Admission Appeals Code 2012 and enable admission authorities to proceed with their admission appeals. In particular, the new regulations disapply the requirement that appeals panels must be held in person and instead give flexibility for panel hearings to take place either in person, by telephone, video conference or through a paper-based appeal where all parties can make representations in writing. We will not however be removing any of the clerking duties for admission appeals. Clerks carry out a key role in relation to appeal hearings and provide advice on admissions law as well as keeping an accurate record of proceedings. The new regulations and accompanying guidance will be published later this month.

Read further guidance on Coronavirus: school admission appeals  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/admission-appeals-for-school-places>).

## 19. Behaviour and exclusions

### 19.1 Will pupils be punished if they deliberately disobey rules on protective measures?

It is important for schools to be calm and disciplined environments, where everyone follows the rules. Before they reopen, schools should update their behaviour policy to reflect the new protective measures (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>) and new rules and routines. It should also include appropriate consequences (such as sanctions and rewards), so that staff can ensure pupils understand them and can enforce them rigorously. The disciplinary powers that schools currently have, including exclusion, remain in place. Schools will be aware that the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents in a way that affects behaviour. Our guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools-2>) sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state and how this can be reflected within the approach to behaviour set out in Creating a Culture (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools>).

### 19.2 How can schools make reasonable adjustments when they devise and implement new rules?

Some children will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity including bereavement and long term anxiety. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) concerns. Additionally, where children have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their provision may have been disrupted during partial school closure and there may be an impact on their behaviour. Some children will need additional support and access to services such as Educational Psychologists, social workers, and counsellors. For children and young people with SEND, it will be especially important to teach new norms and routines around protective measures and personal hygiene clearly and accessibly.

### 19.3 Can head teachers exclude pupils?

Head teachers retain the power to exclude pupils on disciplinary grounds. Any decision to exclude should be lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to exclusions and a school's wider legal duties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the Equality Act 2010); rational; reasonable; fair; and

proportionate. Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

We expect schools who have permanently excluded a pupil to work with parents or carers and the local authority to arrange a place at an alternative educational setting as soon as possible so as to minimise any further breaks in education provision. Where the child in question is vulnerable, the school should notify the local authority/social worker immediately and should work with the local authority to ensure that the child is found a place in another educational setting quickly. During any gap in provision, education providers, social workers, local authorities and other professionals will need to work together to ensure adequate and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep in touch with vulnerable children and young people.

#### **19.4 What is the effect of coronavirus on governing boards' duties to consider reinstatement of excluded pupils, and the process for independent review panels (IRPs)?**

The timeframes set out in the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 remain in force. This applies to all exclusions, including those that were issued before 23 March.

The government appreciates that it may not be possible to meet the timeframes set out in regulations for review meetings and IRPs, due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the health risks of holding meetings. The Regulations themselves envisage that the timeframes may not always be met, which is why they specify that meetings and panel hearings must still go ahead even if the relevant deadline has been missed. It is for the governing board or arranging authority to assess the facts of the case and decide whether the statutory deadlines are achievable or whether, in the circumstances, the meeting has to be delayed. Governing boards and arranging authorities should continue to take reasonable steps to ensure meetings are arranged for a time when all parties are able to attend.

## **20. School meals**

### **20.1 What about children who rely on free school meals, but will not be in school?**

We will give schools and trusts the flexibility to provide meals or vouchers to children eligible for free school meals. Read guidance on supporting children eligible for free schools meals (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>), including details of the national voucher scheme.

### **20.2 What arrangements should we put in place to provide meals for children attending school?**

Schools should provide meals for all children in school, and meals should be available free of charge where pupils meet the free school meal (FSM) eligibility criteria. To ensure food is available for pupils who attend, educational settings are expected to reopen their kitchens and ensure that meals are able to be prepared and served safely.

## **21. Exams and assessments**

### **21.1 What will happen to exams?**

Primary assessments, including SATs, and exams including GCSEs, AS levels and A levels, will not go ahead this summer. The exam regulator, Ofqual, and exam boards, will work with teachers to provide grades to students whose exams for GCSEs, AS and A levels have been cancelled this summer.

Read further information on How GCSEs, AS and A Levels will be awarded in summer 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcse-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020>).

## **21.2 What will happen to assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?**

The Early Years Assessment Stage Profile (EYSFP) will not need to be undertaken in the academic year 2019 to 2020.

The progress check at age 2 will not need to be undertaken during the coronavirus outbreak.

## **21.3 Have plans changed for the EYFS and reception year?**

We are planning to proceed with the reforms to the early years foundation stage, and are considering when to publish the government response to the consultation on the reforms.

The reforms include plans for an early adopter year which will allow schools to voluntarily implement the new learning and development requirements (including the new early learning goals and educational programmes) as well as assessment and moderation arrangements from this September (2020), if they wish to. Arrangements for the early adopter year are being kept under review, given the coronavirus outbreak. National roll-out of the reforms is planned for the academic year 2021 to 2022.

We will provide all schools who signed up as early adopters (and local authorities) with further information on this in due course.

## **21.4 What will happen to the baseline assessment due to be introduced for reception children in September 2020 and when can teachers expect more information?**

DfE understands the challenging circumstances schools are facing and is working closely with our delivery partners to keep progress towards the reception baseline assessment under regular review. We are gathering feedback from stakeholders on a range of options and will be providing further guidance to schools in the summer term.

## **22. Accountability and inspections**

### **22.1 How will school and college accountability operate this year?**

The government will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020. Schools should refer to the Coronavirus: school and college accountability guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-performance-measures/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-accountability>).

### **22.2 When will Ofsted inspections start again?**

On 17 March, the Secretary of State announced the temporary suspension of routine Ofsted school inspections. The Secretary of State has subsequently issued a notice to temporarily disapply provisions of school inspection legislation. The suspension is necessary to alleviate pressure on school leaders and staff and enable them to focus entirely on providing for pupils who are attending school, and developing and implementing appropriate approaches to enable those not attending school to receive as much good quality education as is possible in the circumstances.

While routine school inspections are not taking place, Ofsted retains the power to inspect schools if it has significant concerns.

There are no plans to re-start routine school inspections this term. We continue to work closely with HM Chief Inspector and the sector, and will only re-start routine inspection when it is appropriate to do so.

## 23. Restructuring and academisation

### 23.1 Will you be issuing new academy orders during the coronavirus outbreak?

We are considering each case on its specific merits and taking a pragmatic and sensitive approach. However, there will be no new academy orders for schools judged to be inadequate by Ofsted during this time, as routine inspections have been suspended.

### 23.2 During this period, will you pause all schools becoming academies and stop changes to academy trusts and academies?

No. We supported several schools to become academies both on 1 April and 1 May. For future months, we will support schools to become academies where this will provide more benefits than downsides – such as certainty and clarity to all school staff about their employment status.

We will also continue to make decisions about changes to academy trusts and academies during this period, where these decisions will better serve the interests of the school system over the longer term and where they will provide greater certainty and clarity for schools, parents and pupils alike.

### 23.3 Should planned staff re-structure/redundancy still take place during this time?

We fully recognise the pressure and uncertainty that schools and academy trusts are facing throughout the coronavirus outbreak and appreciate the need for pragmatism and sensitivity in the context of planned re-structures or redundancy. In the case of local authority maintained schools considering staff re-structuring and redundancy, it will be for local authorities to consider how best to support the governing bodies of the schools that they maintain at this time.

In the case of academies, academy trusts should assess their plans on a case-by-case basis. If academy trusts find themselves facing financial challenges as a result of these decisions, they can contact the [DfE's](mailto:DfE.CoronavirusHelpline@education.gov.uk) dedicated helpline at: [DfE.CoronavirusHelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.CoronavirusHelpline@education.gov.uk).

In taking decisions about restructuring and redundancies, governing bodies of maintained schools and academy trusts will need to ensure they conduct processes in accordance with legal requirements, including requirements around consultation.

### 23.4 How can local authorities, foundation governors or governing bodies carry out a legally compliant TUPE consultation during the coronavirus outbreak?

It will be for individual employers to decide how best to carry out TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) consultation during this period. They will need to consider how they will conduct these in accordance with legal requirements and proper consultation processes.

## 24. Types of setting

### 24.1 Will this apply to alternative provision/pupil referral units?

Alternative provision ([AP](#)) settings and pupil referral units ([PRUs](#)) serve a small number of children and young people, a high proportion of whom meet the definition of vulnerability and are well-placed to cater for their needs. This would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

We will support these settings, via local authorities and other key agencies, to identify the best way to protect young people in [AP](#) and [PRUs](#), and to keep them open where it is feasible to do so.

From 1 June AP settings should follow the same principles and guidance as mainstream schools and welcome back all children in Reception, year 1 and year 6. AP settings do not have a year 12, so they should also offer some face-to-face contact for students in year 10 and year 11 to supplement their remote education, as they are approaching key transition points. In line with the advice for mainstream provision, settings should keep students in small groups as set out in our guidance on Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>).

## **24.2 Will this apply to special schools?**

All children in special schools, and in particular in residential special schools, are in the vulnerable category. Special and special residential schools/colleges should be supported to remain open, wherever that is possible, to provide vital services and support to children with complex needs and their families. This may include assistance in sourcing and deploying specialist health and care staff, from other settings, to provide cover arrangements, and ensure the right ratios and skills are in place to enable these vital specialist settings to remain open safely where needed.

Schools, colleges, other training providers, and local authorities will need to consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, alongside the views of their parents, and make a risk assessment for each child or young person. This will inform whether they need to continue to be offered a school/college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. We note that some children with EHC plans may also have parents who are critical workers, and will need to have a school/college place available for that reason. Please see guidance on temporary changes to EHC needs assessments and plans (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-guidance-on-temporary-legislative-changes-relating-to-coronavirus-covid-19#purpose-of-this-guidance>).

In collaboration with PHE and DHSC, we have produced guidance on isolation for residential educational settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings>), including residential special schools and colleges. This contains advice on managing the setting, in the case of self-isolation or infection.

Special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools should work towards welcoming back as many children and young people as can be safely catered for in their setting from 1 June. They may want to prioritise attendance based on key transitions and the impact on life chances and development, and to consider creating part-time attendance rotas so that as many children as possible can benefit from attending their setting. Special settings should work with local authorities and families to ensure that decisions about attendance are informed by existing risk assessments for their children and young people, which should be kept up to date.

## **24.3 Will this apply to academies, free schools and independent schools?**

Yes, between 23 March and 1 June, we expect all schools to be open to priority groups. To ensure this is done as efficiently as possible, we expect all schools to work with local authorities and regional school commissioners as necessary.

From 1 June we expect independent schools, as well as all mainstream schools and colleges to welcome back those children and young people in eligible year groups.

## **24.4 How should boarding and residential schools manage this new operating model?**

Most boarding schools will need to keep their residential provision open, and decisions will have to happen on a case by case basis.

## Read further information on Isolation for residential educational settings

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings>).