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Guidance

Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak

Updated 3 June 2020

Contents

OGL

> This guidance has been updated to reflect the announcement by the Prime Minister that the government's 5 tests have been met and the decision, based on all the evidence, to move forward with the wider opening of education and childcare settings.

The following changes or additions have also been made on 3 June:

- Section 2: updated information on wider opening of educational settings from 1 June and 15 June
- 2.12 to 2.15: updated information on testing as well as the Test and Trace programme
- Section 3: clarification of the responsibilities held by schools, local authorities and trusts during wider opening of schools
- Section 4: further detail on prioritisation of different year groups
- 6.6: link update to new guidance on taking the attendance register
- Section 7: guidance on travelling to and from school
- 10.4: guidance on working with staff who are worried about returning to school settings
- 11.1: update to align with guidance on implementing protective measures
- 11.2: clarification of position on PPA time
- 14.3: clarification on appraisal processes during school closure and wider opening
- 16.5: clarification on decisions relating to pupils to repeating a year
- 17.2: update to align with new guidance on annual reports
- 17.7: guidance on school visitors
- 19.4: update to question on process for independent review panels
- 24.4: clarification on out of school settings
- 24.5 to 24.10: new Q&A relating to boarding school settings

As part of national social distancing measures to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), 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, between 20 March and 1 June, 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.

Therefore, as the Prime Minister announced on 28 May, from 1 June we are asking nurseries and other early years providers (including childminders) to welcome back all children. Primary schools in England can welcome back children in key transition years - nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6. From 15 June, secondary schools and colleges can invite year 10 and year 12 pupils, and 16 to 19 learners in the first year of their course, back into school for some face-to-face support from their teachers, to supplement their remote education.

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)
- guidance on preparing for the wider opening of primary and secondary schools (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june)

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 to work together to ensure that different settings are supported to open to eligible children 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 educational settings to deliver the services required. That includes academies, the independent sector, and boarding schools.

2. The wider opening of educational settings

2.1 Which pupils can attend school?

Primary schools

From the week commencing 1 June, we will be asking primary schools to welcome back children in nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups.

Secondary schools

From the week commencing 15 June, we will ask secondary schools to offer some face-to-face support for year 10 and year 12 students who are due to take key exams next year, alongside the full time provision they are offering to priority groups.

We are asking secondary schools to offer this face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 and year 12 pupils, which should remain the predominant mode of education during this term for these pupils.

Our assessment, based on the latest scientific and medical advice, is that we need to continue to control the numbers attending school to reduce the risk of increasing transmission. Secondary schools should therefore ensure that only a quarter of pupils in year 10 and year 12 are in school at any one time, including vulnerable children and children of critical workers in those year groups who are still encouraged to attend full-time. This is in addition to vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers in other year groups, who should also attend full-time.

Alternative provision settings should mirror the approach being taken for mainstream schools and also offer some face-to-face support for year 10 and year 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 Why are you opening schools to more pupils now?

Thanks to the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the scientific advice indicates the transmission rate of coronavirus has decreased and the government's 5 tests have now been met. Based on all the evidence, we are now able to begin our cautious and phased approach to the wider opening of schools. We want to get all children back into school as soon as we are able because we know it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their friends, carers and teachers.

Our approach is a cautious one, and in line with the experience of other European countries who have begun to bring back pre-school and school-age children in a phased way and are focusing on primary schools and younger children first.

2.3 What scientific advice have you based this decision on?

We have been guided by the science throughout the coronavirus outbreak, including taking advice from SAGE and its sub-group which is focused on the role of children in transmission. SAGE regularly publishes papers from its meeting (https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response).

The department has published an explanatory note (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887247/Department_for_Education_explanatory_note_on_SAGE_modelling.pdf) to accompany SAGE's findings from the Interdisciplinary Task and Finish Group that looked specifically at the role of children in transmission and informed our approach to the wider opening of schools.

Our approach is a cautious one and recognises both the need for a phased return of year groups and that the safety and wellbeing of children, the staff that work with them, and the public is paramount. Our guidance on implementing protective measures gives schools advice on how to minimise risks as they welcome more children back.

2.4 Why are primary schools returning before secondary schools?

We want to get all children back into school as soon as the scientific advice allows, because we know it is the best place for them to learn. Our cautious, phased approach is based on the latest scientific advice. This advice shows that younger children are less affected by coronavirus and have less severe symptoms if they do get infected. We also know that time spent out of education has a particularly detrimental impact on younger children.

Secondary school pupils typically travel much further to school or college and are far more likely to use public transport or school buses, and they are more likely to have higher numbers of contacts outside of school. They are also typically educated in mixed groups for their studies and the scientific advice indicates we currently need to minimise mixing between groups. So, for now, we are asking secondary schools, from 15 June, to only provide some limited face-to-face support for year 10 and year 12 pupils who are preparing for exams next year, to supplement their remote education.

2.5 Can primary schools operate a rota system for eligible year groups returning from 1 June?

For the period from 1 June, when only Reception, year 1 and year 6 will be attending school, alongside vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, we are asking primary schools not to plan on the basis of daily or weekly rotas as they do not provide the consistency of education and care required for the youngest children, who also require more support with remote education.

Rotas are also likely to require more regular and burdensome cleaning between groups, may limit staffing options as staff will also need to be on the same rota, and are more challenging to combine in a low-risk way with full-time provision for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.

We are therefore asking primary schools to welcome back eligible pupils full-time from 1 June.

2.6 Why are you only allowing a quarter of secondary school pupils to attend at a time?

Our assessment, based on the latest scientific and medical advice, is that we need to continue to control the numbers attending school to reduce the risk of increasing transmission. Secondary schools should therefore ensure that only a quarter of pupils in year 10 and year 12 are in school at any one time, including vulnerable children and children of critical workers in those year groups who are still encouraged to attend full-time. This is in addition to vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers in other year groups, who should also attend full-time.

This approach reflects that older children are much more likely to use public transport and to mix outside of school. They also typically mix more between groups while in school due to different subjects.

Therefore, remote education will remain the predominant form of education for these pupils, with some face-to-face support enabling teachers to assess and aid their progress.

2.7 Can you guarantee it will be safe for pupils and staff?

Children, young people and teachers' safety is our top priority. That's why we are taking a cautious, phased approach to the wider opening of schools.

We have worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) to develop guidance on the 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) which schools should put in place. This guidance sets out a hierarchy of controls which schools should work through and which, when implemented, create an inherently safer system where the risk of transmission of infection is significantly reduced. These controls are:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

All staff and children and their families will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus.

2.8 Why are you welcoming more children back when they can't stay 2 metres apart?

We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account. Schools should therefore work through the hierarchy of controls to reduce the risk of transmission - crucially minimising contact and mixing by keeping children and staff in small consistent groups and keeping groups away from each other.

2.9 What public health advice should schools follow?

Keeping children and staff safe is our utmost priority. The department's guidance on safe working in educational settings (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#how-to-work-safely-in-specific-situations-including-where-ppe-may-be-required) as well as 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/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-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).

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).

2.10 Does this guidance change any legal obligations that employers have relating to health and safety, employment, or equalities?

No, this guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that employers continue to comply with existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics. This guidance, and other non-statutory guidance, is to be taken into account when complying with these existing obligations.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continues to regulate occupational health and safety during the coronavirus outbreak.

2.11 What should a member of staff do if they believe their workplace is unsafe and does not meet current Department for Education and Public Health England guidelines?

Employers, staff and workplace health and safety representatives should work together to resolve any concerns. If concerns cannot be resolved, they can be raised with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Where employers are not taking steps to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks (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), HSE will consider taking action to ensure that the risks are controlled. This includes the provision of advice through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements. Further information is available on the role of HSE on regulating occupational health and safety during the coronavirus outbreak (https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/hse-regulatory-activity-during-coronavirus.htm).

2.12 Are education and childcare workers eligible for coronavirus testing?

Yes. If you have any of the symptoms of coronavirus, you can ask for a test through the NHS website (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/).

If you're an essential worker in England, Scotland or Northern Ireland, you can apply for priority testing (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#self-referral). You can also get tested through this route if you have symptoms of coronavirus and live with an essential worker.

2.13 Are children eligible for coronavirus testing?

All children and members of their households in England have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus, including children under 5. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect other children and staff in their setting.

Tests can be accessed through the NHS website (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/).

2.14 How will the Test and Trace programme work?

The NHS Test and Trace programme was launched on 28 May. The service will help identify, contain and control coronavirus, reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes.

People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus. Further information about Test and Trace is available (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works).

If those in isolation develop symptoms, they can book a test on the NHS website (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/) or by calling 119. If they test positive, they must continue to stay at home for 7 days or until their symptoms have passed. If they test negative, they must complete the 14-day isolation period. Members of their household will not have to stay at home unless the person identified becomes symptomatic, at which point they must also self-isolate for 14 days to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.

2.15 How will schools be supported to open more widely?

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 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), which sets out the overarching aims and principles of this next phase, including information about protective measures which will be in place.

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.

The department's planning guide for primary schools is available here (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools#annex-a-behaviour-principles).

The department's guidance for secondary school provision is available here (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-secondary-schools#flexibility).

3. Responsibilities

3.1 What are schools responsible for?

From the week commencing 1 June, we are asking that primary schools welcome back children in nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6 alongside priority groups. Secondary schools should prepare to welcome year 10 and year 12 pupils back into school for some face-to-face support to supplement their remote education from 15 June. Schools should be able to have a quarter of the year 10 and year 12 cohort (for schools with sixth forms) in school at any one time. We expect all mainstream and independent schools to follow the same approach, including middle schools, and welcome back priority and eligible year groups to ensure a consistent approach across England.

3.2 What are local authorities responsible for?

Local authorities are responsible for co-ordinating a response to the coronavirus arrangements, as well as monitoring demand and capacity. Working with educational 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 to return to school from 1 June.

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.

3.3 Who holds the responsibility for key decisions regarding wider opening?

In most cases the preparation for wider opening will be undertaken by the headteacher and senior colleagues. However, relevant bodies (such as local authorities, academy trusts or governing bodies, depending on the school type) retain responsibility for key decisions and plans should be confirmed with them, particularly risk assessments of the school opening more widely, before pupils and staff return.

3.4 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. Regional school commissioners (RSCs) can support conversations between local authorities where necessary. Schools are expected to be flexible and work together where required.

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

3.5 Do schools have to accept temporary attendees and how should they be registered?

Where necessary and appropriate, some schools may provide temporary education and care for priority groups and children in eligible year groups who would normally attend other schools.

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.

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.

3.6 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.

3.7 If children are attending an alternative setting, will transport be provided?

We will work closely with local authorities to put the necessary arrangements in place to support children.

3.8 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.

3.9 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.

4. Prioritising pupils

4.1 Is it necessary to prioritise children?

Education and childcare settings are already open to priority groups, ensuring the continued care for children who are vulnerable and for children whose parents are critical to the coronavirus response, so that their parents and carers can continue to work, where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made.

In the first phases of wider opening, we will prioritise the return of 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. 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, and will benefit immensely from time with their friends and teachers to ensure they are ready.

The 2 year groups in mainstream secondary schools 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. From 15 June, we are asking secondary schools to offer some face-to-face support to year 10 and year 12 pupils (and equivalent) to supplement their remote education. Schools should plan on the basis of having a quarter of the year 10 and year 12 cohort (for schools with sixth forms) in school at any one time.

4.2 How should schools prioritise the return of priority children and respective eligible year groups?

From 1 June, as more children return to primary schools, we appreciate that each setting's circumstances will be slightly different. We acknowledged that some schools may not be able to open for more children immediately, and are committed to continuing to work with the sector to ensure any schools experiencing difficulties are able to open as soon as possible. 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

4.3 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

4.4 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).

4.5 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 (that is where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHCP, 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, and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable).

- 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, and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable).

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

Please 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 and 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.

4.7 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 or carer who is critical to the coronavirus response can go to school if required.

4.8 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.

4.9 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.

4.10 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. Funding

5.1 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 guidance setting out the process for schools needing to claim for these exceptional costs (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools).

6. Attendance

6.1 Is attendance compulsory?

Eligible children - including priority groups - are strongly encouraged to attend their educational 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 school 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.

6.2 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).

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

6.4 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.

6.5 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, educational 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.

6.6 Do schools need to take an attendance register?

Schools should resume taking the attendance register following re-opening to more pupils. Guidance on completing the attendance register at this time, along with which codes to use, is available (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings/process-for-recording-attendance-and-using-the-educational-setting-status-form).

Schools should also continue to submit the Educational Setting Status form (https://form.education.gov.uk/service/educational-setting-status) via the online portal to report whether they are open and how many children and staff are in school.

6.7 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 and where a school implements staggered start times, they may wish to consider temporarily extending this period.

6.8 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.

6.9 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.

7. Transport

7.1 How should children, parents and carers travel to school?

Parents and children and young people should be encouraged to walk or cycle where possible, and avoid public transport at peak times.

They should refer to safer travel guidance for passengers (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers).

7.2 Will local authorities be able provide free home to school transport for all eligible children attending school?

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.

Further guidance is available in guidance on implementing protective measures (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings).

7.3 What is the maximum number of children that should travel on a school bus, minibus or taxi?

Given the variety of vehicles used to deliver school transport this is a matter for local decision making by local authorities and their transport providers, following a risk assessment. They should refer to the Department for Transport's safer transport guidance for transport operators (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators).

7.4 Is PPE needed by staff on home to school transport?

No, PPE is generally not recommended outside of the clinical setting.

The majority of staff in educational settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. For guidance on the appropriate use of PPE in educational settings (including transport), see the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care).

If, when transporting children and young people, hygiene rules and social distancing is not possible, for example, where they have complex needs and may need support to access the vehicle or fasten seatbelts, schools should take appropriate actions to reduce risk. Further information is set out in the guidance on 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).

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 and 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.

8.4 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. Read further guidance to keeping children safe online (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online).

9. Safeguarding

9.1 Do safeguarding duties remain the same during the COVID response period?

Yes, schools' safeguarding duties remain the same. They must continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). The department has published safeguarding guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers) to support schools and colleges continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and suggest where schools and colleges might consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual.

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), 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 What should school leaders do if staff do not want to come into school?

Our guidance on implementing 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) explains who should and shouldn't attend education and childcare settings and sets out the measures that should be followed for staff that are either clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable, or who live with someone in either of these groups.

Whilst other staff should be able to come into school, it is natural that some employees will be worried about doing so even if the risks for them are very low. In agreeing the best approaches for their schools, headteachers and school leaders should work closely with employees and unions, where appropriate. School leaders will be in the best position, knowing their staff and school circumstances, to decide how to proceed in individual cases. We are working in an unprecedented context, and more reassurance and discussion than usual may be required. It is always best, if at all possible, to work out a sensible way forward in individual cases that acknowledges any specific anxieties but which also enables the school's responsibilities to be effectively discharged. If you need support in finding a solution, speak to your local authority or trust.

On 2 June, Public Health England published a review of the disparities in the risk and outcomes from coronavirus (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-review-of-disparities-in-risks-and-outcomes), including disparities associated with age, ethnicity, gender and geography. This review will inform the Government's approach. When considering their preparations for wider opening, schools should be especially sensitive to the needs and worries of individuals who may be more severely affected by coronavirus.

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.

For primary schools, classes should be split in half, with no more than 15 pupils per small group. The planning guide for primaries (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools) provides further information on creating and staffing these small groups.

From 15 June in mainstream secondary schools, the basic principle is that classes should be no more than half their usual size, with mixing between different groups of pupils kept to a minimum. We recognise that the range of subjects taught in secondary schools means that some mixing may be unavoidable to provide pupils with face-to-face support from subject teachers, but we expect that groups should be kept smaller than normal.

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 Are teachers still entitled to planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time?

Yes, teachers have a right, through their terms and conditions, to their PPA time. Headteachers and school leaders will want to take this into consideration when assessing staff availability and risk assessments in advance of wider opening.

11.3 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.

11.4 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) 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.

11.5 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.

11.6 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).

11.7 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).

11.8 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.

11.9 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.

11.10 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). 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.

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 regulation 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, to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances.

Schools must ensure that teachers are not penalised during the appraisal process or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions as a result of partial school closures, where this has impacted on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives.

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).

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).

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 educational 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 primary school from 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 educational 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 educational 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.

Two 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.

16.5 How should schools respond to requests for children and young people to repeat a year?

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the head teacher to decide how best to educate them. This may, on occasion, include deciding that a child should be educated in a year group other than the one indicated by their age. Such decisions should be based on sound educational reasons and in consultation with parents.

We do not currently anticipate that children and young people will need to repeat a school year as a consequence of the coronavirus outbreak. We continue to look at all options to make sure children and young people get the support they need to continue their education during the coronavirus outbreak and make up for time spent out of school.

However, it remains possible for headteachers to agree this in individual cases, if they think it is appropriate.

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.

17.2 Is there still a requirement for schools to produce annual reports for parents?

It is important for parents to receive reports about their children's education. Schools will understandably have less information than usual on which to base this year's reports and the availability of staff to produce the reports may also be impacted. Schools should take a proportionate decision on the level of detail that can reasonably be included.

Guidance on preparing annual reports for parents (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-reports-on-pupil-performance-guide-for-headteachers) has been updated to support teachers following partial school closures and the cancellation of this year's summer exam series and primary assessments.

17.3 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).

17.4 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.

17.5 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).

17.6 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).

17.7 Should schools allow external visitors?

Schools should limit the external visitors to the school during school hours.

Parents should come into school buildings only when strictly necessary, by appointment, and ideally only one at a time (unless for example, an interpreter or other support is required). Any such meetings should take place at a safe distance, and so the use of small offices may not be suitable, for example.

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 government appreciates that it may not have been possible to meet the timeframes set out in the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 for governing board meetings and IRPs over recent months, due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

We have amended the arrangements for governing board and IRP meetings in relation to exclusions occurring from 1 June 2020, and for some exclusions that occurred before that date, to make provision for such meetings to be held virtually provided certain conditions are met, and to extend time limits in some circumstances. Guidance to support governing boards and IRPs on these changes (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion/changes-to-the-school-exclusion-process-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak) is available.

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-gcses-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 What will happen to the proposed changes to the statutory framework 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 dedicated helpline at: 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. From 15 June, AP settings should also offer some face-to-face contact for students in year 10 and year 11 (as they do not have a year 12) 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 or 15 June, depending on whether they cater for primary or secondary pupils. 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. From 1 June and 15 June, for primary and secondary settings respectively, we expect independent schools, as well as all mainstream schools (including academies and free schools) to welcome back those children and young people in eligible year 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.

24.4 Will this apply to out of school settings?

While we have set out that schools should be preparing to welcome back some of their pupils on a phased basis from the week commencing 1 June, this is not the case for out of school settings.

Out of school settings covers 'any institution that provides tuition, training, instruction or activities for children in England, without their parents' or carers' supervision, that is not a school, college, 16 to 19 academy or provider caring for children under 8 years old, which is registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency', and would include for example settings such as supplementary schools, community activities, after school clubs and tuition, as well as holiday clubs.

It should also be noted that where providers, with the exception of childminders who may continue to look after children in their care, are caring for children over 5 and are registered with Ofsted (either on the compulsory or voluntary part of the General Childcare register), they should also not be preparing to welcome back pupils where they are either operating outside of school premises, or caring for children from more than one school.

24.5 What does this mean for school-based wraparound provision?

School-based wraparound providers, such as breakfast and after school clubs, can operate for children in eligible year groups (those in Reception, year 1 and year 6) or those within priority groups (such as children of critical workers and vulnerable children) if they are:

- operating on the same premises as the school those children are attending, and
- only caring for children of that school and no others

Those who do open should ensure they are following the same protective measures being taken by schools during the day and work with schools to follow their arrangements, such as keeping children in the same small consistent groups that they are in during the school day.

If wraparound providers are unable to implement the same protective measures as the school, they should remain closed for the time being.

24.6 How should boarding schools deliver education to those attending?

Boarding schools should follow the 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/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings) on how to reduce class sizes and keep children in small consistent groups and avoid mixing with other groups.

Schools and colleges continue to be best placed to make decisions about how to support and educate all their pupils during this period, based on the local context and staff capacity.

24.7 How should boarding schools manage their boarding houses when more pupils return?

The government's guidance on isolation for residential schools (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) applies to mainstream boarding schools. This guidance recognises that what constitutes a household may be complex. Sharing kitchens, bathrooms and sleeping spaces are important considerations. The guidance states that it is important to decide whether the whole setting should be treated as a single household or as multiple households. For example, where residential provision is spread across several, separate buildings, the school may wish to treat these as different households.

The guidance provides advice on how to manage isolation in the case of symptomatic student or staff member. In addition it provides some general advice on maintaining staff ratios at a safe level to protect children and young people, considering the maximum number of children or young people that can safely be accommodated in each setting, and managing visitors. These households, in contrast with other households, will almost always need to have staff and other professionals arriving and leaving.

Boarding schools should also take into account the guidance on implementing 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) when considering how to group pupils and, where possible, ensure that children from the same boarding house remain in the same group for classes during the day.

24.8 Do boarding schools need PPE?

Boarding schools should refer to guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#how-to-work-safely-in-specific-situations-including-where-ppe-may-be-required).

The majority of staff in education, childcare and children's social care settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain distance of 2 metres from others.

PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases:

- children, young people and students whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way
- PPE should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from any pupil displaying coronavirus symptoms

Where PPE is recommended, this means that:

- a facemask should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from someone with symptoms of coronavirus

- if contact is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a facemask should be worn.
- if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of fluids entering the eye from, for example, coughing, spitting or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn

When PPE is used, it is essential that it is used properly. This includes scrupulous hand hygiene and following guidance on how to put it on and take it off safely (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-non-aerosol-generating-procedures) in order to reduce self-contamination.

24.9 What if a case of coronavirus occurs in a boarding school?

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. Boarding schools should follow the guidance on isolation in residential 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) and decide whether the whole setting should be treated as a single household or as multiple households.

All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for 7 days and their household should self-isolate for 14 days.

As part of the national Test and Trace programme, if other cases are detected within the household or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise boarding schools on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate as a precautionary measure - perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

24.10 When can international students return from abroad?

Once international travel resumes, international boarders should follow the rules on self-isolation for international travellers that are in force at the time they arrive. The Government will continue to monitor worldwide border, travel and public health restrictions. Further guidance on this will be set out in due course.

24.11 Can pupils attending boarding schools play sport?

Children who have had limited opportunities for exercise should be encouraged to exert themselves physically, making use of supervised non-touch running games within their small group.

Physical education lessons and sports may continue to take place providing they are strictly non-contact and do not involve more than any one small group.