



This guidance is being updated to reflect the latest advice on [face coverings in education](#).

This guidance is for parents and carers of children at:

- registered nurseries and childminders<sup>1</sup>
- primary and secondary schools<sup>2</sup>
- further education colleges<sup>3</sup>

We have updated this guidance to include:

- new information on school admissions
- updated information on travelling to and from nursery, childminders, school and college
- updated information on education, health and care (EHC) plans, wellbeing and online safety
- updated information about assessment and exams

## Returning to nursery, childminders, school and college

All children and young people, in all year groups, will return to school and college full time from the beginning of the autumn term.

Children attending nurseries and childminders were able to return from 1 June. From 20 July, nurseries were able to return to their normal group sizes.

The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased since schools and colleges restricted their opening to most pupils in March. The NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and we understand more about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments.

The scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults of becoming severely ill. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults. However, there will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community.

To manage the risks, things will be a bit different when children and young people return to education. We have asked nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to put in place a range of protective measures to help reduce the risks.

Your child's nursery, childminder, school or college will be able to give you more information about the changes they have made.

## **Attendance**

### **Attendance at nursery and childminders**

Whether your child attends nursery, a childminder or another early years provider is your decision, but we do encourage you to take up a place for your child. Attending childcare can help provide a routine as young children develop their social skills.

You can check if your child is eligible for any of the free childcare entitlements on the [Childcare Choices](#) website. These are worth on average £2,500 a year to parents of 2 year olds and up to £5,000 a year to parents of 3 and 4 year olds.

### **Attendance at school and college**

It is vital that children and young people return to school and college, for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School attendance will be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. This means that it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child (if they are of compulsory school age) to school regularly.

There is not a corresponding legal duty for post-16 education but if a young person fails to attend, their college may believe they have left the course.

Local authorities and schools have a range of [legal powers to enforce attendance](#) if a child or young person misses school without a valid reason.

If children and young people have found lockdown exceptionally difficult, then their school or college may suggest a brief phased return. This will only be if it suits the needs of your child, and is agreed with you in advance. Your child will be supported to return to full time attendance as soon as they can.

If you have concerns about your child returning to school or college because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should discuss these with your school or college. They should be able to explain ways they are changing things to reduce risks. There are resources to support you with these conversations, including this leaflet on [returning to school after a period of absence](#).

## Self-isolation and shielding

A small number of children and young people may be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they:

- are self-isolating
- have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

If your child is unable to attend school or college for these reasons, ask your school or college what support they can provide for remote education.

Shielding advice for all adults and children was paused from 1 August. This means that children and young people can return to school or college if they:

- are on the shielded patient list
- have family members who are shielding

See the [guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#) for the current advice.

Children and young people under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before

returning to school or college. This should usually be at their next planned clinical appointment.

If children are not able to attend school because they are following clinical and/or public health advice, you will not be penalised.

## **Holidays**

As usual, you should plan your holidays within school and college holidays. Avoid seeking permission to take your children out of school during term time.

Keep in mind that you and your children may need to self-isolate when you return from a trip overseas.

## **Helping make nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges as safe as possible**

Each nursery, childminder, school or college will do their own health and safety risk assessment as part of their planning for the autumn term.

As part of this, there are certain approaches that we have asked nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to implement that are essential to reduce health risks.

## **Actions that nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will take**

We have asked nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to:

- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school or college, in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days by their nursery, childminder, school or college (based on advice from their local health protection teams) if they

have been in close, face to face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus

- ensure that everyone cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - this should be done for 20 seconds with soap and running water or hand sanitiser
- promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach, to ensure good respiratory hygiene
- enhance cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often

Nurseries and childminders will also minimise contact between individuals where they can. This could mean using different rooms for different age groups and keeping those groups apart.

Schools and colleges will minimise contact and encourage maintaining distance as far as possible. They will decide how best to do this because it will be different for each school or college. This will involve asking children and young people to:

- stay within specified separate groups (or bubbles)
- maintain distance between individuals

We know that younger children may not be able to maintain social distancing. It is likely that for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older children, it will be on distancing.

## **Actions you can take**

Do not send your child to their nursery, childminder, school or college if:

- they are showing [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#)
- someone in their household is showing symptoms

[Arrange a test](#) if you or your child develops symptoms. Inform your nursery, childminder, school or college of the results.

If the test is positive, follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

It is really important that you help nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to implement these actions by following the advice set out here and wider public health advice and guidance.

## **Face coverings**

Based on current evidence, Public Health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in nurseries, childminders, schools or colleges (except in some specific circumstances).

This is because:

- children, young people and staff are mixing in consistent groups
- not using them correctly may accidentally increase the risk of transmitting the virus
- there may be negative effects on communications and therefore on your child's education

The guidance on face coverings will be kept under review.

## **Arriving and leaving nursery, the childminder, school or college**

Some nurseries, schools or colleges may need to stagger or adjust start and finish times. This helps keep groups apart as they arrive and leave the premises. If schools or colleges choose to do this it should not reduce the amount of time they spend teaching - but it could mean that your child's start or finish times change.

Your nursery, childminder, school or college will be in touch to set out any changes they are making. This might also include new processes for drop off and collection.

## **Using public transport**

Everyone needs to play their part in reducing the demand for public transport. If possible, you should look for alternative transport options, especially walking or cycling, particularly at peak times.

This will help to ensure that there is enough public transport capacity to allow those who need to use it to travel safely. It will also benefit your family's health. See the guidance from:

- Living Streets on [walking to school](#)
- Sustrans on [keeping safe on the school run](#)

If you and your child rely on public transport to get to their nursery, childminder, school or college, the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#) will apply. In some areas, local authorities may be providing extra dedicated school transport services to help children and young people get to school or college.

Children and young people, and their parents and carers must not travel to nursery, childminders, school or college if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

It is important that you follow any local advice provided and that your child knows and understands the importance of following any rules that are set.

## **Wearing face coverings when travelling to and from school and college**

Most children and young people aged 11 and above are now required to wear a face covering on public transport. This does not apply to children and young people who:

- have a disability that means they cannot wear a face covering
- would find wearing a face covering severely distressing
- are travelling with someone who relies on lip reading to communicate

We advise that children and young people aged 11 and over also wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport to secondary school or college, apart from those who are exempt.

If your child needs to share a car to school with someone outside of their support bubble or household, they should:

- share with the same people each time
- open the windows for ventilation
- if they are over the age of 11, wear a face covering

If your child has been wearing a face covering before arriving at school or college, they must understand how to remove it and how to keep it or dispose of it safely. All schools and colleges should have a process for making sure face coverings are removed when pupils and staff who use them arrive at school. They should let you know what their process is.

Children and young people must:

- clean their hands before and after travelling to or from their school or college
- put any temporary face coverings they may have been wearing in a covered bin
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag that they can take home with them
- clean their hands again before heading to their classroom

## Curriculum

We have set out what we expect schools to teach when pupils return in the autumn. Schools will provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects.

There may need to be changes to some subjects, such as PE and music, so that schools can teach these subjects as safely as possible.

We expect colleges to return to full, high-quality study programmes in the new academic year.

Schools and colleges will also make plans for providing remote education if needed. This means that if your child needs to stay at home, due to shielding or self-isolation, their school or college will support them to continue learning.

We have already announced a catch up package worth £1 billion to ensure that schools have the resources they need to help pupils make up for lost teaching time, with extra support for those who need it most.

# Assessment and exams

## Assessments in primary or junior schools

Children and young people have missed a critical period of their education due to schools having to close to the majority of pupils to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). It is vital that we better understand the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on children's education and give support to schools that need it the most. To support this, we are planning for statutory primary assessments for those going into year 6 in September to take place in summer 2021.

## Ofsted inspections

In the autumn term, Ofsted inspectors will visit a sample of nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to discuss how they are supporting children and young people coming back. These visits will not result in a graded judgement.

It is intended that routine Ofsted inspections will restart from January 2021. The exact timing is being kept under review.

## School admissions

### Admission appeals

If you have applied to a school and it does not offer your child a place, you have the right to appeal this decision.

[Admission appeals](#) can now be held by telephone, video conference or in writing, instead of face-to-face hearings.

# Behaviour

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges may update their behaviour policies to reflect any new rules or approaches they are making. They will let you know what these changes are.

# School uniform

Schools decide their own uniform policy.

We are encouraging all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term.

You do not need to clean uniforms differently or any more often than usual because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

# School food

School and college kitchens should be fully open from the start of the autumn term.

They will provide food to all pupils who want it, including free school meals and universal infant free school meals as usual for those who are eligible.

# Online safety

Most people, including children, have been spending more time online, whether that is in the classroom or at home.

See the [support for parents and carers to keep children and young people safe from online harm](#). It suggests resources to help keep children and young people safe from different risks online and where to go for support and advice. [Support to stay safe online](#) includes information on security and privacy settings.

# Mental health and wellbeing

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will understand that some children and young people may be experiencing feelings such as anxiety, stress or low mood as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

There are online resources available to help you and your child with mental health, including:

- [MindEd](#), a free educational resource from Health Education England on children and young people's mental health
  - [Rise Above](#), which aims to build resilience and support good mental health in young people aged 10 to 16
  - [Every Mind Matters](#), which includes an online tool and email journey to support everyone to feel more confident in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing
  - [Bereavement UK](#) and the [Childhood Bereavement Network](#), provide information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff
- It is also vital to report any safeguarding concerns you have about any child. Contact the [NSPCC helpline](#) or [Barnardo's support service](#).

## Education, health and care (EHC) plans

During the outbreak, we needed to make some of the specified special education and health care provision within EHC plans more flexible.

This flexibility has now ended, which means that if your child has an EHC plan they should receive the support they need as usual when they return to school.

## School and college trips

From the autumn term, schools and colleges can resume educational day trips in the UK. They must follow the latest public health guidance and wider guidance for schools and colleges on the actions they can take to reduce risks.

We currently advise against overnight trips in the UK and overseas educational visits.

## Extra-curricular activities

Schools can run breakfast and after-school activities from the autumn term. Schools will need to make sure these can be delivered in line with the wider guidance on protective measures. This means they may need to run things differently.

Talk to your child's school to check whether they will be running breakfast and after-school activities.

Out-of-school settings, such as holiday or after-school clubs, can open to children and young people of all ages. It remains important that they put protective measures in place to help reduce the risk of transmission.

To minimise risks, consider:

- sending your child to the same setting consistently
- limiting the number of different settings you access

Ask the organisation that runs the activity what they are doing differently to reduce any risks.

There is advice available for parents on the [use of these clubs and activities](#).

## Local outbreaks

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will contact their local health protection team if they:

- have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) among pupils or staff within 14 days
- see an increase in children or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The local health protection team will advise what action is required. Usually, closure will not be necessary, but some groups may need to self-isolate.

If an outbreak in a school or college is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched. They will test everyone who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school or college, if necessary.

If your local area sees a spike in infection rates that results in localised community spread, the government will decide what actions need to be taken.

Your child's school or college should provide remote education if:

- groups of pupils need to self-isolate
- a larger restriction of attendance at school or college is needed