

This is guidance provided by the Department for Education, upon which our risk assessment and mitigating measures have been based. This version has been edited so that it just reflects guidance applicable to Primary Schools. The original can be found here:

<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>

Class or group sizes

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 measures set out above:

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

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if early years settings, schools and colleges do this, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.

Where settings can keep children and young people in those small groups 2 metres away from each other, they should do so. While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk.

For primary schools, classes should normally be split in half, with no more than 15 pupils per small group and one teacher (and, if needed, a teaching assistant). If there are any shortages of teachers, then teaching assistants can be allocated to lead a group, working under the direction of a teacher. Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in other year groups should also be split into small groups of no more than 15. Desks should be spaced as far apart as possible.

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. This might be because there are not enough classrooms or spaces available in the setting or because they do not have enough available teachers or staff to supervise the groups. Solutions might involve children attending a nearby school. 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:

- primary schools - nursery (where applicable), reception and year 1

We will revisit this advice when the science indicates it is safe to invite more children back to schools and colleges.

How to implement protective measures in an education setting before wider opening from 1 June

Planning and organising

Consider the following steps:

- refresh your risk assessment and other health and safety advice for children, young people and staff in light of recent government advice, identifying protective measures (such as the things listed below). Also ensure that all health and safety compliance checks have been undertaken before opening
- organise small class groups, as described in the 'class or group sizes' section above
- organise classrooms and other learning environments such as workshops and science labs for those groups, maintaining space between seats and desks where possible
- refresh the timetable:
 - decide which lessons or activities will be delivered
 - consider which lessons or classroom activities could take place outdoors
 - use the timetable and selection of classroom or other learning environment to reduce movement around the school or building
 - stagger assembly groups
 - stagger break times (including lunch), so that all children are not moving around the school at the same time
 - stagger drop-off and collection times
 - for secondary schools and colleges, consider how best to supplement remote education with some face to face support for students
 - plan parents' drop-off and pick-up protocols that minimise adult to adult contact
- in addition, childcare settings or early years groups in school should:
 - consider how to keep small groups of children together throughout the day and to avoid larger groups of children mixing
 - consider how play equipment is used ensuring it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously
- remove unnecessary items from classrooms and other learning environments where there is space to store it elsewhere
- remove soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean (such as those with intricate parts)
- consider how children and young people arrive at the education or childcare setting, and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport where possible. Read the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)
- institutions offering residential provision will also need to consider the maximum number of children or young people they can safely accommodate in residences

Communicating your plans

Consider the following steps:

- tell children, young people, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter the education or childcare setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (following the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#))
- tell parents that if their child needs to be accompanied to the education or childcare setting, only one parent should attend

- tell parents and young people their allocated drop off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use)
- make clear to parents that they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the site (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment, which should be conducted safely)
- also think about engaging parents and children in education resources such as [e-bug](#) and [PHE schools resources](#)
- ensure parents and young people are aware of recommendations on transport to and from education or childcare setting (including avoiding peak times). Read the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)
- talk to staff about the plans (for example, safety measures, timetable changes and staggered arrival and departure times), including discussing whether training would be helpful
- communicate early with contractors and suppliers that will need to prepare to support your plans for opening for example, cleaning, catering, food supplies, hygiene suppliers
- discuss with cleaning contractors or staff the additional cleaning requirements and agree additional hours to allow for this

When open

Keep cohorts together where possible and:

- ensure that children and young people are in the same small groups at all times each day, and different groups are not mixed during the day, or on subsequent days
- ensure that the same teacher(s) and other staff are assigned to each group and, as far as possible, these stay the same during the day and on subsequent days, recognising for secondary and college settings there will be some subject specialist rotation of staff
- ensure that wherever possible children and young people use the same classroom or area of a setting throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day. In schools and colleges, you may want to consider seating students at the same desk each day if they attend on consecutive days

For cleaning and hygiene:

- follow the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#)
- ensure that sufficient handwashing facilities are available. Where a sink is not nearby, provide hand sanitiser in classrooms and other learning environments
- clean surfaces that children and young people are touching, such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, bannisters, more regularly than normal
- ensure that all adults and children:
 - frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly. Review the [guidance on hand cleaning](#)
 - clean their hands on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
 - are encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose
 - use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
- ensure that help is available for children and young people who have trouble cleaning their hands independently
- consider how to encourage young children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs and repetition
- ensure that bins for tissues are emptied throughout the day
- where possible, all spaces should be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units
- prop doors open only if they are not fire doors, and where it is safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation
- get in touch with public sector buying organisation partners (for example ESPO, YPO, NEPO) about proportionate supplies of soap, anti-bacterial gel and cleaning products if needed

- there is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in an educational or childcare setting

Reduce mixing within education or childcare setting by:

- accessing rooms directly from outside where possible
- considering one-way circulation, or place a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep groups apart as they move through the setting where spaces are accessed by corridors
- staggering breaks to ensure that any corridors or circulation routes used have a limited number of pupils using them at any time
- staggering lunch breaks - children and young people should clean their hands beforehand and enter in the groups they are already in, groups should be kept apart as much as possible and tables should be cleaned between each group. If such measures are not possible, children should be brought their lunch in their classrooms
- ensuring that toilets do not become crowded by limiting the number of children or young people who use the toilet facilities at one time
- noting that some children and young people will need additional support to follow these measures (for example, routes round school marked in braille or with other meaningful symbols, and social stories to support them in understanding how to follow rules)

Use outside space:

- for exercise and breaks
- for outdoor education, where possible, as this can limit transmission and more easily allow for distance between children and staff
- although outdoor equipment should not be used unless the setting is able to ensure that it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children and young people using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously. Read [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#)

For shared rooms:

- use halls, dining areas and internal and external sports facilities for lunch and exercise at half capacity. If class groups take staggered breaks between lessons, these areas can be shared as long as different groups do not mix (and especially do not play sports or games together) and adequate cleaning between groups between groups is in place, following the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#)
- stagger the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy

Reduce the use of shared resources:

- by limiting the amount of shared resources that are taken home and limit exchange of take-home resources between children, young people and staff
- by seeking to prevent the sharing of stationery and other equipment where possible. Shared materials and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently
- although practical lessons can go ahead if equipment can be cleaned thoroughly and the classroom or other learning environment is occupied by the same children or young people in one day, or properly cleaned between cohorts

Adjust transport arrangements where necessary including:

- encouraging parents and children and young people to walk or cycle to their education setting where possible
- making sure schools, parents and young people follow the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#) when planning their travel
- ensuring that transport arrangements cater for any changes to start and finish times

Additional questions

Will contact tracing be in place in educational and childcare settings?

The government has launched a new national test and trace programme. This will bring together an app, expanded web and phone-based contact tracing, and swab testing for those with potential coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. This programme will play an important role in helping to minimise the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the future. It will also include more traditional methods of contact tracing if a child, young person or parent tests positive. This could include, for example, direct discussion with parents and schools or colleges on recent contacts. The government is recruiting 18,000 contact tracers to support contact tracing and will recruit more if needed. They will play an important part in tracing the contacts of those with coronavirus (COVID-19), including children.

What happens if someone becomes unwell at an educational or childcare setting?

If anyone in an education or childcare setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection guidance](#).

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone with symptoms, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive (see 'What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting?' below). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#).

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a setting?

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19), they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days and arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19. They can do this by visiting [NHS.UK](#) to arrange or contact NHS 119 via telephone if they do not have internet access. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), 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, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home 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.

Should educational settings ask parents to report pupils' temperatures at the start of each day?

Parents, carers and settings do not need to take children's temperatures every morning. Routine testing of an individual's temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19). Educational and childcare settings should reiterate to parents the need to follow the standard national advice on the kind of symptoms to look out for that might be due to coronavirus (COVID-19), and where to get further advice. If anyone in the household develops a fever, or a new continuous cough, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they are advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection guidance](#) (which states that the ill person should remain in isolation for 7 days and the rest of the household in isolation for 14 days).

Will children and young people be eligible for testing?

All children and young people eligible to attend education and childcare settings, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). This will enable them to get back into childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. Parents will have a number of routes to access testing for them and their children. Visit the [guidance on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing and how to arrange to have a test](#).

Will teachers and other staff be able to get tested if they have symptoms?

Access to priority testing is already available to all essential workers. This includes anyone involved in education, childcare or social work – including both public and voluntary sector workers, as well as foster carers. See the [full list of essential workers](#). Education settings as employers can book tests through an online digital portal. There is also an option for employees to book tests directly on the portal.