

Frequently asked questions for parents

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Government advice to schools

Approach: First phase of wider opening of educational and childcare settings (from 1 June 2020 depending on the most up-to-date assessment of the risk posed by the virus)

From the week commencing 1 June 2020 at the earliest, we are asking nurseries and other early years settings to open to all children; primary schools to welcome back pupils to Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6 (including in middle schools); secondary schools and colleges to offer some face to face support for children and young people in year 10 and year 12 to supplement their remote education; alternative provision to 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); and special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools to welcome back more pupils and students.

We will assess the impact of these changes closely, working with medical and scientific advisers as well as sector leaders. When the most up-to-date assessment of the risk posed by the virus indicates that it is appropriate to do so, we will ask more primary year groups to return to school, and issue revised guidance.

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

- 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 and encouraged 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). The risk assessment is subject to change and alternatives such as reduced timetables may be arranged.
- children, young people and staff who have been classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions](#) 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](#), 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

Implementation: Managing risk and rate of transmission

Scientific advice indicates that a phased return that limits the number of children in education settings and how much they mix with each other will help to control the rate of transmission. This is set out in [our guidance](#).

There are a number of immediate issues which educational and childcare settings will need to consider. The following list of issues are the ones we have identified as the top priorities. We recognise that each setting and community is different, and that leaders will need to make their own judgements on the most important issues for them. Further guidance on these, and other important areas, will be developed with the sector in the coming days and weeks.

Key issues

Risk assessment

Every setting should carry out a risk assessment before opening. The assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), so that sensible measures can be put in place to control those risks for children and staff. All employers have a duty to consult employees on health and safety, and they are best placed to understand the risks in individual settings.

Class sizes and staff availability

One of the protective measures we can take to reduce transmission is to have smaller group and class sizes. We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m 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 in our [guidance](#):

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

It is still important to reduce contact between children and staff as far as possible, and settings can take steps to achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, and staff where possible, mix in a small group and keep that small group away from other people and groups. For pre-school children in early years' settings, the staff to child ratios within Early Years Foundation Stage continue to apply, and we recommend using these to group children. In mainstream schools and college settings the basic principle is that classes should be halved. Normally one teacher should be allocated to a group but if there are any teacher shortages then support staff may be used to lead groups, under the direction of a teacher. More detail is provided in our [protective measures guidance](#).

Public Health England are clear that if early years, school and college settings do this, and crucially if they also apply comprehensive infection control measures, such as taking steps to ensure symptomatic individuals do not attend settings, regular hand cleaning, respiratory hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per our advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.

Where settings can keep children and young people in those small groups 2m 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.

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 / spaces available in the setting or because they do not have enough available teachers / staff to supervise the groups. Solutions might involve children attending a nearby school (on a consistent basis). 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, years 1 and 6

Our ambition is to bring all primary year groups back to school before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible, though this will be kept under review. We will review this advice on class sizes as and when the science indicates it is safe to invite more children back to childcare settings, schools and colleges.

Protective measures in education and childcare setting

The DfE guidance on [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
- what settings should do in response to a case of COVID-19 being confirmed

Attendance

No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. Eligible children – including priority groups - are strongly encouraged to attend their education setting, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable (in which case they should follow medical advice). If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions. Families should notify their nursery/school/college as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together. Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time, and schools and colleges will not be held to account for attendance levels. Schools and colleges should continue to inform social workers where children with a social worker do not attend.

Schools and colleges should resume taking their attendance register and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending. The Department will continue to monitor attendance at early years' settings, via local authorities. This is to ensure that we have up-to-date information on available early years and childcare provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, which children are accessing it and to monitor sufficiency in particular areas.

Vulnerable children and young people

There is a continuing expectation that vulnerable children and young people of all year groups will attend educational or childcare provision, where it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. As per the current guidance, where these children and young people are currently not attending but attendance is appropriate, we expect providers and local authorities to consider how to encourage their attendance.

Vulnerable children and young people in this context include 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. Attendance is expected, unless their social worker decides that they are at less risk at home or in their placement. The educational provider should notify the social worker in cases where these children or young people do not take up their place at school or college
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following a risk assessment, carried out with educational providers and parents, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who are therefore in need of continued education provision - this might include children 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 who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that schools and childcare settings must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. Early years settings should use reasonable endeavours to deliver the learning and development requirements as far as possible in the current circumstances, as [set out here](#).

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.

Where year groups are returning to school, we would expect school 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 agree what adjustments may be needed to the school curriculum 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.

Schools should use best endeavours to support pupils attending school as well as those remaining at home, making use of the available [remote education support](#).

No school will be penalised if they are unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to their pupils during this period.

Priority groups

Settings will need to consider how they integrate children and young people from priority groups who are attending but not in any of the transition year groups into their education offer. Settings have the flexibility to make the right decision for their circumstances on how these pupils are supervised, continue to learn and are supported in school.

Assessment and accountability

There are no changes to the previously announced expectations on assessment and accountability. No examinations or assessments will take place this term and Ofsted will continue to pause routine inspection.

Staff workload and wellbeing

Governing boards and senior leaders should be conscious of the wellbeing of all staff, including senior leaders themselves, and the need to implement flexible working practices in a way that promotes good work-life balance and supports teachers and leaders.

Workload should be carefully managed and schools and colleges should assess whether staff who are having to stay at home due to health conditions are able to support remote education, while others focus on face-to-face provision. Senior leaders and boards will want to factor this into their resource and curriculum planning, and consider where additional resource could be safely brought in if necessary.

Transport

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

Government will shortly publish guidance on how to travel safely, which schools, parents and young people can refer to when planning their travel, particularly if public transport is required.

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](#).

Food

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.

We are also continuing to ask schools to work with their food providers to offer meals or food parcels for benefits-related free school meal pupils not in school. Now that schools are opening more widely, school catering teams will be better placed to do this. The provision of food vouchers for those eligible under the benefits criteria will also continue to be available where needed. Information on supporting those in FE with free meals is in the FE operational guidance.

Costs associated with opening for more children and young people

As previously confirmed, schools will continue to receive their core funding allocations – as determined by the local authority for maintained schools and through the general annual grant (GAG) for academies. FE colleges continue to receive funding in line with the flexibilities that have been announced in recent weeks including payment on profile for 16-19 study programmes without reconciliation. In addition, we have announced a fund for schools to cover specific additional costs as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak – this remains open and should be used by schools as appropriate. Access to the wider business support schemes, including Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), can continue to be used for staff typically paid for through private income, on condition that the principles in Department of Education's [sector specific guidance](#) continue to be met.

For early years' settings, the dedicated schools grant (DSG) should continue to be paid by local authorities for provision of free entitlements. Where parents are accessing hours beyond the free entitlements they are eligible for, early year providers should continue to charge parents in the normal way. The wider business support packages can continue to be used as appropriate, including the loan schemes and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), on condition that the principles in Department for Education's [sector specific guidance](#) continue to be met.

We are continuing to work with the childcare sector to understand how the early years' sector can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available for those returning to work now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

Further guidance and support

We have published:

- [supporting guidance on protective measures which should be implemented in education settings](#)
- [guidance for parents and carers](#)

This complements the [existing guidance for schools and educational settings](#) that continues to be relevant (and which will be updated in due course where needed).

We will publish further guidance for senior leaders to enable them to work through the actions they need to take to get ready for 1 June 2020. This will be co-produced with experienced school and trust leaders and sector representatives.

1. Throughout this document there is a distinction made between 'vulnerable children' which has a wide definition as [described in this link](#) and in the relevant section below; and those who are 'clinically vulnerable' to coronavirus. [↪](#)

Parent Questions and Answers

Q. Which year groups will open on which date?

A. The four year groups within mainstream primary have been prioritised because they are key transition years – children in Nursery, 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 1 will return on: Monday 1st June

Reception will return on: Tuesday 2nd June

Nursery will return on: Wednesday 3rd June

Q. Why have you chosen to open when other schools are staying closed?

A. We have carried out in depth risk assessments and recognise the Government advice on how to keep children safe whilst in the academy. Government advice is provided below.

The above approach is underpinned by our latest understanding of the science, which indicates that we need to take a phased approach to limit the risk of increasing the rate of transmission (often referred to as R) above 1. We have factored in:

- *severity of disease in children – there is high scientific confidence that children of all ages have less severe symptoms than adults if they contract coronavirus (COVID-19)*
- *the age of children – there is moderately high scientific confidence that younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with coronavirus (COVID-19)*
- *numbers of children going back – which needs to be limited initially then increased gradually as the science permits*
- *systems to reduce the size of the groups coming into contact with each other – such as smaller class sizes spread out across settings*

Q. If anyone in my household has Covid-19 symptoms should I let my child attend the academy?

A. No your child should follow Government guidance.

Q. We have someone shielding in my household, should my child attend the academy?

A. You should allow your child to attend the academy in line with Government guidance. If you feel they cannot maintain social distancing then they should remain at home and remote learning will apply.

Q. My child has medical conditions that fall under the vulnerable group, should they attend the academy?

A. You should seek the advice of your GP and advise the academy. The academy will have an increased cleaning regime and 2m social distancing will apply.

Q. I normally drive to the academy, is this still acceptable?

A. The government are encouraging walking or cycling to school and we are encouraging parents to maintain social distancing.

Q. Where should I drop my child off, are we allowed in the playground?

A. Parents will be allowed on the school grounds to walk along the marked path to drop their children off at the gates; a strict one way system will be in operation. The drop off and pick up times are staggered to discourage parents congregating in groups. Only one parent should arrive to drop off or pick up the child/ren.

Q. Will my child stay with the teacher and children in the same class?

A. Where possible, the children will remain with the same group of children and same teacher.

Q. How do I know which classroom my child has to attend?

A. Parents need to contact LFPA if your child/ren are returning to school and we will inform you of the classroom allocation, start and finish times.

Q. Am I allowed to speak with the classroom teacher?

A. We would prefer you to email any points to the office email account lfpaoffice@theparkfederation.org or the year group email address. There will be no access to teachers as children will be dropped off and collected at the gates.

Q. Will you be encouraging hand washing on first arrival?

A. Yes, each child will have to wash their hands on first arrival with soap for 20 seconds and periodically throughout the day as will staff. For staff we will also have alcohol based sanitisers that they may use if they so choose.

Q. How many children will be in my child's class?

A. Class sizes will not be larger than 15.

Q. What will the classroom seating look like?

A. The children will be seated facing forward and will sit in the same seat every day. They will be 2m apart at all times. Each child will have their own personal learning pack that contains the equipment they will need.

Q. Will the academy be clean?

A. Yes, we continue to use appropriate cleaning chemicals in line with Government advice.

Q. Will you have day time cleaners to clean common areas and in particular the toilets?

A. Yes

Q. Will toilet handles be clean?

A. Children will be asked to wash hands before they go to the toilet and before they return. Cleaners will also be cleaning toilets during the day.

Q. How will you ensure effective infection protection and control?

A. There are important actions that children, their parents and those who work with them can take during the coronavirus outbreak, to help prevent the spread of the virus.

In the academy, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). A range of approaches and actions will be employed to do this. These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the academy
- cleaning hands more often than usual – children and staff will wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach, with tissues provided in every classroom
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, with wipes available throughout the day in classrooms and offices as well as us deploying additional daytime cleaners
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times). Our class sizes will never be greater than 15.

Q. Will you be providing my child with PPE?

A. As per Government advice, wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This does not apply to when children are in the academy.

The academy have been advised that we should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. Face coverings (or any form of medical mask where instructed to be used for specific clinical reasons) should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

The majority of staff in the academy 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; however staff may choose to wear PPE at times. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- children, 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
- if a child, becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in the academy and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask will be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask and eye protection will be worn by the supervising adult if there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.

Q. What happens if my child becomes ill during the day?

A. We will contact you and ask you to collect your child. If they are seriously ill then we will call the Ambulance Service and notify you.

Q. What sort of lunches will you be providing?

A. You can either bring in packed lunches or our caterer will be preparing a sandwich lunch, details of which will be provided on our website. Meals will be eaten in your child's classroom.

Q. Do children in Reception and Year 1 need to bring packed lunches?

A. The Government continue to fund lunches for these year groups and they will be provided with packed lunches that they will eat in the classroom.

Q. Will children or adults be provided with PPE?

A. Unless there is a specific child who already requires PPE, no other child will be issued with PPE. Certain staff in the academy will be provided with PPE when completing essential tasks that through risk assessment warrant the wearing of PPE. Cleaners for example who come in to contact with chemicals, first aiders and welfare assistants.

Q. Will children have access to toys?

A. We have removed all soft toys based on Government advice and children will have access to hard toys that have been cleaned. Children will not share toys.

Q. Will my child be able to play using the outdoor equipment?

A. The Government advice is not to allow shared use of any play apparatus and we will be following this guidance. All outside play equipment will be taped off.

Q. Will my child have outdoor lessons?

A. Outdoor lessons will be encouraged where this can be planned for good weather and groups of children do not mix

Q. Will after school clubs or breakfast clubs open?

A. Not at this time but we will update you as soon as this provision is allowed.

Q. Will you continue to support key worker children and those identified as vulnerable?

A. Yes

Q. How will you ensure 2m distancing in the playground?

A. The playground will be zoned. Each group will have an allocated time and they will remain with the same group they are with in the classroom. An adult will be allocated to each zone. SLT will be monitoring break and lunchtimes

Q. Where should I collect my child from and at what time?

A. Changes to drop off and pick up routines will be required. There will be a queuing system in place and allocated gates for drop off and collection. This is to reduce the number of people on the school site in the interest of infection control. Parents will not be able to gather in the playground/gates/car park or to enter the buildings to drop off or collect children.

Q. Can I enter the academy to see the Receptionist or attend a meeting?

A. It would be preferable if you did not enter the academy but emailed or phoned in questions. Parents should come into school buildings only when strictly necessary, by appointment, and ideally only one person (unless for example, an interpreter or other support is required).

Q. What have you done to protect the staff?

A. We are abiding fully by Government guidance and applying 2m social distancing. Where necessary such as Reception we have taken measures such as having antibacterial alcohol based sanitisers or installing screens.

Q. How will social distancing apply in the Nursery?

A. We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 meters apart from each other and staff. It is still important to reduce contact

between people as much as possible, so children, young people and staff where possible, should only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group should stay away from other people and groups. The nursery will be split into four areas (within and in other classrooms) to support with this.

Q. Will you administer medicines for my child and if you will how do I drop of medicines?

A. Our Welfare Officer will still administer medicines and these will need to be dropped at the office maintaining the 2M distance. PPE will be worn.

Q. Will my child be playing sports whilst in the academy?

A. We will still be offering limited sports, but only if it adheres to the government guidance.

Q. What if my child is still in nappies?

A. To minimise contact, if your child is still in nappies we will be advising parents to keep them at home.

Q. What if my child soils themselves during the day?

A. To minimise contact, if your child soils themselves they will be directed to clean and change in to new clothes. If they are unable to do this themselves and staff are not safely able to support, we will call parents to come and change their children.

Q. Will the academy still continue online learning?

A. LFPA has been able to offer high-quality remote education opportunities or programmes over recent weeks. Now that we will be opening more widely, larger numbers of staff will be needed to provide face-to-face teaching at school. This means that it may be more difficult to maintain the same level of remote education provision for pupils in the year groups who are not eligible to attend, or for those pupils in year groups who are eligible to attend but who themselves cannot.

Q. I have children in reception and year 1 so staggered start times are not practical for me. What should I do?

We encourage parents where this is the case to contact the school and agree a start time for both or all children concerned.

Q. Can I choose the days I send my children to school if they are in the specified year groups attending LFPA?

The government have requested children return on a full time basis and not part time. Therefore, we will not be permitting children to attend part time. LFPA is open every day for the times given above.

Q. Should my child wear school uniform?

We will not expect our children to wear school uniform but they can wear their PE kit or similar style clothing. This is so parents can change and wash clothes on a daily basis.

Q. Will my child be bringing home reading books?

To limit transmission and the sharing of resources, we will not be sending home reading books or asking teachers to sign or look at diaries. If you have a message for the teacher, please call or email.

Q. What will the curriculum look like and what will my child be learning?

The different experiences all pupils will have had at home will naturally play a large part in how easily they re-adapt to attending school and its routines. LFPA staff will strike an appropriate balance between reintegrating pupils into a reassuring and familiar work ethic to support their mental wellbeing on the one hand, and identifying and taking time to address explicitly individual concerns or problems on the other.

The priorities for young children at this time are re-socialisation into new style school routines; speaking and listening, and regaining momentum in particular with early reading.

For year 1, as well as re-socialisation and routines, our aim is to ascertain where children have fallen behind or have progressed further against the school's existing reading curriculum. If they have forgotten aspects already covered, then our plan is to reteach and practice this material, where necessary re-teaching phonics and using appropriately matched reading books to practice reading.