

Covid-19 update from the Education and Skills Team

Professional Advocates for Children in Education, Governor Support, NQTs, Early Years, the Virtual School for Looked after Children and In Year Fair Access

Be proud!

The new week, which we hope has started well for you, brings several updates and amendments in guidance. Some messages are reinforced across different documents from early years through to further education, so there are a few summaries but also links to further reading for your phase or phases.

Through continuing challenging times, we continue to be inspired by your positivity and resilience as we visit schools. Despite some heavy winds and rain overnight, reminding us how quickly Autumn has returned, amidst a seemingly never-ending pandemic, today still brings sunshine! And your school's radiate sunshine even on the toughest of days..... a pupil pointing at a blackbird on the tree on an art display said, Mrs..... can I tell you what I call that bird? I call it the bird of hope and trust... because this is the tree of life. Thank you.

Pauline, Jo and the E&S team

Test kits

Updated to confirm that staff and secondary school pupils should continue LFD testing at home, the actions settings should take following PCR test results, and that children who were previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable are no longer considered clinically extremely vulnerable. Also clarified how test kits can be reordered and that any queries should be directed to 119 NHS Test and Trace.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-test-kits-for-childrens-homes>

Updated for SEND and specialist settings

Several changes. Updated SEND and specialist settings guidance to align with changes to advice for those who were previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable, remove out of date content, add advice on vaccines, and update information about remote education, dedicated transport, the contingency framework, testing, and the temporary education directive. Updated information on asymptomatic testing and contact tracing in the 'rapid asymptomatic testing in specialist settings' guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

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Asymptomatic testing, CEV and vaccinations updates

Asymptomatic testing - Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within settings. Staff and secondary aged children should continue to test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3 to 4 days apart. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged.

There is no need for primary age children (those in year 6 and below) to test.

Clinically extremely vulnerable - The shielding programme has ended and adults previously considered CEV should, as a minimum, continue to follow the same [COVID-19 guidance](#) as everyone else. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance, but people previously considered CEV may wish to consider taking extra precautions, including personal advice from their specialist or clinician.

Employers should be able to explain the measures they have in place to keep staff safe at work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on [protecting vulnerable workers](#), including advice for employers and employees on [how to talk about reducing risks in the workplace](#).

Children and young people previously considered CEV may attend out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare and should follow the same [COVID-19 guidance](#) as the rest of the population. They will need to isolate if advised by their specialist.

Vaccinations for children - All children aged 12 to 17 over are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination (12-15s a first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine via the school based programme)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-schools/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-children-and-young-people-guidance-for-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Students with certain medical conditions that make them more at risk of serious illness, or who are living with someone who is immunosuppressed, are eligible for 2 doses. These children will be contacted by a local NHS service such as their GP surgery to arrange their appointments.

Actions for early years and childcare providers

This guidance has been updated to reflect the September Review and ensure it is consistent with the changes to advice relating to those previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable, remove out of date information relating to the 2020 to 2021 academic year, and update guidance on educational visits.

Educational visits - Undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits and ensure that any public health advice, such as hygiene and ventilation requirements, is included as part of that risk assessment. Given the likely gap in COVID-19 related cancellation insurance, ensure that any new bookings have adequate financial protection in place.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures

What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19

Mixing ('bubbles')- No longer recommended as necessary to keep children in 'bubbles' or to keep groups apart as much as possible to manage COVID-19. Assemblies and larger group activities can resume. Any decision to recommend the reintroduction of 'bubbles' would not be taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education.