



## **Waltham Forest Local Authority**

### **Guidance for Schools on Returning to School on 1 June 2020**

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## Introduction

This Waltham Forest LA Guidance is intended to assist schools on return to school on 1 June 2020. It should be read in conjunction with the various DfE Guidance documents. These are listed in appendix 1.

This LA Guidance reflects the DfE advice which includes:

- From 1 June, primary schools are asked to welcome back Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6 pupils as well as priority groups;
- Secondary schools are being asked to offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 and 12 students who are due to take key exams next year alongside the full-time provision they are offering to priority groups;
- Nurseries and other early years providers, including childminders, are also being asked to welcome back all children;
- Alternative provision settings should mirror the approach being taken for mainstream schools and also offer some face-to-face support for years 10 and 11.
- Special schools will work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups;
- Getting all children back into school as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because their mental wellbeing relies on social interactions with peers, carers and teachers;
- Children returning to school will allow more families to return to work;
- By returning children gradually, schools can initially reduce the number of children in classrooms and put protective measures in place to reduce risks;
- Children will need to stay in their new class/group wherever possible;
- A range of protective measures will need to be put in place, including increased cleaning, reducing 'pinch points' (such as parents gathering) and utilising outdoor space;
- Staff and pupils will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will all members of their households;
- A negative test will enable children to return to school and parents to return to work;
- A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting;
- In childcare settings, children below statutory school age are likely to attend in smaller numbers than usual, which should allow for small group working.
- The government's ambition is for all primary year group children to be back in school before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible;
- The safety of pupils and staff is the utmost priority so additional year groups will only be invited back if the most up-to-date assessment indicates that this is appropriate.

This LA Guidance is based on the assumption that schools will re-open in phases from 1 June 2020, that attendance will be voluntary, at least initially, and that pupils and staff will be required to adhere to a level of social distancing.

The Guidance includes the specific DfE advice as well as LA recommendations. The Guidance is divided into several sections, each covering a major aspect of the return to work:

1. Covid-19 infection control and social distancing
2. Communication – parents
3. Communication – pupils
4. Curriculum- home
5. Curriculum – school
6. Finance
7. Governance
8. Health and safety
9. Human Resources
10. LA/Trusts
11. Phased return of pupils
12. Premises
13. Safeguarding
14. Staffing
15. Transition of pupils
16. Vulnerable Pupils

The opening section is the DfE initial planning framework which all schools should check.

## Opening Section – the DfE Initial Planning Framework

Theme	Key action list
Children and parents	Identify likely numbers of pupils returning and agree required staffing resource and approach and liaise with your local authority on your plans.
	In special schools, specialist post-16 and hospital schools only, agree which additional pupils will return irrespective of year groups to achieve a phased return.
	Plan content and timing of communications to parents and pupils (including discussing attendance expectations and other specific things that parents should do to help prepare returning pupils, for example, arrangements for drop-off/collection).
	Plan to resume taking attendance registers and continuing to complete the online educational setting status form to provide daily updates on how many children and staff are in school.
	Plan how children of critical workers and vulnerable children will be accommodated alongside returning year groups and encourage attendance (unless they are extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding, or medical advice or further guidance suggests they should not attend).
	Agree what returning support is available for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children (including any dual-registered students) and put in place provision for the return of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in conjunction with families and other agencies and engage with partners who will help to provide that support, for example, local authorities.
	Agree what safeguarding provision is needed in school to support returning children (e.g. where new issues have arisen, or existing ones escalated) and consider any necessary changes and referrals as more children return to school, including those with problems accessing online offers. Check for revised protocols from your local authority and update safeguarding policy if necessary.
	Update behaviour policies to reflect the new rules and routines necessary to reduce risk in your setting and agree how to communicate this to school staff, students and parents and review uniform expectations.
	Work with your catering supplier to ensure meals are available for all children in school. Also, consider your arrangements for those year groups still out of school and eligible for benefits related free school meals.
	Agree whether breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and after-school clubs can operate (in line with the <a href="#">implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings</a> guidance), and under what terms.

Theme	Key action list
Staff (teachers, support staff and non-teaching staff)	Decide content and timing of staff communication(s) including if bringing staff in in advance of pupils returning is necessary.
	Consider options if necessary staffing levels can't be maintained (including school leaders and key staff like designated safeguarding leads and first aid providers).
	Identify staff who can't return to school at this point (for example, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable or those who are clinically vulnerable or living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to on site) and how they can work from home (for example, supporting remote education).
	Agree any flexible working arrangements needed to support any changes to your usual patterns (for example, staggered start/end times).
	Agree staff workload expectations (including for leaders).
	Decide what staff training (either delivered remotely or in school) is needed to implement any changes the school plans to make (for example, risk management, curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding).
	Put in place measures to check on staff wellbeing (including for leaders).
Protective measures and hygiene	Read the guidance on <a href="#">implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings</a> and agree how this will be implemented in your school, including agreeing on any necessary updated health and safety policy and risk assessments.
	Decide the physical and organisational structures needed to limit risks and limit movement around the building(s) (for example, classroom layouts, entry and exit points, staggered starts and break times, class sizes, lunch queues, use of communal staff areas). Agree how safety measures and messages will be implemented and displayed around school.
	Decide what an enhanced cleaning schedule looks like and how it will be implemented in your school (for example, how often, when/if an additional clean is necessary) and how you will ensure sufficiency of supplies.
	Decide the approach to enhance hygiene (for example, toilet use, hand washing) and decide on policy related to usually shared items (for example, books, toys, practical equipment).
	Plan the school level response should someone fall ill on site (in line with relevant government guidance).
Make arrangements for the very small number of cases where personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies will be needed: if your staff provide intimate care for any children or young people and for cases where a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home.	

Theme	Key action list
Pupil wellbeing	Plan likely mental health, pastoral or wider wellbeing support for children returning to school (for example, bereavement support) and discuss with your local authority what wider support services are available. Work with your local authority to secure services for additional support and early help where possible (for example, around anxiety, mental health, behaviour, social care, or changes to mobility), and consider how these might apply to pupils and students who were not previously affected.
Learning	<p>Agree what learning is appropriate (including the relationship between face-to-face and remote education), for example, identify curriculum priorities, agree revised expectations and required adjustments in practical lessons, and any approaches to 'catch up' support.</p> <p>Work with your local authority or trust (and where applicable NHS Clinical Commissioning Group) and families to identify what provision can be reasonably provided for in line with education, health and care (EHC) plans.</p> <p>Agree ongoing learning offer for eligible pupils who can't attend school, as well as offer for those that continue to be out of school.</p> <p>Agree ongoing approach for learning offer for vulnerable children and children of critical workers who are in school but not in the returning year groups.</p>
Other considerations	<p>Work with other school based-provision as necessary (for example, nursery, SEN unit) to ensure policies are aligned where they need to be.</p> <p>Agree approach to any scheduled or ongoing building works.</p> <p>Plan arrangements with your suppliers and check they are following appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures (for example, food suppliers, grounds maintenance, transport providers), including when in school.</p> <p>Ensure you have considered the impact on staff and pupils with protected characteristics, including race and disability, in developing your approach.</p>

## Section 1A – Covid-19 - Infection Control

### What the DfE says:

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.
- institutions offering residential provision will also need to consider the maximum number of children or young people they can safely accommodate in residences
  - the availability of soap and hot water in every toilet (and if possible in classrooms)
  - the location of hand sanitiser stations, for example at the school entrance for pupils and any other person passing into the school to use, and their replenishment
  - the location of lidded bins in classrooms and in other key locations around the site for the disposal of tissues and any other waste, their double bagging and emptying
  - ensure you have a good supply of disposable tissues to implement the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach in each classroom and enough to top up regularly

### Use of PPE

The majority of staff in education 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. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

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

Further information can be found at:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

### **School Considerations: Covid-19 - Infection control**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Maintain your usual cleaning procedures but augment them with the advice above
- Publicise to parents that you will have improved cleaning procedures
- Make sure staff model personal hygiene
- Include personal hygiene in the curriculum taught
- Create a detailed and meticulous cleaning schedule
- Ensure you have the staffing to undertake the enhanced cleaning schedule
- Check you have adequate cleaning supplies in place and longer-term deliveries arranged
- Devise a procedure for any confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases
- For any COVID-19 cases in school: appoint staff member to take action; create an area for such cases to be managed; clean thoroughly any affected areas; inform parents or carers
- Schools and settings might want to designate particular staff to support children with suspected symptoms. It is vital for any member of staff who uses PPE to read the guide to donning and doffing which can be found [here](#) and also to watch the [video](#) which runs through the basics of use of this equipment.

### **Section 1B - Covid-19 - Social distancing**

#### **What the DfE says:**

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 pre-school children in early years settings, the staff to child ratios within Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) continue to apply as set out here, and we recommend using these to group children.

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.

For secondary schools and colleges, the same principle of halving classes will normally apply. It is also sensible to rearrange classrooms and workshops with sitting positions 2 metres apart. Where very small classes might result from halving, it would be acceptable to have more than half in a class, provided the space has been rearranged. Again, support staff may be drawn on in the event there are teacher shortages, working under the direction of other teachers in the setting.

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:

- 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

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

## School Considerations: Covid-19 – Social Distancing

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Ensure staff model social distancing practice
- Build on any good practice from the last eight weeks if the school has been open
- Measure classrooms and corridors to estimate the safe number of pupils and staff with the 2-metre distance recommendation
- Wedge doors open so they do not have to be opened
- Consider the school estate as you may want to re-position classroom space (halls, etc.)
- Ensure office space enables social distancing
- Create a Social Distancing Plan which includes meetings and professional development
- Bear in mind: staggered school drop off/pick up times; limited movement round the school; classroom redesign; staggering break and lunch times; queues for lunch; toilet arrangements
- Consider the entry and exit routes to the school – do they need signage to impose social distancing?
- Would 2 metre markings on the floor at key points be helpful?
- Consider the sanctions if social distancing is not taking place – home school agreement on this area?
- Enable parent visits/meetings with social distancing
- Reminders on social distancing – posters in classrooms and round the school
- Consider risk assessments for pupils who might struggle with social distancing
- Plan assemblies bearing in mind social distancing
- Revise timetables to better suit social distancing
- Revise transport arrangements
- Consider innovative ways of teaching the pupils about social distancing
- With social distancing, is PPE needed at all?
- See the curriculum section for aspects related to teaching

## Section 2 – Communication – Parents

### What the DfE says

We want to get all children back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know it is good for children’s mental wellbeing to have social interactions with other children, carers and teachers.

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus has decreased. We anticipate with further progress that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June, to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. We will only do this provided that the 5 key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the recovery strategy are operating effectively. As a result, we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

We are asking that only these year groups return to childcare providers, schools and colleges from 1 June. This does not include siblings in different year groups unless those siblings are in a priority group, for example, the children of critical workers.

We hope that all primary school children can come back to school before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible, although this will be kept under review. Reducing the risks for children and staff is our utmost priority.

We have provided guidance and support to schools, colleges and childcare settings on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) to help them to reduce the risk of transmission as more children and young people return.

To prevent the spread of coronavirus, schools and other settings will use a range of protective measures to create safer environments in which the risk of spreading the virus is substantially reduced. Whilst such changes are likely to look different in each setting, as they will depend upon individual circumstances, they are all designed to minimise risks to children, staff and their families.

Schools and other settings should communicate their plans to parents once they have had a chance to work through them in detail. Approaches we are asking schools and other settings to take include:

- carrying out a risk assessment before opening to more children and young people - the assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus so that sensible measures can be put in place to minimise those risks for children, young people and staff
- making sure that children and young people do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus
- promoting regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use of sanitiser and ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach
- cleaning more frequently to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, tabletops, play equipment and toys
- minimising contact through smaller classes or group sizes and altering the environment as much as possible, such as changing the layout of classrooms

- reducing mixing between groups through timetable changes, such as staggered break times or by introducing staggered drop-off and collection times
  - We strongly encourage children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend, as requested by their school or college, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions).
  - You should notify your child's school or college as normal if your child is unable to attend so that staff are aware and can discuss with you.
  - Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.
  - Once settings open to more children and young people, staff and pupils in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their household. This will enable children and young people to get back to childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative.
  - A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting
  - When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. 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.
  - Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class/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/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 child or young person's cohort or in the wider education or childcare 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 and 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.

### **School Considerations: Communication – Parents**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Maintain the current communications practice but augment this, bearing in mind the parents' understanding of COVID-19
- Consider creating a Task and Finish group of representative parents for this period
- Create regular and expected communication streams
- Use parent governors as ambassador for the school
- Communicate with parents: plan for partial re-opening; social distancing plan; wellbeing and pastoral support to parents of home learning
- Devise a weekly or regular communication to keep parents well-informed
- Try to communicate with parents to alleviate their fears about sending their children to school
- Consider end-of-year reports to parents
- Could a parent group support the school with communication or a 'touchstone' group help keep the school well informed on the feelings of parents?

- Depending on numbers and the size of buildings, some pupils may transfer to other schools – keep parents informed about any plans
- Be clear about expectations on attendance as more pupils start schooling again
- Alleviate parental anxiety by devising welcoming programmes and induction
- Manage the transition from home learning to school-based learning through good communication with parents
- Consider the parents who will not allow their children to return to school and the needs of their children
- Prepare parents that their children may have different teachers on return as class sizes are halved

## Section 3 – Communication – Pupils

### What the DfE says

The first aim of the partial school closure measures was to reduce the overall population of children moving around local areas, in order to further reduce the number of social interactions, and thus flatten the upward curve of the coronavirus outbreak.

However, the second aim was to continue to care for children whose parents are critical to the coronavirus response, so that they can continue to work where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made, and for children who are vulnerable.

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. These priority groups remain eligible to attend as schools open to more students.

In the first phases of wider opening, we will prioritise 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.

The three 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.

From 1 June, as more children return to schools, we appreciate that each setting’s circumstances will be slightly different. Any setting that cannot achieve the small groups recommended as part of the [protective measures guidance](#) 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

Children and young people who are considered [extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding](#) should continue to shield and should not be expected to attend.

Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Children and young people who live in a household with someone who is [extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding](#) should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and the child or young person is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Children and young people who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) as defined in the [social distancing guidance](#) and including those who are pregnant, can attend.

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](#).

### **School Considerations: Communication – Pupils**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Use the established routines for communicating with pupils and add to this – school council; school newsletters; assemblies, etc.
- Ensure that social distancing is carefully introduced and justified and modelled by staff
- Encourage pupils to use jotters, homework diaries etc. to note new changes, such as timetable arrangements
- At staff meetings and training, rehearse key issues to discuss with the pupils and how you might lead these
- Parents must be kept well informed on all matters so they can encourage and support their children
- The rationale for the return to school particularly should be clearly communicated to parents who can inform their children - schools can further explain when the pupils return
- Schools need to give consideration to siblings not yet returning to school
- On return to school, pupils need to be made aware of their new timetable, possible new teachers and arrangements for social distancing
- Teachers will need to introduce pupils to a return to academic work and the new social situation
- Some pupils will have been attending school during the lockdown – these will need integrating carefully with the new entrants
- Teachers will need to consider wellbeing, mental health and resilience, including possible bereavement support
- For year 6 pupils, a support programme for school leavers will need delivery
- Teachers will need to bear in mind the impact of lockdown on the pupils – financial; increased FSM eligibility; social care engagement; mental and wellbeing issues

- Pupils will have experienced different educational experiences during lockdown – teachers will need to assess what work has been covered at home and ways of reinforcing learning with the different pupils
- Schools may want to consider a distance learning programme to help prepare the pupils returning
- Teachers will want to immediately gauge how pupils are feeling about returning to school and link this to teaching and learning methods
- Pupils will want to share sensitively their experiences to date with COVID-19 and will rely on their teachers to make this happen
- Pupil voice must not be lost in these very different times – how can pupils contribute to decision-making about the differences in their daily school life?

## Section 4 – Curriculum – Home

### What the DfE says

We have brought together an initial list of online educational resources to help children to learn at home. These websites have been identified by some of the country's leading educational experts and offer a wide range of support and resources for pupils of all ages.

The list includes subject-specific resources for:

- [English](#)
- [maths](#)
- [science](#)
- [PE](#)
- [wellbeing](#)
- [Special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\)](#)

They are currently being offered for free. Individual resources cannot replace a school's properly planned curriculum, and the resources in this list are not intended to do so.

They may be useful for parents in considering how they could support their children's education, but they should not be used in place of existing resources which schools may be using as part of their continued provision for pupils' education at this time.

Schools may also wish to explore this initial list of resources as they consider how they continue to support children's education.

This list of resources is not exhaustive and there are many other resources available to schools. We want to signpost to a broad range of high quality resources for teachers and parents. This list will be updated shortly to reflect recent applications from suppliers.

Before using these resources, you should refer to the guidance '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#)', which has further information on how to keep children safe online.

[Bitesize Daily](#) has been developed by the BBC to provide new lessons every weekday for pupils in Year 1 to Year 10. Created in collaboration with teachers and educational experts, videos and interactive activities cover core subjects and other topics on the school curriculum. Content is available for free on television, online and through BBC iPlayer.

Schools might also consider using resources from [Oak National Academy](#), which was created by teachers from schools across England in response to school closures. This free resource for teachers will provide the equivalent of three hours of lessons a day for primary school pupils and four hours a day for secondary across a variety of subjects. Lessons have been devised by practising teachers, combining videos, quizzes and worksheets.

The Department for Education (DfE) has been working with schools to develop remote learning guidance based on the current experiences and practices of teachers and school leaders.

It outlines some approaches that have worked for schools and includes case studies and information about:

- [supporting pupils' wellbeing](#)
- [adapting teaching practice for remote education](#)
- [adapting the curriculum for remote education](#)
- [keeping pupils motivated and engaged](#)

The schools that have informed this guidance are developing their practice in a variety of different circumstances.

School leaders have explained that the level of challenge and nature of provision will vary across schools, and that schools need the flexibility to plan and provide remote education that is suitable for their circumstances. This includes considering the age of pupils. Remote education for younger children will typically need more involvement from parents, and parents are facing a range of pressures at this time.

Additionally, most of the examples given are from schools that already had some infrastructure or technology in place. Many schools and households do not have the same level of access. We are developing examples of effective practice from schools in these circumstances, and for schools providing education to younger children.

### **School Considerations: Curriculum – Home**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Continue good practice in remote learning with the pupils not returning
- Blend in-school and remote learning creatively for returning pupils
- Communicate with home-based pupils through a range of means
- Assess what the curriculum for pupils at home looked like (for returners) and is like (for those still home-based)
- Ensure the pupils still based at home receive full attention even though some year groups have returned to school
- Delegate to some staff responsibility for the home learners to ensure they are continuously engaged and learning
- Try to engage home-based pupils and returners actively together in remote learning through, for example, group discussions, small group assemblies
- Make good use of the free DfE materials and Oaks National Academy resources for pupils based at home still
- Undertake a SWOT analysis about the pupils still home-based and act on your findings
- Delegate some responsibility to older pupils to communicate with home-based peers
- Adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of those spending long periods at home and request assistance from parents and carers
- Provide activities for home-based pupils that reflect their context and limitations
- Try to ensure that curricular planning for returners matches the opportunities and challenges for home-based peers (whose parents are unwilling to send their children to school)
- Get groups of pupils to communicate between the school and home
- Ensure that home-based pupils receive feedback on their work and efforts

## Section 5 – Curriculum – School

### What the DfE says

#### 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 education 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.

#### What are the expectations for children returning to school on 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.

#### 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 education settings, local authorities and parents. Further information can be found in the guidance on [supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

Pupils on SEN support who remain at home will continue to have ongoing learning needs. Ensuring there are good communication channels between education 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 [remote learning resources](#), which includes those designed for children with SEND

### **School Considerations: Curriculum – School**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Returning pupils will be a challenge so prepare carefully, predicting their feelings and likely behaviour patterns
- Ensure you have a failsafe system for recording who is in school on any one day
- Have high expectations from 1 June in terms of behaviour for learning and conduct round the school
- Manage the returning day especially carefully as pupils will be anxious and unclear on expectations
- Consider the workload on staff with new teaching arrangements and beware too much additional workload
- Schools will need to individually baseline assessment of progress and identify any gaps
- Teachers will need to plan learning that can relate to the differing levels of progress as the pupils will doubtless have had different home learning experiences
- Social distancing will need to be factored in when planning activities
- For some subjects (PE, practical science, DT/FT), risk assessments may be necessary and any risks mitigated
- The curriculum will need close attention paid to wellbeing and mental health – the pupils will be learning in new ways and are going through a very challenging period
- Professional development will help identify the best teaching methods for social distancing
- The classroom environment may need changes to meet the new requirements
- Pupils are being asked to bring a water bottle each day – no water fountains and strict social distancing put in place
- School displays will need to reflect the year groups in school and the new rules of social distancing etc.
- The behaviour policy will need amending to reflect the new teaching and learning circumstances
- The examination grades for years 11 and 13 may need close attention
- Secondary schools will need information on year 6 pupils
- The school-based curriculum will need to build on previous learning at home
- Year groups or classes may need to be staggered for return
- Pupils with additional needs will need careful planning and support
- A protocol needs to be generated for adults coming into the school or classrooms
- A key intention will be to keep pupils feeling safe, confident and happy rather than slavishly delivering the National Curriculum
- The school's calendar of events will need reviewing and ways found to provide alternative opportunities where possible
- The curriculum for 2020/21 will need attention in this new context

## Section 6 – Finance

### The DfE says

We have already confirmed that 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 – for the 2020 to 2021 financial year (April 2020 to March 2021 for maintained schools and until August 2021 for academies and non-maintained special schools). This will happen regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure and will ensure schools can continue to pay staff and meet other regular financial commitments, as we move through these extraordinary times.

Local authorities will also continue to receive their high needs budgets and should continue to pay top-up and other high needs funding to schools. This will ensure that the employment and payment of staff supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can continue.

Similarly, where schools pay top-up or other funding for pupils attending alternative provision (AP), or pay for other SEND or AP services, we expect these payments to continue so that teachers and other staff can be paid in accordance with their existing employment contracts.

If placements and services for the summer term have not yet been agreed, schools should fund on the basis of previous patterns of placements and commissioning.

The additional funding set out in this guidance is not intended to cover any additional costs relating to changes in SEND provision organised by local authorities for individual children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

There will be some instances where schools that remain open have already, or will over the coming weeks, face additional costs as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. In some instances, schools will not be able to cover these from their existing resources.

The following guidance sets out the details of the support the Department for Education is putting in place for such schools. We will keep this guidance under review, as the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak develops.

### How schools can access funding

Funding will be available to cover costs relating to specific items. These items are ones we judge are likely to be necessary to allow schools to provide appropriate support to those children who will continue to attend school under the current arrangements.

Funding will be available to schools that are unable to meet such additional costs from their existing resources, or which they could only meet by drawing down on reserves and undermining their long-term financial sustainability.

While we are not asking schools to draw on existing reserves to meet these costs, we do not expect schools to make a claim against this funding if they are anticipating that they will be able to add to their reserves in the 2020 to 2021 financial year.

We are asking schools to make the necessary payments from their existing budgets and record these in line with local finance policies. In June, we will publish further guidance for schools on the process for informing us of any additional costs relating to coronavirus (COVID-19). We understand the

significant challenges schools are facing at present and will therefore make the process for reporting this information as simple as possible. We will then make payments – direct to academies, or to local authorities to pass onto their schools – to reimburse schools for costs they apply for up to the limits set out below.

### **School Considerations: Finance**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- The school can claim additional funding at this time – ensure your school is claiming the full entitlement
- Handling cash may be a COVID-19 issue and need consideration
- After care and safety, teaching and learning remain the top priorities – finance should be enabling the best provision possible
- Teacher morale will be challenged at these times – handle any changes in contracts, working practices etc. with extreme care
- Enable staff to focus on the children above all else
- It will be important for schools to record any additional costs related to COVID-19
- Schools also need to record any loss of income, such as lettings and the financial implications
- There may be insurance claims for visits booked previously
- Some school services may be re-contracted, such as cleaning, IT, catering
- Establish a business continuity plan that can be adapted to reflect the changes and phases of re-opening
- Some additional costs can be claimed (see DfE advice above) but plans will need to be generated for other areas
- The business manager will need to ensure that finances continue despite remote working etc.
- Schools need to be aware of the delays and cancellations of some financial returns
- Transport costs may need adjusting in the light of social distancing
- The school needs to apply for any possible refunds for residentials, theatre trips etc
- There needs to be a crisis financial plan prepared in case of a second COVID-19 outbreak
- Leaders need to review all related safety concerns with financial implications – ventilation, gas safety, fire, water hygiene, cleaning, premises etc.

## Section 7 – Governance

### The DfE says

#### Advice for governing bodies

- In line with Public Health England guidelines, all non-essential contact must be avoided to stop the spread of COVID-19. That is why the government has given clear guidance on [self-isolation](#), [household isolation](#) and [social distancing](#). The department therefore advises against governing bodies meeting in person, and to instead adopt alternative arrangements, for example by using video or teleconferencing applications. If you are using video conferencing platforms to continue to meet as a governing body, then please consider the security of the platforms that you are using. You should read the privacy terms and conditions and ensure that where possible you enable any security features. If you have any concerns, you might want to consult your IT provider or staff for support. Please remember that all parties will need to agree to these arrangements.
- Boards can agree to hold meetings via telephone or video-conferencing without having to meet first. The chair or clerk/governance professional can contact governors directly to agree to alternative meeting arrangements during this lockdown period.
- Please note: the department will not be making any changes to the statutory governance functions in any upcoming regulations related to COVID-19. The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 ([regulation 14](#)) allows for governing bodies in maintained schools to approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings of the governing body, including by telephone or video conference. The [model articles of association for academy trusts](#) state that trustees can attend meetings remotely subject to certain stipulations set out in article 126.
- The department urges governing boards to be pragmatic in what they cover in meetings during this time, and to be proportionate in the decisions that they are planning to take. We expect governors to focus on urgent, time-bound decisions. We understand that you are likely to want to defer non-urgent decisions/agenda items until future meetings.
- Boards should prioritise providing support to their school leaders and staff where needed, to allow them to get on with operational matters. School leaders should stay in touch with the governing board in a proportionate way, including providing information on the welfare of staff and pupils, so that they can retain a strategic overview of the situation and the school.
- We urge schools' [Get Information About Schools](#) (GIAS) gatekeepers and individuals who have their details on GIAS to keep email addresses up to date. Important information being communicated from the department may require quick and effective action.
- We also recommend governing boards have in place contingency plans in case the chair and/or vice chair become unavailable, so that there is clarity about who will be the conduit of information for the board.
- Finally, we would like to thank you for your understanding and continuing support through this period. The department is very grateful for the way in which schools, trusts, governing boards, clerks and governor services have quickly responded and supported their communities during this unprecedented time.

#### 3. Additional useful information

- If you have a query about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to schools and other educational establishments in England, contact the DfE coronavirus helpline on 0800 046 8687. Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm. If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.
- The National Governance Association (NGA) have produced useful [COVID-19 information sheets for governing bodies](#), as well as additional guidance on business continuity and holding virtual meetings.

## School Considerations: Governance

- Consider the DFE Guidance above
- The key imperative is to keep the school operating well – governors should be assisting this process and may need to reduce their usual demands
- Meetings should continue to be held virtually during this time, although boards may want to scale back on the number of meetings (full board may be sufficient and committees optional)
- Key communications between SLT and staff may be useful for governors too
- Governors can find ways to reassure staff and boost morale
- The relationship between the head and chair is vitally important – heads will be going through a very stressful time and chairs can help alleviate some of this pressure through minimal demands and being reassuring
- The LA's Governor Services will be happy to advise or support where requested including advice on IT for governor meetings
- When using remote tools, do be aware of confidentiality if working from home
- Governors should still be making corporate decisions, unless chair's action is appropriate
- Governors have a strategic rather than operational role so it is important to enable the headteacher and staff to take appropriate action in these challenging times
- Prioritising meetings and decision-making will be crucial at these times
- Regular contact should be maintained between the leadership and governors – possibly a weekly catch-up between head and chair and staff updates also circulated for information to governors
- More routine matters will probably have to be delayed during these times but there should be a plan or strategy to deal with such items in the future
- Governors should have a role in the discussion and planning for the school re-opening
- Staff will need reassurance at this time – governors have a role in support as well as challenge
- Where the school has link governors, they can liaise and support the department/area with which they are connected
- On visits to school, governors need to be aware of the school's procedures for social distancing

## Section 8 – Health and Safety

### The DfE says

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, where 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

### **School Considerations: Health and Safety**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Health and safety occupy a higher profile during this time
- The responsibilities of the various staff (teaching or non-teaching) in terms of health and safety should be reclarified
- Use the LA's health and safety team for expert advice
- Take no risks and have in place risk assessments for major aspects
- Consider appropriate sanctions and strategies for pupils who fail to meet health and safety expectations
- Staff should be modelling best practice in terms of health and safety
- Adapt the health and safety policy (and related policies) to include aspects linked to COVID-19
- Prepare carefully for the safe return of staff and the preparation of classrooms
- Determine the PPE needs of the school – consider contact and risk assess

- Order the PPE necessary and arrange delivery in good time prior to re-opening
- Ensure there are assured supplies of PPE for the future
- Plan arrangements if a positive COVID-19 incident occurs – deep cleaning; temporary halt to re-opening etc.
- Risk assessments feature highly at this time - adjust any to take account of COVID-19
- Ensure there is a named person responsible for risk assessments
- Plan how to stagger start/finish/play/lunch times to manage social distancing
- Consider how parents can leave and collect their children and meet social distancing requirements
- Ensure that all 'normal' health and safety work takes place – fire alarm testing; repairs; grass cutting; servicing of equipment; PAT testing; boiler checks; heating checks; etc.
- Could any costs be shared across schools to save funding?
- A risk assessment should be carried out before the school re-opens
- Children should not attend school if they or a member of their household has any symptoms of COVID-19
- Promote regular hand washing for 20 seconds – catch it, bin it, kill it
- Clean surfaces carefully often
- Minimise contact through smaller class sizes and changing the layout of classrooms
- Reduce mixing of children through staggering breaks etc.

## Section 9 – Human Resources

### What the DfE says

#### **Audit your whole staff to ascertain who will be available to be in school from the week commencing 1 June**

Remember staff may need to work with different groups of children than usual.

You may also be working with some staff who are anxious and may value the opportunity for discussion and reassurance.

The guidance on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) contains information about clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable adults.

**Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals** are advised not to work outside the home. 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.

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

**Clinically vulnerable individuals** who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions as set out in the [staying at home and away from others \(social distancing\)](#) guidance) have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. This includes pregnant women. 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.

If clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available on-site roles, staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, although the individual may choose to take on a role that does not allow for this distance if they prefer to do so. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

If a **member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable** (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), which includes those who are pregnant, they can attend work.

If a **staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable**, as set out in the [guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#), it is advised they only attend work if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to work at home.

Your staffing picture may change so you should update your audit frequently. Ask staff to update you immediately if their situation changes as you will need to base decisions on your most recent staff availability audit.

#### **What to consider when working out staff ratios**

1. How many staff do you have available to work in school?
2. How many teachers do you have available to work in school?

3. How many support staff including teaching assistants do you have available for work in school?
4. Do you have a head or deputy available for work in school?
5. Do you have at least one person with paediatric first aid training available for work in school?
6. Do you have at least one person with up to date Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training available to work in school?
7. Do you have your special educational needs coordinator available for work, or an alternative staff member who could take on this role?
8. Do you have a caretaker and/or cleaning staff, and if necessary at least one office staff member available during the school day?

If the answer to questions 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 is no, then you should try to find a solution to this before going further. You should speak to your local authority and/or trust who may be able to provide a suitable person temporarily to cover 5, 6, 7 or 8. In some cases, staff members may be prepared to undertake a different role to their normal role temporarily.

Keep your staffing arrangements as consistent as possible. In instances where you do need to use staff from other schools, ensure cover is agreed on a weekly basis, not daily, to limit contacts

### **School Considerations: Human Resources**

- Consider all the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Keep in close contact with your school's HR representative as staffing changes
- Be aware of maintaining high morale and well-being for all staff despite these challenging times
- Risk assess how the school can operate with high staff sickness levels and procedures should the school become understaffed
- All staff should be modelling social distancing
- In terms of who should be at work, check the DfE advice above
- You will need to calculate how many staff you will need to deliver the new social distancing approach
- Support staff such as facilities, midday and office/admin staff will also be needed but again social distancing put in place
- Staff need to be aware of the latest guidance on absence reporting and recording, using the new DfE reporting spreadsheet daily
- Appointments and interviews can still take place during these times – check with your school's HR representative- the statutory guidance of safer recruitment still applies
- If you have an NQT who may not successfully complete their induction year, contact HR or your school's HR representative asap
- For staff shielding, they should also be in communication with the school and their role in continuing to support the working of the school is clear
- For staff who are vulnerable but not in receipt of a shielding letter, or live with those who are shielding – they should also be in communication with the school and understand their role
- The proportion of remote and in-school teaching will need to be determined
- Any redeployment options have been considered in the light of the school's new context
- Plans are made to deal with increased sickness levels – cover arrangements put in place
- The wellbeing, mental health and resilience of staff are all supported

- Arrangements for any testing planned are put in place
- Staff are clear on returning to work guidance
- Induction for any new starters is planned and in place
- Professional development planned on the new approaches to teaching and learning
- Any furloughed staff are returned to school (if appropriate)
- Staff contracts in the new scenario are all in place
- Any HR issues pre-lockdown are appropriately resolved

## **Section 10 – LA/Trusts**

### **What the DfE says**

#### **What are schools responsible for?**

Between 23 March and 1 June, educational and childcare settings are responsible for providing places only to priority children (vulnerable children, and children of critical workers).

While as many schools as possible should try to stay open for priority pupils at this time, this will not be possible for all settings, and the local authority should oversee arrangements so that pupils are able to access provision elsewhere.

We are also asking that schools prepare for wider opening on the assumption that eligible year groups can return to schools from 1 June.

From the week commencing 1 June at the earliest, we are asking that schools welcome back eligible year groups as part of the wider opening of educational settings, alongside priority groups.

Maintained, academy and independent schools should work with local authorities to ensure provision is available for priority and eligible groups.

#### **What are local authorities responsible for?**

Local authorities are responsible for co-ordinating a response to the coronavirus arrangements. Working with education settings (including academies and the independent sector), they should use the [critical worker list](#), and the [definition of vulnerable children](#), to support schools and trusts to ensure that there is sufficiency for these priority groups, and for those groups eligible for return to settings from 1 June.

Local authorities are also responsible for monitoring demand and capacity. This may involve working with schools to provide places in alternative settings if necessary, and supporting residential special schools, alternative provision, and other special settings to remain open, wherever possible.

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.

#### **Will it be mandatory for all schools, colleges and early years settings to remain open in some form?**

We are asking all schools and early years settings to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

We acknowledge that some schools and early years settings may be unable to do so, and will support them to work with local authorities, regional school commissioners, and neighbouring schools and settings, to continue to support these children.

#### **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. Schools are expected to be flexible and work together where required.

### **Can provision be shared across local authority areas?**

If a school is unable to open, local authorities should try to co-ordinate provision for pupils in other schools in their area. If this is not possible, local authorities should consider working with neighbouring local authorities, while keeping in mind the impact on children. Regional school commissioners (RSCs) can support conversations between local authorities where necessary.

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

### **School Considerations: LAs/Trusts**

- Consider all the detailed DfE Guidance above
- These are new times – seek advice actively on all matters from the LA or Trust
- Use the LA or Trust to find about best practice at other schools in the borough
- If you hit upon a problem, it has probably occurred elsewhere so seek from the LA or Trust strategies to solve issues
- The school should maintain an up-to-date list of key contacts in the LA or Trust
- Communications from the LA or Trusts should be appropriately disseminated to staff
- Headteachers are represented on the LA Coronavirus Recover Group so individual heads can make contact with their representative to raise any issues or concerns
- The current good practice of schools working in clusters and federations should continue
- Schools may want to agree some consistent practice with partners schools, such as revised start and finish times
- Schools will need to meet DfE statutory requirements as well as being informed by LA or Trust recommendations
- Headteachers will need to lead the operational re-opening of the school and liaise as appropriate with the LA, Trust (if applicable) and governing body
- Schools will need to put in place QA systems that measure the success and development areas of re-opening
- It is in the interest of schools to keep the LA or Trust informed of progress on re-opening
- The LA or Trust will keep in close contact with individual schools and also the LA Covid Recovery Group will inform schools of actions and recommendations
- Schools should inform the LA or Trust of any additional needs for re-opening and negotiate response

## Section 11 – Phased Return of Pupils

### What the DfE says

#### Why can more children now attend school and childcare settings?

We want to get all children back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know it is good for children’s mental wellbeing to have social interactions with other children, carers and teachers.

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus has decreased. We anticipate with further progress that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June, to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. We will only do this provided that the 5 key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the recovery strategy are operating effectively. As a result, we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

#### What does the latest scientific advice say?

We have been guided by scientific advice at every stage. The latest scientific advice to government is that:

- there is high scientific confidence that children of all ages have less severe symptoms than adults if they contract coronavirus and there is moderately high scientific confidence that younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with coronavirus
- limiting the numbers of children going back to school and college initially then gradually increasing numbers, guided by scientific advice, reduces risk of increasing the rate of transmission
- schools and other settings can make changes to how they are organised and put measures in place to reduce risks

We have provided advice to schools and other settings on the steps they should consider taking, this includes:

- limiting the amount of contact between different groups of children (such as smaller class sizes with children and staff spread out more)
- additional protective measures, such as increased cleaning and encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene

#### How will risks to children, teachers and families be managed?

We have provided guidance and support to schools, colleges and childcare settings on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) to help them to reduce the risk of transmission as more children and young people return.

To prevent the spread of coronavirus, schools and other settings will use a range of protective measures to create safer environments in which the risk of spreading the virus is substantially

reduced. Whilst such changes are likely to look different in each setting, as they will depend upon individual circumstances, they are all designed to minimise risks to children, staff and their families.

Schools and other settings should communicate their plans to parents once they have had a chance to work through them in detail. Approaches we are asking schools and other settings to take include:

- carrying out a risk assessment before opening to more children and young people - the assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus so that sensible measures can be put in place to minimise those risks for children, young people and staff
- making sure that children and young people do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus
- promoting regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use of sanitiser and ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach
- cleaning more frequently to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, tabletops, play equipment and toys
- minimising contact through smaller classes or group sizes and altering the environment as much as possible, such as changing the layout of classrooms
- reducing mixing between groups through timetable changes, such as staggered break times or by introducing staggered drop-off and collection times

### **School Considerations: Phased Return of Pupils**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- You know your school community best, so use this knowledge when planning the phases return of pupils
- The school may want to slowly admit returners – leaving till later possibly the most challenging individuals
- Have a clear communication plan for announcing who returns when
- Match carefully the returning pupils to staff in-school to meet all demands
- The school will need to prioritise the return of pupils in year groups or classes and articulate the reasons for this phased return to parents and others
- The timetable will need updating to allow for social distancing such as more outdoor activity or using the hall for different purposes
- Families with siblings will need consideration and support
- All eligible key workers should be listed to help plan provision, including those who have yet to take up the school place offer
- The good practice from 23 March onwards could be integrated into new arrangements
- Changes needed, now that more children are attending, will need to be planned and delivered
- Some children will continue to be shielded and provision for them will need consideration
- Social distancing will be a real challenge – schools will need to determine what will be possible and ways to implement the guidance
- Flexibility is key – what weekly model might work best for smaller class sizes?
- As pupils return, some may be overawed being with groups of peers again and it will be important to maintain a quiet, disciplined atmosphere across the school
- Schools might want to consider a gradual re-entry to school, building up to whole days

- The DfE has stated that priorities for young children at this time are resocialisation into new style school routines, speaking and listening and early reading – these will need building into the initial programmes;
- Non-touching sport, such as running games, will be important, especially for those pupils who have had little exercise of late; resources for activities should be washed before and after use;
- Pupils will be at different stages on their return and teachers will need to assess progress for individual pupils; phonic teaching may have to remind pupils of basic sound recognitions
- Year 6 pupils will be unlikely to experience established events, such as parent assemblies, trips, end-of-year concerts and plays etc., and schools will want to discuss this with pupils. Secondary liaison is key and ways should be sought to prepare year 6 for transition.

## Section 12 – Premises

### What the DfE says

It is important that arrangements remain in place to ensure that children and staff are in safe buildings during reduced occupancy arrangements. Educational settings should review their arrangements for all building-related systems but in particular:

- hot and cold-water systems
- gas safety
- fire safety
- kitchen equipment
- security including access control and intruder alarm systems
- ventilation

Staff should be familiar with the [actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#) and work with their responsible bodies to ensure that statutory health and safety arrangements are in place.

**There are increased risks related to safety concerns around water hygiene, building and occupancy safety and building hygiene due to reduced occupancy. Follow this guidance to manage these risks.**

Contact your contractors and suppliers to check on any special interim arrangements in place due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

In all educational settings, a member of staff should be identified with responsibility for managing premises. In cases of staff illness, cover arrangements should be put in place as soon as possible.

### Cold water systems

This includes tanks, sinks/basins/showers and drinking water outlets (taps and water fountains).

Do not drain down systems.

Increase the frequency of outlet flushing and temperature monitoring to maintain water quality within the entire system.

If required, consider additional water quality testing at water outlets (closest and further from the main water source) and drinking water outlets that remain in use.

### Domestic hot water services

This includes calorifiers/direct fired water heaters/sinks/ basins/ showers.

Do not drain down systems, you should continue hot water generation servicing in line with manufacturers' criteria.

Water temperatures must be kept within limits recommended for the control of legionella bacteria in water systems. For reference, use the [Approved Code of Practice](#) and [HSG 274](#).

Regularly check hot water generation for functionality and if required, temperature recording.

If the hot water system has been left operational the hot water should be circulating as normal and regular checks, in line with guidance, should be carried out.

### **Gas safety**

Do not isolate gas supplies to boilers and hot water generation.

To avoid the risk of leaks and dangerous build-up of gases, isolate gas supplies where not in use, for example, in science labs and prep rooms, design and food technology classrooms, and school kitchens. Otherwise, gas services should remain in normal operation.

Continue planned gas safety checks including gas detection and/or interlocking.

### **Fire safety**

You must review and if necessary, update your fire management plans and ensure any changes to fire escape routes are clearly identified and communicated.

During the reduced occupancy period you must:

- carry out weekly checks of alarms systems, call points and emergency lighting
- carry out regular hazard spotting to identify escape route obstructions
- check that all fire doors are operational

Fire drills should continue to be held as normal.

### **Kitchen equipment**

Equipment that holds water – for example, dishwashers, combination ovens – should be run through at least a full cleaning cycle per week. This is to remove scale build-up and standing water build-up to prevent possible bacteria growth.

### **Security**

All areas of the school should be kept secure.

Access to certain closed areas should only be possible by relevant staff – for example, science laboratories, chemical stores and IT rooms. Check that access control and lockdown systems are operational.

### **Ventilation**

All systems to remain energised in normal operating mode.

Where mechanical ventilation is present, recirculatory systems should be adjusted to full fresh air. If mechanical ventilation systems cannot be adjusted to full fresh air these should be switched off.

Where possible, occupied room windows should be open.

Ventilation to chemical stores should remain operational.

New DfE guidance on premises during COVID-19 will be published before June 1 2020

### **School Considerations: Premises**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Consider carefully all premises areas in terms of potential teaching and support areas
- If you are using previously unused areas, ensure they are clean and healthy
- Premises are engaged in major safeguarding aspects – check that any changes to the premises reflect good safeguarding practice
- A risk assessment will be needed before re-opening
- Health and safety checks may be needed, especially if the building has been closed: water treatments; fire alarm testing; repairs; grass cutting; PAT testing; fridges and freezers; boilers/heating services; internet services
- First aid arrangements may need refreshing
- PPE requirements understood and in place
- Food provision and safety considered
- Clothing expectations reviewed, such as possibly no ties
- Transport needs considered: school transport; family transport; public transport; walking; cycling and liaison with the police if necessary
- Procedures put in place to avoid children congregating and breaching social distancing
- The school will need to arrange a safe entry and exit for all, complying with social distancing
- Supervision may be needed at entry and exit points and appropriate signage
- The premises will need measuring to calculate the number of pupils who can be safely taught at any one time
- Cleanliness and hygiene have changed – does the cleaning staffing match the new context?
- A change in staff numbers may affect accommodation for staff
- The site manager or suchlike will need to order long term cleaning and hygiene supplies: soap, hand sanitisers etc. and have in stock spare supplies in case of a second outbreak or deeper cleaning needed
- The school needs to consider cleaning equipment, door handles etc. during the school day as well as when school closes
- Outdoor space will need to be optimised to meet social distancing requirements but the weather may be a key factor
- The school will need to establish the basic layout of classrooms to manage social distancing and cleaning staff will need to be aware of this
- The maximum number of children allowable in each teaching space will need to be calculated
- The school will need to audit all the premises to discover any areas suitable for social distance teaching – which may have been used previously for a different purpose
- Premises risk assessments will be necessary before the school re-opens and each time a COVID-19 incident occurs (see appendix 3)
- Lettings will need reviewing carefully which may lead to financial implications

## **Section 13 – Safeguarding**

### **The DfE says**

#### **Keeping children safe in schools and colleges**

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools and colleges should continue to have regard to as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements.

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that schools and colleges are under, it remains essential that as far as possible they continue to be safe places for children. This guidance supports governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) so they can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep their children safe. It suggests where schools and colleges might consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual.

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

#### **Child protection policy**

Schools and colleges will have an effective child protection policy in place reflecting business as usual. It is likely that the policy will not accurately reflect new arrangements in response to COVID-19. It is important schools and colleges (led by a DSL or deputy, wherever possible) review and revise their child protection policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve. In some cases, a COVID-19 annex/addendum that summaries any key COVID-19 related changes might be more effective than re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy.

#### **Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)**

The optimal scenario for any school or college providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case there are 2 options to consider:

- a trained DSL or deputy from the school or college can be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools or colleges (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

### **Vulnerable children**

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans, read more in the [guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) for further information.

### **Attendance**

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Schools/colleges and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school or college should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools and colleges should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend. To support the above, schools and colleges 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. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school or college, or discontinues, the school or college should notify their social worker.

The department has introduced a [daily online attendance form](#) to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

### **Staff training and safeguarding induction**

All existing school and college staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The important thing for these staff will be awareness of any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school or college, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up to date child protection policy (described above) will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE.

The existing school and college workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school or college should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. If schools and colleges are recruiting new staff, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its [guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#) to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

Where schools and colleges are utilising volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

## Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. You can read the guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

## Online safety in schools and colleges

It will be more important than ever that schools and colleges provide a safe environment, including online. Schools and colleges should continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what "appropriate" looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the school or college's IT systems or recommended resources. Schools and colleges should consider who in their institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. Schools and colleges should also consider what their contingency arrangements are if their IT staff become unavailable.

The department is due to publish new Safeguarding guidance before 1 June 2020.

## School Considerations: Safeguarding

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- COVID-19 adds a whole new perspective to safeguarding – consider this and obtain any LA or national materials to help
- This will be challenging: some pupils facing safeguarding issues at home; others in school in a new safeguarding context; a few in neither area and at very real risk – this will all take time to plan and manage
- The school may want to add additional members to the safeguarding team, to cover all eventualities
- The NSPCC recommends that children under 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time, children under 16 should not be left alone overnight and babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone
- For children who are currently on a Child Protection Plan, you need to have daily contact if the school is closed to their year group during term time, ideally by phone. If you have any concerns, please contact the child's social worker as normal

- For children open to Social Care under Child in Need (CIN), the contact should be 2-3 times a week. For all other vulnerable children, please aim to have weekly contact unless you believe it should be more regular for those in certain circumstances. Provide them with a contact number or email on which they can call or text the DSLs if they themselves are at risk or they are worried about a friend/family member
- In exceptional circumstances, where you don't think a phone call will suffice and you may need to have some face-to-face contact, consider using Skype or similar platform
- We know that agencies have seen an increase in exploitation online but a decrease in reporting from professionals. Those intent on harming children have taken advantage of this crisis and of schools being closed to target children and young people who may be isolated from their usual support networks or missing supervision and support offered by school, college and other education settings
- As you already know, helping children and young people and their parents understand and manage those risks is a key part of your work and you will have provided information and guidance to them on keeping safe online
- The school needs to consider what additional safeguarding risks COVID-19 brings and how to deal with these
- Safeguarding policies will need reviewing in the light of the new circumstances
- The child protection policy also deserves review in relation to COVID-19
- The school needs to determine any specific COVID-19 issues and resolve these
- Governors need to be aware of the government's interim safeguarding guidance
- A trained DSL needs to be available, in-person, by phone or video link when required
- There needs to be an onsite senior leader each day the school is open responsible for safeguarding
- Contact with the LADO must be maintained at this time
- The school needs to check for any contact changes for external services and social workers
- CLA/PCLA children need to be identified and contact made with the LA virtual headteacher
- Prioritising children for return will involve discussion of the needs of the pupils
- New staff must be informed of all safeguarding policies and procedures
- Volunteers must be individually risk-assessed
- The school should maintain for vulnerable pupils: why they are vulnerable; copy of the EHCP, and/or CIN or CP plan; name of their social worker and contact details; for LAC, name of their virtual head
- There is a need to keep track and record who is onsite each day
- The SCR needs to be kept updated and new staff added and checked
- Safer recruitment processes need to be in place
- The school needs to be very aware of the mental health needs of pupils, parents, staff and volunteers
- Remote/online learning needs to have full safeguarding procedures in place as stated in the school policy
- There are reports that domestic abuse has risen during the lockdown so staff may want to plan carefully for pupils to speak confidentially about their experiences

## Section 14 – Staffing

### What the DfE says

#### Reviewing your staff for availability in school

#### Audit your whole staff to ascertain who will be available to be in school from the week commencing 1 June

Remember staff may need to work with different groups of children than usual. You may also be working with some staff who are anxious and may value the opportunity for discussion and reassurance.

The guidance on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) contains information about clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable adults.

**Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals** are advised not to work outside the home. 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.

Read [guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#) for more advice. Your staffing picture may change so you should update your audit frequently. Ask staff to update you immediately if their situation changes as you will need to base decisions on your most recent staff availability audit.

#### What to consider when working out staff ratios

1. How many staff do you have available to work in school?
2. How many teachers do you have available to work in school?
3. How many support staff including teaching assistants do you have available for work in school?
4. Do you have a head or deputy available for work in school?
5. Do you have at least one person with paediatric first aid training available for work in school?
6. Do you have at least one person with up to date Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training available to work in school?
7. Do you have your special educational needs coordinator available for work, or an alternative staff member who could take on this role?
8. Do you have a caretaker and/or cleaning staff, and if necessary, at least one office staff member available during the school day?

If the answer to questions 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 is no, then you should try to find a solution to this before going further. You should speak to your local authority and/or trust who may be able to provide a suitable person temporarily to cover 5, 6, 7 or 8. In some cases, staff members may be prepared to undertake a different role to their normal role temporarily.

Keep your staffing arrangements as consistent as possible. In instances where you do need to use staff from other schools, ensure cover is agreed on a weekly basis, not daily, to limit contacts.

#### Familiarise yourself with the maximum safe group size

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.

You should, therefore, work through the hierarchy of measures set out in [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#):

- 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, 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. If you can keep older children within those small groups 2 metres away from each other, you 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).

Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in other year groups should also be split into small groups of no more than 15. Where desks are used, they should be spaced as far apart as possible.

### **Creating and staffing your temporary teaching groups**

If you have answered yes to questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 in [section 2](#), and know how many teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff you have who are available for work, you should begin the process of working out how you can support eligible pupils.

In so doing you should:

- assume all eligible children will attend for the purposes of the first stage of planning, even if you think that is unlikely - that includes ensuring you follow the [attendance expectations for vulnerable children](#)
- determine your half class groups (maximum size of 15), taking into account any limitations of your school buildings and outdoor space (see [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) for more details)
- include children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are in reception, year 1 or 6 in groups of 15 within their year group
- determine your small groups (maximum size of 15) of children of critical workers and vulnerable children not in reception or years 1 and 6
- assume that the staffing model will be one teacher per group (or 2 teachers sharing the week if you have existing job shares) - qualified teachers are qualified to teach any primary year group, including early years foundation stage (EYFS)
- if there are any shortages of teachers then teaching assistants can be allocated to lead a group, working under the direction of a teacher

As a result of this exercise, and in the light of your staffing audit and the school premises, you will know if you can cater for all eligible children, including children of critical workers and vulnerable children of all ages.

If you do not have the staff available to be able to cover all the new teaching groups you have created, and this may be more likely for infant schools, you will need to consider possible solutions with your local authority and/or trust.

### **School Considerations: Staffing**

- Consider the detailed DfE Guidance above
- Staffing may radically change during these times – allow sufficient time to consider and consult on proposed amendments
- Radical new approaches will be needed in this new scenario – try and capture good practice elsewhere as well as working within the school
- The safety and well-being of the pupils is the prime concern in managing the changes necessary
- Staff may find themselves in new roles – be supportive and allow time to assimilate all the changes
- Schools can collaborate at this time and consider sharing staff, teaching each other’s groups etc.
- Headteachers will need to communicate and consult over the re-opening plan for their school
- Staff will need to keep themselves safe and stay safe
- The well-being, emotional and personal needs of staff will demand attention
- The school will need to calculate staffing levels required, based around a number of likely models for staffing
- The variables related to staffing need to be considered and options generated
- The staff will need leadership support to manage the return of pupils to school
- Illness is likely to impact on planned staffing and back-up strategies will need to be generated
- A reliable communication system to alert and update all staff will need to be created
- Involving staff in consultation on staffing changes will be important
- Cover plans will need to be generated – a new model for this may be necessary
- Headteachers may need to redeploy some staff whose previous duties are no longer needed (such as after school play leaders perhaps)
- As increasing numbers of pupils return to school, staffing will need to be used flexibly
- Staff meetings should focus on staff well-being and some duties curtailed to help with staff morale and well-being
- Review teachers’ workloads in this new scenario

## Section 15 – Transition of pupils

### The DfE says

In year 6 it is unlikely that many of the end of term traditions will be able to take place, for example, whole year or class assemblies with parents, school journeys and trips. Schools should provide opportunities for children to discuss this as it may be a source of anxiety or sadness. Though visits to secondary schools for induction will not take place this year, some secondary schools may have capacity to undertake remote induction briefings or other types of sessions for pupils, for example to meet form tutors, heads of year, or other key staff, or have a tour of the school virtually. You should discuss the options with your secondary schools.

Primary schools should, if not already in hand, ensure that information is transferred to destination secondary schools as soon as possible, and if practical in the absence of SATs results ensure that secondary schools are briefed in as much detail as possible about the attainment profile of transferring pupils, along with other information normally transferred.

Year 6 teaching during this time should focus on readiness for secondary school, including academic readiness, which could involve additional teaching in any subject, but in particular mathematics and English to make up for any losses to learning incurred while at home.

### School Considerations: Transition of pupils

- Consider the DfE Guidance above
- We should try and retain some of the excellent transition work that has taken place in previous years where possible
- Secondary schools may have space to welcome year 6 pupils for a day or period of time this term
- It will be important for heads to talk cross-phase asap to plan activity to ensure smoother transition
- The major transition for the pupils due to return on 1 June 2020 is year 6 into secondary school
- However, there is also reception moving into key stage 1 which can be a challenging process
- Local schools will have established transition activities, such as visits to the new secondary school, cross-school projects, secondary pupils and staff visiting primary feeders – some of these may be possible in this lockdown period but circumstances will doubtless change quickly
- The June/July period is likely to focus on well-being, safeguarding, routines and reassuring pupils – time will need to be created for worthwhile transition activities and settling new early years children into school
- Primary schools may want to plan in early June which transition activities can take place – and inform local secondary schools
- It will be important for those year 6 pupils who do not return on 1 June to have closure, say goodbye and mark the transition – this also needs to include any staff moving on or retiring
- The year 6 non-returnees could be invited to a special event to leave their primary school or perhaps a date fixed in the autumn term to celebrate the end of their primary years

- For new early years children, a transition programme would normally be mounted and this may have to be scaled back because of social distancing – some online transition may be possible
- Short films on the school's website may be able to help with transition
- A staggered start for new children may be appropriate
- Parents need to be kept well informed about any transition activity
- Headteachers will need to agree together the nature of any transition programmes
- For secondary schools, transition into the sixth form or FE College may be challenging as some Year 11 students may not return this term
- Information-sharing on the attitudes and abilities of the year 6 pupils will need to be agreed across phases
- Reports to parents will also have to be determined by all schools
- Pupils with SEND will need particular care on transfer and preparation for transition

## Section 16 – Vulnerable Pupils

### What the DfE says

Vulnerable children and young people across all year groups continue to be expected to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so. This should remain a priority for educational providers and local authorities, including as some year groups begin to return to on-site provision.

Educational providers - working together with other partners, where relevant, such as local authorities - should take the following actions, the detail of which is contained in the DfE Guidance:

- identify vulnerable children and young people based on the definition below
- determine whether attendance at educational provision is appropriate for individual vulnerable children and young people and take appropriate action to encourage this and follow up where children and young people are absent
- consider how best to support vulnerable children and young people's welfare and education, both remotely and on-site
- consider how to respond to potential increased safeguarding concerns
- consider how to respond to staffing, transport and other logistical concerns

### Summary of attendance expectations for vulnerable children and young people

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 EHC plan) 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 nursery, early years, school or college provision 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 clinically 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](#), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment.
- 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 clinically extremely vulnerable](#)).

For all these groups, educational providers, local authorities, social workers, parents/carers and other relevant professionals (where applicable) should work together closely to consider factors, such as the balance of risk, including health vulnerabilities, family circumstances, risks outside the home, and the child or young person's assessed special educational needs, where relevant. The

sections below set out specific considerations that these partners may wish to consider when determining whether attendance is appropriate.

Parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision. We expect educational providers and other relevant partners to work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school, where attendance is appropriate

### **Supporting vulnerable children and young people’s learning via home education**

The government has put in place several measures to support children and young people to learn at home, and to use technology to support safeguarding. Some of these measures, including providing laptops and tablets, are targeted at those with the greatest need, including children and families with a social worker who do not already have access to a device, as well as care leavers. Educational providers and local authorities should refer to [Get technology support for children and schools during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) on how to order devices and 4G routers. Devices ordered through the scheme will be delivered directly to the local authorities or schools named on the order. They can arrange for them to be collected by families from a school (with a social worker present where relevant) or organise for them to be delivered to a children’s and care leavers’ home.

In addition, [Oak National Academy’s](#) existing online resources are being made more accessible through the addition of signing and subtitling, and specialist lessons have also been introduced so more pupils can engage effectively with these resources. There is also a list of [SEND resources](#) for pupils and teachers that has been developed with a focus on accessibility and inclusivity, based on the recommendations of trusted organisations, charities, multi-academy trusts and special education headteachers. For younger children, the government’s [Hungry Little Minds](#) campaign features tips and practical activities that parents can do at home with children to support their early learning.

### **Supporting vulnerable children and young people’s learning via on-site education**

Educational providers are free to determine the type of provision they offer children and young people during this period. Further information can be found at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#).

In cases where vulnerable children and young people are returning to educational provision, including where they have previously been absent, educational providers should:

- 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 curriculum over the coming weeks
- identify and plan how best to support the education of high needs groups, including disadvantaged pupils, SEND and vulnerable pupils
- support pupils approaching transitions (such as those in year 6 moving to year 7, or later year groups) and examinations, including in years 10 and 12

### **Addressing safeguarding concerns**

As set out in more detail in separate [safeguarding guidance](#), schools and colleges, led by a designated safeguarding lead or deputy wherever possible, should review and revise their child

protection policy as circumstances continue to evolve. This guidance supports schools and colleges to continue to meet their safeguarding responsibilities as set out in [Keeping children safe in education](#).

Early years settings should continue to take all necessary steps to keep children safe during this period and have regard to the government's statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. The safeguarding and welfare sections of the early years foundation stage framework still apply, including requirements relating to child protection arrangements. For further advice, read [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

### **School Considerations: Vulnerable Pupils**

- Consider the DfE Guidance above
- Schools benefit from external services extensively for vulnerable pupils – use this expertise to help manage this difficult time
- Some vulnerable pupils may have gone missing over recent times – use all reasonable efforts to locate and educate such pupils
- Some vulnerable pupils rely on specific staff members who may be absent or undertaking other duties – bear this in mind
- Stagger entry to school so you can carefully manage the entry of vulnerable pupils for the first time
- Vulnerable pupils are often engaged in close physical contact with staff and peers – consider this and create different ways to manage
- Safeguarding is key for vulnerable pupils – see DfE advice above
- The school should have recorded relevant information about each vulnerable pupil to inform future planning
- Information on the last 8 weeks (home schooling or school attending) should be considered to transition each pupil back into learning
- Support for vulnerable pupils (FSM, social work support etc.) needs to continue when schools re-open
- For shielded pupils, the school needs to plan out an education programme remotely
- The school needs to re-engage with external services to support the most vulnerable pupils
- Safeguarding processes should be in place to ensure all vulnerable pupils are safe and being well educated
- The school will need to work closely with SEND pupils on social distancing
- Each school needs to manage the re-integration of EHCP pupils, many with 1:1 support – managing this will be challenging
- Schools also need to ensure that each EHCP programme is being delivered
- Transition needs will be paramount for some pupils changing schools
- Schools may well decide to hold a phased and separate return day for those pupils likely to find transition challenging

## Appendix

### DfE Guidance on Coronavirus

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-clusters-and-hubs-to-maintain-educational-provision/cluster-and-hub-provision-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools>