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| Q: What is the local authority role in supporting sufficiency of childcare during this time? |
| A: The LA has a sufficiency duty and will work with local providers and neighbouring LAs to monitor demand from critical workers and for vulnerable children to support and broker places across the LA.  We are very proud of the sterling work that settings are doing to work with their colleagues and parents to slow the spread of the virus by encouraging families to stay at home and working together to provide safe care. The recent Emergency Bill allows the secretary of state powers to force settings to open, close and re-open. National guidance is being worked through to detail how this continuity power will be used in practice. We have not yet reached a stage where this is needed in Solihull. |
| Q: What information do we need to communicate to the LA? |
| A: We have asked all settings to keep us informed of their current position. Let us know if you are closed so that we can communicate this to parents and others settings via Social Solihull Family Information Service [FIS] <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo> 🖰 [familyinfo@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@solihull.gov.uk) The LA need to submit data relating to the number of schools and setting open across the LA and the numbers of children they are caring for. This includes early years care and care outside the school day for vulnerable children and critical workers. We will need to start contacting you twice a week for your updated attendance information. You will start to receive an email from Family Information Service with a link to a survey monkey to complete with your attendance data twice weekly. Please submit this information in a timely manner to ensure we can submit data for all open Solihull settings to DfE on time.  Settings have received funding for children’s early education entitlement [Early Education Funding] and this will continue into the summer. We expect the places that are funded, but where children are safely cared for at home, to be available to children where their settings have closed because of staff illness or very low numbers. The government has communicated a LA national data collection system for early years, to enable the collection of sufficiency information for critical services such as NHS staff. <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo> <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Schools-learning/Coronavirus-Schools> sites indicate which settings are open  Please let us know if providers open in your area that may be unregistered or those who are not operating as per the government ‘partial closure’ guidance.  Whilst training and setting visits are suspended at this time, we will try our best to support you both through our children’s services Headlines publication and through e mail and telephone support. |
| Q:What is a critical worker? |
| A: The list is on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision> and parents have been asked to use the flow chart [below] to check whether their role is key to the local and national infrastructure, and where children cannot be cared for in their home. <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/news/letter-to-early-years-and-childcare-providers-in-england/> - parents letter |
| Q:Who is considered vulnerable? |
| A: The guidance is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people> –it includes children with Education Health and Care Plans and those children who have a social worker. |
| Q: How can I help a child move to a new setting if mine has to close? |
| A: Social Solihull website is regularly updated by FIS. You can check which settings are open in the required locality. We ask you to support families to find alternative places. Where a child is more vulnerable, and needs a higher level of support, we ask for settings and parents to support the move to a new provider and share information that supports the child and families on-going well-being. Where social workers, or a wider range of professionals such as health care professionals, are involved, the setting should communicate with those needed to support on-going care. We ask key people to transfer with the child to their new setting where possible. |
| Q: Can I charge parents who pay for child care in my setting? |
| A: The government has urged childcare providers to be sensitive during these times. This question is part of the guidance in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures> We recommend you do not charge the parents of children, who are not in your care, for food and nappies etc that they are not using. |
| Q: Can I have additional funding for school age children that come to me or emergency transport for children whose parents need support to get children to the setting? |
| A: The DfE have said that they are trying to find solutions to these situations. See recent funding guidance at [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef) for early education funding information from FIS. |
| Q: Does the EYFS still apply? For example ratios and the need for every early years provision to have an on-site Paediatric first aid trained practitioner where there are early years children |
| A: The EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements continue to apply in full with flexibility as outlined in the statutory guidance and the documents at [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>  The DfE are working to consider further flexibility. Any changes require legislation change. |
| Q: How do I report a coronavirus outbreak in my setting? |
| There is a new online method for reporting outbreaks in nurseries and schools, within the West Midlands to Public Health England. An outbreak is classed as where there are 2 or more people with symptoms within a 14-day period. In these instances please report the outbreak using the following link:  <https://surveys.phe.org.uk/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=n4KL97m2I>  You will then be given links and information on how to manage the outbreak.  The team are currently managing a large volume of calls and notifications regarding COVID-19 so please only contact the PHE office directly via telephone if you require URGENT advice or guidance that cannot be located in the information sent following online notification. The contact details are: 0344 225 3560 Option 0, Option 2. |
| Q:What is happening to the updated Early Learning Goals |
| A:The changes to the learning and development requirements are being considered against the impact of C19. |
| Q: Safety and personal protection equipment [PPE]- how do settings stay safe? |
| A: Guidance on hygiene, social distancing in education settings, and health and safety are outlined below. Settings are often working with very young children where social distancing is difficult.  Handwashing guidance is here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19> Soap and water, and regular handwashing for at least 20 seconds, is the best way of staying safe. Handwashing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus.  Social distancing <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings> Staff should pay particular attention to handwashing before and after supporting children who need help with nappy changing, toileting or eating, as well as avoiding touching their own face whilst at work. Settings should clean and disinfect equipment, toys and surfaces more regularly. This includes keyboards, mouse, tables, chairs, door handles, light switches and bannisters.  Cleaning guidance- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings> As much as possible, settings should seek to prevent the sharing of food, drink, utensils, equipment and toys. Childcare practitioners do not need PPE. They should care for children as normal, although increasing the frequency of handwashing (and always doing so before and after, for example, feeding children or changing nappies) and cleaning of surfaces and toys. Soft toys should not be shared between children. If a child displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they should not come to the setting, or should be sent home with their parents/carers if symptoms arise during the day. Staff should clean as normal after this. Settings remain safe as they have lower numbers of children attending. The above guidance outlines additional actions we can all take to reduce the risk of infection. Parents/carers and schools do not need to take children’s temperatures every morning, but should be vigilant about signs of a temperature.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19> PHE does not advise using face masks in public places and for those working in schools and similar settings |
| Q: Ofsted- I’m due an inspection, will Ofsted visit my setting? |
| A: Ofsted produce a rolling guidance [ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update> ] They have suspended all routine inspections and report publications but continue to visit where there are settings where safeguarding was judged not to be effective. |
| Q: Should I tell Ofsted that I am closing? |
| A: Early years and childcare Ofsted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update> At this time, you do not need to let Ofsted know if you are closed due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), whether that’s because you are not caring for the children of critical workers or vulnerable children, or because you are ill. |
| Q: What business support is available to education and care settings? |
| There have been a variety of business announcements to support childcare. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19> for support summary and childcare clarifications  More guidance is expected, specifically for the childcare sector. Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership <https://www.gbslepgrowthhub.co.uk/business-advice/coronavirus> 0800 032 3488 offers business support. As do your professional organisations.  See [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef) for early education funding information from FIS. |
| Q: How can we get vital supplies such as milk and food? |
| A: This issue has been raised and food suppliers are being asked to consider practitioners, in their role as key workers, for priority access to supplies. We ask those who are not currently working to support settings who still continue to care for children and consider supporting with the supply of essential resources such as hand wash. |
| Q: How can we support parents and children at home? |
| A: We suggest you signpost to the Tiny Happy People and Hungry Little Minds websites. Those families with access to outdoor space should be encouraged to explore the outdoor environment at home [balcony’s, garden, yard] <https://www.naturallylearning.co.uk/50-outdoor-activities-toddlers> |
| Q: I am not currently working in a setting but have relevant qualifications and a full paediatric first aid certificate- how can I help? |
| A: Your local setting or school may need you to volunteer to support them to keep the business open for early years children and to remain safe. Contact the Solihull Education Improvement Team where we will keep your details, and contact you when settings ask for help.  If you are able to offer help to a Solihull school or setting please contact [seisenquiries@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:seisenquiries@solihull.gov.uk) stating your name, a contact e mail and phone number, dates and days you could be available and your location [so that we can match you with a school or setting that is near to you if this is possible] please tell us if you are paediatric first aid trained and the expiry date of your full 12 hour certificate. |
| Q: Have the rules on safeguarding changed? |
| A; No, we all continue to be responsible for children’s safety. If you have a concern about a child contact Solihull Local Safeguarding Partnership or NSPCC. <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/childrenfamilies/safeguardingchildren/safeguardingchildrenyoungpeople>  Education settings should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>  Lorraine Lord, senior education safeguarding officer in Solihull, sends regular updates through Headlines news. |
| Q: Childminders- how can we help? |
| A: Childminders are very much part of the national support for vulnerable children and critical workers. They are often able to be flexible and provide care at times when other settings are closed. Childminders can support other settings by using their ability to work out of their home for 50% of the time. Childminders and childcarers looking after the children of key workers on domestic premises can apply to work from non-domestic premises for up to 50% of their time. If you would like to do this, email your [application form](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-providers-eya-approval-to-operate-from-non-domestic-premises) to [regulatoryteam@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:regulatoryteam@ofsted.gov.uk). We will review the details and contact you as quickly as possible to discuss your request. |
| Q: Can a childminder look after children in the child’s own home? |
| A: Yes if they temporarily suspend their childminder registration and register with Ofsted as a nanny/ home child carer <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-and-childcare-providers-register-with-ofsted/nannies-registration> |
| Q: How can I keep myself safe and well? |
| A: You are very important to us and those around you. The council webpage and others listed may be useful <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/ArtMID/820/ArticleID/2894/Message-from-the-Leader-of-Solihull-Council>  Well-being guidance <http://mindsmatteruk.co.uk/minds-matter-stress-busters/>  <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/Coronavirus>  <https://www.birminghamandsolihullccg.nhs.uk/your-health/mental-health-support-offer>  Guidance for children <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources/>  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing> <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/education/education-improvement/health-and-wellbeing/support-directory/home-learning-resources/> <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/solar-youth-services/>  Ideas for activities for children can be found on [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc) [www.solgrid.org.uk/fivetothrive/](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/fivetothrive/) and <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/childrenfamilies/fis/parentingsupport> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education> |

Please see the letter from Vicky Ford MP who confirms the national position in relation to our thanks to you for your dedication and skill during this unusual time. <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/news/letter-to-early-years-and-childcare-providers-in-england/>

Further support in difficult times : <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/community-educational-psychology-service/>

**Hub Guidance:**

For when a setting works with others to meet the needs of critical worker families and vulnerable children…

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| **Q:Are childcare settings expected to share resources?** |
| A: If settings are experiencing high demand for places or severe staff shortages, local authorities will coordinate support from other settings in the area. Settings are expected to be flexible and work together where required. |
| **Q: Early years settings in some areas are operating in ‘hubs’, involving groups of settings operating at a single site. Is this permitted?** |
| A: With significantly reduced numbers of children attending, and risks of under-staffing due to illness, we understand that shared provision through early years hubs and clusters is an option being considered in some areas, and in some cases, arrangements are already in place.  There are issues to balance when making choices about provision at this time. First and foremost is public health, which remains the priority. Any arrangements should enable staff and children to limit risks relating to the spread of the virus. Alongside this, issues such as safeguarding and consistency of provision for all children, particularly those with additional needs, should also be considered.  Additionally, in the current circumstances there will be practicalities to consider, including how children and staff access settings while limiting travel.  We want to ensure the system is sustainable and are working through these points with early years settings, local authorities, and stakeholders, via the Department for Education’s central and regional teams.  Further guidance will be published after Easter. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures> |
| **Q: What if a member of staff already has an enhanced DBS check but is moving temporarily to another early years setting?** |
| A: Where members of the early years and childcare workforce are already engaging in regulated activity and already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained for them to temporarily move to another setting to support the care of children.  The onus remains on the receiving setting to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including by seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks. |
| **Q: Can childminders get involved in supporting the continuation of provision for priority children?** |
| A: Under existing registration arrangements, childminders can work for up to 50% of the time on non-domestic premises. Childminders who do not already have approval to work up to 50% of their time on non-domestic premises will need to seek approval from Ofsted, after seeking initial support from their local authority. If childminders have the capacity and there is a local need, they could help support with staff shortages in centre-based childcare provision.  **Can childminders work with other childminders to look after more priority children together?** Yes – up to 3 childminders (or a mix of up to 3 childminders and assistants) can work together in the same domestic premises. However, if more than 3 childminders work together they will need to apply to Ofsted to register childcare on domestic premises. |