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| We are asking all childcare settings, including childminders, to provide care for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers where possible. Care should be provided to children of critical workers and vulnerable children only, in order to limit the spread of the virus. Other children should remain at home, in order to further reduce the number of social interactions and thus flatten the upward curve of the coronavirus outbreak. Children with at least one parent or carer who is critical to the coronavirus response can attend a setting if required. Many working parents who are critical workers may also be able to ensure their child is kept at home. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>  |
| 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. |
| 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 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 contact you twice a week for your updated attendance information through a link to a survey monkey. Thankyou for submitting this information which enables an accurate picture of Solihull’s early years and childcare position to be communicated to the DfE.Settings have received funding for children’s early education entitlement [Early Education Funding] and this continues 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. <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo> <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Schools-learning/Coronavirus-Schools> sites indicate which settings are openPlease 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: 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> Is it still a requirement for early years settings to have a separate baby room for children under the age of two during this period of disruption?The EYFS requirement to have a separate baby room is a safety issue for the protection of very young children particularly when they are asleep. Paragraph 3.59 of the EYFS already allows for the mixing of children when this is appropriate. If the layout of the premises does not allow for a separate ‘baby room’ with its own door, a suitable area may be partitioned off to provide safety for younger children.The DfE is [planning to provide temporary flexibility](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#early-years-foundation-stage) in meeting some requirements of the [early years foundation stage statutory framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2). This includes those around:ratios and qualifications of staff, paediatric first aid certificates, learning and development and the progress check at age 2. However, until this temporary legislation is passed in parliament, the current requirements in the framework continue to apply. |
| 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: 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 settings 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 or where relevant complaints are received. |
| 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. No organisation should profit from the exceptional financial support available, and should therefore only access the support required. For example, organisations which continue to receive government funding should not furlough staff whose salaries that funding could typically be considered to fund, and therefore will not need to access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Where funding continues to be paid, we expect providers to continue to provide that service in so far as is possible, and in accordance with the relevant guidance. Where employers receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, we expect employers to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion – and correspondingly not furlough them. This also applies to non-public sector employers who receive public funding for staff costs. Organisations that are receiving public funding specifically to provide services necessary to respond to coronavirus are expected not to furlough staff . Childminders may find the [Self Employment Income Support Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme) guidance useful. A private provider should only furlough employees, and therefore seek support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, if they meet the following conditions:•the employee works in an area of business where services are temporarily not required and where their salary is not covered by public funding•the employee would otherwise be made redundant or laid off•the employee is not involved in delivering provision that has already been funded (free entitlement funding)•(where appropriate) the employee is not required to deliver provision for a child of a critical worker and/or vulnerable child•the grant from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would not duplicate other public grants received, and would not lead to financial reserves being createdIf it is difficult to distinguish whether staff are funded through free entitlement or private income for the purposes of meeting the first 3 conditions as listed above, then an early years provider can access the CJRS to cover up to the proportion of its paybill which could be considered to have been paid for from that provider’s private income. This would typically be income received from ‘parent-paid’ hours, and excludes all income from the government’s free entitlements (or ‘DSG income’) for all age groups. In line with the conditions of the scheme listed above, providers should initially use the month of February 2020 to represent their usual income in calculating the proportion of its paybill eligible to be covered by the scheme. Providers should adjust these proportions in subsequent furloughing applications if their income from the government’s free entitlements changes, but are not expected to make any adjustments in relation to changes in parent-paid income. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care> , <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder> , <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme> . 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 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.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers> [section 7] <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19> Ideas for activities for children can also be found at [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>  |
| 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 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. 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 following webpages may be useful. 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/>  |

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

### Solihull community educational psychology service (CEPS) family support line, Solihull Council's **community educational psychology service** family support line will open on Monday 20 April 2020. CEPS has produced a leaflet aimed at parents and carers. Please share this wherever you have the opportunity. Please select this [link](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/nJh2CK8Z7cqYVlRHZ4HOk?domain=lnks.gd)to download the leaflet for parents and carers.

We have also produced a SEND newsletter, explaining more about the service. Please select this [link](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/_Qk8CLZ81sPg6Azc6LmlC?domain=lnks.gd)to download the SEND newsletter.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-adoption-support-fund-scheme-to-help-vulnerable-families> DfE coronavirus helpline - for members of the public -0800 046 8687

**Hub Guidance:**

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.<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. |

Since the crisis broke, we have been amazed but not surprised by the resourcefulness, determination and kindness shown by teachers, social workers, childminders and all those who work in education and social care. [*Comment from Ofsted rolling update].* We appreciate the selfless dedication that childcare staff demonstrate in their work every single day. [*DfE C19: Early years and childcare closures*]