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|  The Prime Minister has confirmed that early years settings and schools can now open to a wider cohort of children. Solihull Councillors, LA officers and of course critical workers and children thank you for working hard to support families at this time as we ‘restore and recover’. *We are very proud of the number of Solihull early years providers that are working to support young children across the borough. In Solihull this week we again have a higher percentage of providers open that the national figure. We really thank all those working in education and childcare for the huge efforts they are making on a daily basis to support families and make sure our children do not miss out on their education and care.* The EYFS continue in its ‘disapplied’ form for the time being. We will continue to share information and contact you through Headlines and LA correspondence, as well as communicating with those who contact us with questions and comments. [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc) -newsThe summary below outlines the key messages from the DfE guidance…… we await further guidance for early years <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-coronavirus-covid-19> It is important to reduce contact between children and staff as far as possible, and settings can take steps to achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, and staff where possible, mix in a small group and keep that small group away from other people and groups. Keeping group sizes to a maximum of 8 children, while adhering to EYFS ratios, is preferable so groups are as small as possible. Providers are expected to ensure that there are no more than 16 children in a group in early years settings.The Department for Education does not expect providers to keep all children two metres away from each other (three big steps), or to care for children while remaining two metres away, as this is simply not possible. Its guidance states: “We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart from each other and staff.” Provider can take children outside their building [beyond the home/ setting] as long as they carry out a risk assessment and ensure protective measure continue.To support children’s early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children who are 3 and 4 years old followed by younger age groups. Children due to transition to reception should be prioritised after critical worker and vulnerable children. Settings can take children of the ages that they normally would.The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that schools and childcare settings must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. Early years settings should use reasonable endeavours to deliver the learning and development requirements as far as possible in the current circumstances, as set out here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> Education and childcare settings should not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings. They are interacting with a small group of consistent adults and children with a range of protective measures in place. PPE is only needed for children whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE, or if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from any child displaying coronavirus symptoms. Education, childcare and children’s social care settings and providers should use their local supply chains to obtain PPE. Where this is not possible, contact eyenquiries@solihull.gov.uk We recommend you read the following for a full understanding of the government guidance:[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/nP1nCZ8VGcMNzo1iKhkqM?domain=gov.uk)  <https://foundationyears.org.uk/category/news/> -documents and vodcasts <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#main-changes-to-previous-guidance>  |
| Q: What information do I need to tell local authority? |
| * Family Information Service submit a return to DfE about settings that are open/ closed and the number of children they are supporting. We ask settings to complete a weekly Survey Monkey return to FIS via this link. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/EYCOVID-19> The Department for Education will continue to monitor attendance at early years settings, via local authorities. This is to ensure that we have up-to-date information on available early years and childcare provision during the coronavirus (C19) outbreak, which children are accessing it and to monitor sufficiency in particular areas. DfE will continue to run the data collection beyond the 1 June, to ensure that we have information on which children are accessing provision and if there are sufficiency issues in particular areas.
* The LA requests a ‘one off’ return to list the vulnerable children that could attend your settings and their attendance status. We ask for this return to be updated as circumstances change.

Contact : educationsafeguarding@solihull.gov.uk OFSTED If your operating circumstances change (you open or close), notify us by sending an email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk with ‘Change in operating hours’ in the subject field. In the body of the email, please confirm the unique reference number for each setting and the details of the change. You can find your URN on your registration, your inspection report(s), and on your Ofsted reports page. |
| 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> please contact  You will then be given links and information on how to manage the outbreak. PHE office for URGENT advice that cannot be located online. .. 0344 225 3560 Option 0, Option 2. |
| Q: What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in my child’s school, college or childcare setting? |
| A: When a child 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 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.<https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/coronavirus/reopening-settings-coronavirus/> -free downloadable chartWhen there is a confirmed case of C19 in your setting: *you may find the Solihull sample letters, used by schools and settings, useful to support your communications to parents if you have an outbreak of C19.* [*www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources*](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources) *and see the cleaning guidance below.* |
| Q: What is Solihull’s advice on cleaning the setting? |
| A: SMBC does not normally recommend the use of bleach for general cleaning in settings, as it is a hazardous chemical and can react with other cleaning products if not used carefully, however, the use of bleach solutions are recommended by Public Health England for infection control purposes.  Frequently touched surfaces should be regularly cleaned with both a disposable cloth and detergent (soapy solution) or disposable cleaning wipe to ensure any organic matter (e.g. dirt, mucous, food) is removed, this will ensure the surface is physically clean prior to disinfecting. The area should then be dried using a disposable cloth/paper towel then disinfected with the cleaning product that the setting normally use. Simply spraying items with disinfectant would not be considered cleaning. There are many disinfectants that are safe to use around children (e.g. Milton Solution). Childcare settings should ensure they have obtained material safety data sheets for any products used. They also need to carry out a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) risk assessment for any products classified as hazardous. The risk assessment should then be shared with relevant staff who undertake any cleaning activities.  If making up bleach solutions for infection control purposes careful calculations need to be made following manufacturer instructions. Each product/type of bleach may be of a different concentration depending on its use so may require a different dilution rate. According to Public Health England any sodium hypochlorite solutions for infection control purposes should be diluted to 0.1% or 1000 parts per million (ppm). Whichever solution is used, settings need to ensure that it kills both viruses and bacteria and is used in line with manufacturer instructions. All made up bleach solutions should be used the same day, i.e. only made up and used as needed. National guidance suggests that a thorough cleaning of rooms should be carried out at the end of each day.  Staff will need to be mindful of their skin and clothing to prevent bleach harming both. Outdoor play equipment should be cleaned between each group of children.  (See Learning Through Landscapes for further guidance <https://www.ltl.org.uk/school-grounds-hygiene-and-cleaning-advice/> )Tables used during lunchtime should be cleaned between groups of children. If such measures are not possible, children should be brought their lunch in their roomsAny shared materials and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently. Any equipment used in practical lessons should be cleaned thoroughly. The learning environment should be occupied by the same children or young people in one day, or properly cleaned between cohorts. Any areas used for lunch or exercise, for example halls, dining areas, internal and external sports facilities, 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 is in place. For electronic devices (such as phones, interactive boards, keyboards and screens) settings should follow the manufacturer guidelines.Settings should follow national guidance contained within Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings> For details on how to clean where a person with possible or confirmed coronavirus has left the setting or area follow COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings guidance which contains more detailed advice:- [https://solgrid365.sharepoint.com/_layouts/images/icgen.gifhttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings)  |
| Q: Can I use hand sanitizer with young children? |
| Hand sanitiser can be effective as an alternative to hand washing if soap and water is not available, swallowing just a small amount can cause alcohol poisoning in children that can cause low blood sugar, seizures, coma and even death. Therefore, it is important that young children or any child/young person that may not understand this risk does not ingest it. Any hand sanitiser needs to be kept out-of-reach of children and young people. Any use of hand sanitiser by children should be with adult supervision. |
| Q: What business/ finance support is available? |
| A: See <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support> and to support you with the updated guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-is-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19> business / self-employment support video guides. You may also wish to look at website offering [money tips](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/) to support those applying for universal credit. |

**Recovery phase- opening to wider groups**

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| Q: Who can open? |
| **A:**  see the guidance summary above6.3 EY Actions guidance **Are before and after school clubs allowed to operate?**Providers which are registered with Ofsted or with a Childminder Agency which have before and after school clubs on school premises and can ensure they follow the protective measures guidance, are able to operate. This is only the case for registered providers which operate on school premises. All other out of school settings are not able to reopen. <http://outofschoolalliance.co.uk/restrictions-on-clubs-reopening> Childminders can continue to operate as usual. From 1 June, community centres or places of worship will be allowed to open for providers on the early years register which usually use those premises.The [Government’s ambition](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time?utm_source=f5cb6d8f-1bae-4cb0-a91f-28a6ab03ca58&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate) is that all providers running holiday clubs and activities for children over the summer holiday will be able to open, if the science allows. Guidance will be provided to the sector on how to implement the protective measures necessary to open safely, and to parents on how to minimise the spread of the virus if they choose to attend.  |
| Q: Can we blend children from a mixture of settings/ ‘bubbles’ in ours? |
| A: see above and <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/coronavirus-early-years> [FAQ]To minimise contact between groups of children and staff, children should attend just one setting wherever possible and parents should be encouraged to minimise as far as possible the number of education and childcare settings their child attends. Childminding settings should consider how they can work with parents to agree how best to manage any necessary journeys, for example pick-ups and drop-offs at schools, to reduce the need for a provider to travel with groups of children.**Can dual-registered children and young people attend both settings? [SEND guidance but it can be applied to settings and children that attend more than one provision]**Moving between settings will increase the risk of viral spread, however there are circumstances where this may be required, such as where a child or young person’s needs cannot be met without provision in two settings. This means that provision in two settings is possible, but will be subject to the child or young person’s individual risk assessment, and on the ability of both settings to accommodate the child or young person. These risk assessments are likely to be complex, and the two settings may need to liaise with one another. It may be best for a child or young person to return to only one setting, or to return to one setting first before returning to both, so that their opportunity to receive on-site education is not delayed due to those complexities. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance> For childminders, who work together, but live in different households, you can still attend the childminding setting as it is your place of work**. Can practitioners who work in more than 1 setting continue to work across more than one?** The guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings> states: “As far as possible, the same members of staff should be assigned to each group and these should stay the same during the day and on subsequent days. Keep your staffing arrangements as consistent as possible. In instances where you do need to use staff from other settings or agency staff, ensure that this is agreed on a weekly basis, not daily, to limit contacts.” |
| Q: Can childminders pick up children in the family car? |
| A: Where possible everyone is being asked to walk rather than travel with others in a car. If it is not possible to have children delivered to the childminder rather than being collected and travel is essential, then a car is preferable to public transport. ‘If you have to travel with people outside your household group, try to share the transport with the same people each time and keep to small groups of people at any one time’ –C19 DfE safer travel guidance. Car cleaning is then required as a protective measure. |
| Q: How can we help children transition back to our nursery or move to our nursery? |
| A: Settings need to support children’s **well-being**, to be guided by their needs and adjust routines and organisation for those who have remained in the setting as well as those transitioning back or between settings. Visual and online **communications** will help make the unfamiliar - familiar and will support parent-child discussion. Transition communications and information sharing should begin well before the start date where possible. What can families see on your website or in communications before they start? The environment, routines, key people, favourite activities, food routines and provision, and how you will keep children safe and well will be important to share through photographs and video where possible. Can they see a virtual tour and have a video welcome message from their key person or a person they will meet on the day they start? This allows children and families to **prepare for continuity** and have fewer surprises. Much of this will need to be done in small groups, through virtual communications. See <https://www.babcockprime.co.uk/improving-schools-and-settings/early-years/early-years-inclusion/a-z-of-inclusion-resources/t-inclusion-resources> -transition kit. **Important information** should be provided by the parent or carer to the setting on day one, including emergency contact details, dietary requirements and medical needs to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child. Settings will need to be aware of the additional needs of vulnerable children/ parents. **Childminders** may choose to invite new parents and their child to visit at a time where there are no other cared for children present. This will be part of your risk assessment, but you will need to plan to ensure you minimise risk and employ protective measures for visits and visitors. Consider a shared story/ song that is available on-line, and as a book in some homes, to unify and prepare children for something that they know and can expect on their first day. Ensure children can play in role and act out what they are feeling and their experiences. Young children will not recall the ‘familiar’ from 6 weeks+ ago so assume they are new to you and you will need to build relationships. Above all, talk to them and their parent[s] about what they have enjoyed doing at home and can continue to experience, and how you can support the child to settle and feel safe. It may be wise for settings to re-visit their ‘**all about me’** information sharing arrangements with parents; to clarify family, health, contact, well-being and celebration details. There will need to be extra arrangements for information sharing before children start and during the early days of return. <http://evolutionaryparenting.com/daycare-and-cortisol-levels-what-does-this-tell-us/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_w-5sXz0sQ> –self-regulation ‘training’ may be worth considering Also s*ee FAQ below* EYSAT Transition Guidance <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/early-years-send-team-2/early-years-advice-sheets/>  |
| Q: What will I need to consider as I re-open? |
| A: Management of people and spaces –**Risk Assessment**: Check premises that have been fully shut for **safety** – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-school-premises-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak> . Opening times, numbers of children to be supported and staffing arrangements will be a priority and demand-management work in respect of people and resources/ stocks [such as PPE/ hand wash/care]. See the cleaning FAQ above and associated national guidance. Safeguarding and welfare arrangements have been relaxed in some areas with the need for settings to use their best endeavours to meet them. Settings continue to have some challenges around sufficiency of first aid trained staff and suitably qualified staff which will continue. Rotas may need to be communicated to parents to ensure they know who their ‘**key person’** is each day and prepare children. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care> How will you **communicate** your ‘it’s safe here’ offer to parents? You will need to remove items that are difficult to clean and keep clean, rotas to frequently clean high traffic/ contact areas, individual towels/ bedding/ etc. so that children don’t share them and put up **posters** to remind staff about hygiene practices and expectations. What will you put in place for staff using public transport and larger **group** times [staff lunch and children’s **lunch** – serve not canteen style for now for example]? Can windows be open and outdoor spaces be used more frequently? How will you limit movement between rooms/ spaces? Parent drop off and collection for safe distancing and parent ‘meetings’ will need consideration. Where will buggies and things from multiple homes be stored safely? What will your ‘visitors’ policy be? How will you help adults to be calm to support children to feel safe? What will be your new **distancing** greeting promoted to be friendly but avoid hugs if you can – although you will hug them if they approach you for a cuddle? Will you keep children to key group social ‘**bubbles**’ to play together? Remember child development and the needs of young children. Parents and children will need support during this unsettling time and will need to know that appropriate safe physical contact continues for young children when they need it. **Policies** may need to be amended for this time. The designated **safeguarding** lead and special needs co-ordinator, as well as those with specialism for health and safety and behaviour, will be key to supporting children. Staff may also need re-**induction** training on child protection and safeguarding, health and safety. Communication and consistent messages will be important to build trust and confidence.**Important information** should be provided/ refreshed by the parent or carer to the setting on day one, including emergency contact details [who are not shielding], dietary requirements and medical needs to safeguard the health, safety and **welfare** of the child. Building upon children’s **interests** and celebrations shared from their time away from the setting. There may also be changes to a **family context**, which settings would benefit from knowing, and which could be relevant to share to best meet child’s needs and emotional well-being. What has the child shown that they loved, learned, didn’t like during their absence? Settings may be **different** for those that remember – staff and children may not wear ‘uniform’ but wear gloves at times and some things may not be available [large group sessions] as before and families may need to be prepared. Meal times and outdoor play times may be staggered and hand washing more frequent. You may use outside and get physical more frequently.**Routine** amendments: Regular activities and routines may need to be revised based on the context and needs of the children. – experiences during absence / attendance in the previous week , flexibility based upon current needs/ interests, additional hygiene requirements with potentially more children and their use of toys and the setting. How will positive **behaviour** be supported during this time? We need to be careful in the ways we encourage physical distancing but encourage **social** skills. What visual props can be used for children to understand ‘**rules**’ and how can stories, songs, signs and language be used to make these **positive** rather than ‘don’t do’ messages? Settings will need to ensure that best practices are re-established for effective communication and optimal teaching interactions for staff who have either been off work or working in a different way. Settings will need to consider how to reduce the numbers of parents in a setting whilst continuing to share celebrations, worries and communicate ‘all’s well here’ in other ways such as through electronic communications. Support for children’s **personal, social and emotional needs** will be a priority. Re visit your **transition** procedures. <https://www.unicef.org.uk/coronavirus-children-in-lockdown/> & <https://emergingminds.org.uk/co-space-study-1st-update/> show emerging findings such as those from the Co-SPYCE study [school and pre-school versions]. Staff will need to be aware of parent partnership **information sharing** for the home learning offer and how this compliments the settings offer. How will the setting manage toys and things bought from home? They may worry more about people.**Curriculum**: intent> implementation> impact – what are your **priorities** for the first days/ weeks? Characteristics of learning, PSE, making the unfamiliar> familiar, communication, continuity of their learning from home> school. Consider songs, rhymes and spatial awareness (keeping spaces between you) activities to reinforce key rules and desired behaviour. Children may not have been used to learning in a group and show signs of worry or try to gain control of their experiences in different ways. <https://parentingfromscratch.wordpress.com/2014/08/11/behavior-is-an-iceberg/> Pupils **voice**: Settings should ensure they give children a voice through the 100 languages they use to communicate how they are feeling and their needs. They may need to sleep more, need more cuddles, need more reassurance, etc. How will **key persons** get to know children and their needs now? <http://www.ncb.org.uk/resources-publications/listening-way-life-why-how-we-listen-young-children> You may need to consider emergency plans for a potential local or further lockdown.*See actions suggested by DfE in a separate solgrid document- ‘EYFS lockdown to open up guidance’* |
| Q: What about those children moving on to a new setting? What information should I pass on? In Solihull 6th July 2020 is virtual ‘transition week’.  |
| A: The advice from public health is not to have new pupils into school before September. Therefore, we will not have pupils physically transitioning and this will need to be virtually until those pupils are on role from September. Assessment – the statutory assessment arrangements have been relaxed but practitioners will continue to need to observe and respond to **children’s needs**. Practitioners will need to be aware of the need to pass on information about children’s learning characteristics and development to the next phase of their education in collaboration with [and the permission of] parents. Arrangements for continuity will be different depending on the timing of the next phases of return to education and care. SEN and vulnerable children and their families may need further discussion to support transition.  Face-to-face meetings will probably be reduced and the more the ‘new’ setting can share information through post, photograph, video, virtual meetings the better. Parents may refer to you to talk through this information. Consider continuing with the actions you usually take in this situation –but at a distance. |
| Q: Can early years providers take groups of children to outdoor public places, for example if there is not private outdoor space in the setting? |
| A: Settings should maximise use of private outdoor space, while keeping small groups of children and staff away from other groups. Childminders and early years providers may take small groups of children to outdoor public spaces, for example parks, provided that a risk assessment demonstrates that they can stay 2m away from other people at all times. This should be restricted to small groups and should be done in line with wider government guidelines on the number of people who can meet in outdoor public places. Providers should not take larger groups of children to public outdoor spaces at one time.  |

**Useful weblinks:**

[www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc) - resources and EEF pages

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> - revised and temporary EYFS

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update> - Ofsted

<https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder> - business finance guidance

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/category/news/> - planning guidance, FAQ and vodcasts.

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership 0800 032 3488 offers business support <https://www.gbslepgrowthhub.co.uk/business-advice/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-coronavirus-covid-19> - DfE collections of useful guidance

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/childrenfamilies/fis/parentingsupport> - parent support

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/Coronavirus> -support for you

<https://famly.co/blog/covid-19/denmark-reopening-child-care-corona/> - we are not promoting the product but the information from Denmark and the associated resources may be useful ☺

<https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/nurseries-childminders-reopen-after-coronavirus-lockdown> -FAQ from EY Alliance

For further support please contact:

Solihull Family Information Service - <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/>

Solihull EYSAT <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/early-years-send-team-2/>

Early Years and Education Improvement - <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/support/>