The frequently asked questions have been updated in line with guidance relating to the national lockdown January 2021. There will be further updates as information becomes available. (11/1/21)

Ofsted information updated 11/1/21

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# ***Q:What has changed with the new lockdown January 2021?***

During the period of national lockdown all early years providers (including registered childminders but not including reception years in primary schools) can remain open.

The earliest years are the most crucial point of child development and attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children’s social and emotional development. We continue to prioritise keeping early years settings open in full because of the clear benefits to children’s education and wellbeing and to support working parents. Caring for the youngest age group is not something that can be done remotely.

# ***Q:I am a childminder, can I take in school age children?***

Childminders can look after all early years children; together with school-age children (from reception onwards) who are vulnerable or children of critical workers. Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can attend the setting if required. This includes parents who may be working from home.

 If it is necessary for a childminder to pick up or drop off a child from another location and walking is not practical, then a private vehicle for single household use is preferable. Use of public transport should be minimised.

# ***Q:Can school aged children of a critical worker parent attend a childminder instead of school?***

Childcare.co.uk have spoken to the DfE about such a scenario and the DfE have stated that, under the current 'national lockdown: stay at home' childcare information, a school child with a critical worker parent should be able to attend their childminder if they, for example, cannot access a space at school or if parents feel it would be safer for the child to be with their childminder.

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/news/providers-coronavirus-faq>

# ***Q:Can children attend more than one setting?***

There may be situations where a child needs to attend more than one setting, for example, children attending a childminder before their nursery opens so that their parent or carer may go to work.

Parents and carers should be encouraged to limit the number of settings their child attends, ideally ensuring their child only attends the same setting consistently. This should also be the same for staff.

Where a child routinely attends more than one setting on a part time basis, settings should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced provision for the child.

# ***Q:Do the EYFS Disapplications still apply?***

As set out in [application and disapplication of the early years foundation stage framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#disapplication), unless a setting is using the new regulations to disapply elements of the EYFS due to further local or national coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, providers must ensure a member of staff with a full PFA certificate is on site at all times when children are present, as set out in the EYFS.

Specific EYFS disapplications are in place for any provider who cannot comply with the early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements in full due to restrictions or requirements imposed through the national lockdown.

# ***Q:My childcare setting meets in a church hall. Will we have to close?***

No. Regulations enable registered Early Years provision to operate in community settings and places of worship.

# ***Q:I am a childminder and my own children are isolating. Do I have to close?***

As the number of suspected and confirmed cases increase across Solihull we know that providers may be effected by the need for self-isolation and proximity isolation. This is especially true for childminders whose own children are asked to isolate by their school/ public health if they have a confirmed case in their school bubble. The decision to close your home to minded children is a hard one and you will need to look at your context to decide if your circumstances mean that you can continue to mind or if its best for you and the children to close.

# ***Q:Are Ofsted still Carrying out inspection visits?***

Update from 11/1/2021

We will carry out assurance inspections to early years settings, such as nurseries, but not to childminders just yet. This is because we recognise the added pressures on childminders, who may be home-schooling their own children and have family members working from home, and the difficulty in remaining COVID-safe in a home setting. We will continue regulatory visits to childminders and other EY providers where we have concerns.

We will keep these plans under review. As with all visits, we will put considerable measures in place to ensure the safety of all concerned.

**Phased return to inspection**

We are not planning to carry out graded inspections of education or social care providers before the summer term.

For Early Years…we will carry out a [programme of assurance inspections](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/january-2021-registered-early-years-providers) from the start of the spring term in group settings. These inspections will confirm whether or not a provider is meeting the [early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2).

Assurance inspections will be proportionate and risk-based. Providers will be prioritised based on the length of time since their last inspection, and any other relevant information.

Routine graded inspections will resume in the summer term of 2021.

When full routine early years inspections resume Ofsted will introduce a new approach to inspecting early years providers which will give good and outstanding providers more consistency while prioritising providers rated less than good. For more information follow this [link.](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-announces-new-early-years-inspection-arrangements)

# ***Q:Is there additional information for childcare and education settings?***

 This guidance provides information on how the national lockdown restrictions, to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), impact early years and childcare settings. It should be read alongside the guidance [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures) Where it touches on the same policy areas, this national restriction guidance supersedes the early years and childcare guidance.

# ***Q:Who is eligible for free flu vaccines?***

Department for Health and Social Care [announced details of its expanded winter flu programme](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/q3eSC08Vock4WB1iwti-C?domain=gov.uk) to protect vulnerable people and support the NHS. As critical workers staff in early years and childcare settings will want to consider being protected. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>

[Parent Leaflet](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613471/Protecting_your_child_against_flu_leaflet.pdf)

# ***Q:Should I be wearing a face covering?***

[The latest evidence and advice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term?utm_source=25%20August%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) is that children aged 12 and over should wear a mask where social distancing cannot be safely managed and there is widespread transmission in the area. The evidence suggests that face coverings can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease from someone who is suffering from coronavirus, but not showing symptoms.

Nationwide, we are not recommending face coverings are necessary in nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges generally. This is because the approaches nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges are putting in place already reduce the health risks. See [Early Years Actions –use of face coverings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#considerations-for-operating-the-setting)

[Solihull Council website](https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Schools-learning/Coronavirus-Schools) has links to leaflets for parents; they are available in different languages.

# ***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:Can we use sand and water in our setting?***

DfE advise that:

settings should risk assess activities that involve malleable materials for messy play such as sand, mud and water, as part of their regular curriculum planning. A risk assessment should consider whether materials can be handled by a small, consistent group of children of no more than 15 at a time (to meet ratio requirements), and that no one else outside of this group can come into contact with it. Also, the malleable material for messy play (e.g. sand/water/mud) can be used and cleaned - including being replaced - in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, where applicable. Settings should follow the system of controls and ensure that children wash their hands thoroughly before and after messy play. Also, frequently touched surfaces, equipment, tools and resources for messy play are thoroughly cleaned and dried before they are used by a different group. Further general cleaning advice can be found in the  COVID-19: [cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings).

# ***Q:How can we keep our setting well ventilated without it being too cold?***

DfE advise that:

In colder weather windows should be opened just enough to provide constant background ventilation and periodically opened more fully when it is safe to do so to purge the air in the space. Further advice on this can be found in [Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm) and [CIBSE Coronavirus (COVID-19) Advice](https://www.cibse.org/coronavirus-covid-19/emerging-from-lockdown) . To balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature, the following measures should also be used as appropriate: opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts, increasing the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied, and, rearranging furniture where possible to avoid direct drafts. Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained, particularly in occupied spaces.

# ***Q:What information do I need to tell the 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 until further notice

# ***Q:What do I do if a known vulnerable child has to isolate?***

If a child is being sent home to isolate as part of a bubble closure and is known to have an allocated social worker, we would ask that settings make contact with the allocated worker either directly or via the main children’s social care number on 0121 788 4300 to advise of the situation and agree monitoring and support during the isolation period. It would be helpful for settings to contact their Area SENCo if a child that EYSAT work with is isolated. [A list is available [here](https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/early-years-send-team-2/) ]

# ***Q:What information do I need to tell Ofsted?***

You must inform Ofsted about…an illnesses to a child, *including confirmed cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus)* by using the link [Tell Ofsted if you have a COVID-19 incident at your childcare business](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-ofsted-if-you-have-a-covid-19-incident-at-your-childcare-business)

More information is available on what Ofsted sees as a [serious accident, injury or illness](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-reporting-childrens-accidents-and-injuries) that you must report.

Please report:

* any confirmed cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in the setting, either in children or staff
* if the setting is advised to close as a result

You should report this as an “*Event likely to impact on the smooth running of the setting*”.

Please also confirm:

* the date when cases were first suspected
* the date when cases were confirmed as positive
* the total number of children attending the setting at the time of the suspected case
* the total number of staff working at the setting at the time of the suspected case
* the date the setting is closing from, and when you intend to re-open (if applicable)
* if you have notified the case to Public Health England via the [Department for Education helpline](https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe)  or *Solihull Public Health*
* the advice provided by the DfE helpline, if applicable:   [or Solihull Public Health]
* if you have advised the local authority (yes or no)
* any other action taken

If operating circumstances change (you open or close), notify Ofsted 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 the 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. The serious event notification form can be found via [Ofsted Applications.](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/ByumCOgyXfNJl2EFEwmKh?domain=gov.uk)

# ***Q: What happens if a child or staff member shows symptoms of coronavirus?***

A: When a child or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 10 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 10 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.

Getting a test for coronavirus:

Tests conducted at a testing site will deliver the fastest results. Individuals must [book a test in advance](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test?utm_source=16%20September%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) or they will not be given a test. People can also order home test kits to be sent directly to them. These routes remain the primary channels for any individuals displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms to get a test. We suggest you try and find a booking after 8pm and keep refreshing or re-entering the webpage so that new appointments appear.

# ***Q: Can we ask for evidence of a test result?***

Settings should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation. They should not disclose information about the people [adult or child] with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

# ***Q: What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a childcare setting?***

Where the child or staff member tests positive follow the ‘Procedure for Managing Covid-19 Cases in Educational Settings in Solihull’



If a staff member has been isolated from a school/setting following an exposure to a confirmed case of Covid-19, they must stay at home and not attend for work in any other setting in which they have be employed. This is critical in ensuring that we safely protect our staff, pupils and families from Covid-19. It is understood that some staff members may work in roles in multiple settings, however, once isolated, they need to stay at home as per the guidance.

When Solihull Council Public Health advises on a situation, they will notify Public Health England of the confirmed cases on behalf of schools/settings to ensure information flow.

# ***Useful documents***

**\*Some documents have not yet been updated with the new 10 day isolation period\***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Testing flowchart |  | Response to COVID-19 Symptoms and Cases  In Solihull Educational Settings |
|  | Procedure for Managing Covid-19 Cases in Educational Settings in Solihull |  | Considerations for local lockdown and when partial closure/ full closure is necessary due to Cv19 infection. |
|  | How to get tested |  | What to do if a child is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) |
| Public Health England has drafted some letters for you to customise to send out to your parent community. | | [Early Years Resources](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources/) | |

# ***Useful guidance***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Guidance for schools: coronavirus (COVID-19)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=1d82c57e-3c93-4518-b8f3-49dfb7142afa&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate) | Guidance documents for schools, other providers and parents |
| [Local restrictions](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/birmingham-sandwell-and-solihull-local-restrictions) | Information on local COVID alert levels, including what they mean, why they are being introduced and what the different levels are. |
| [EYFS](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2) | revised and temporary EYFS |
| [Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak) | Protective measures for providers of community activities, holiday or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings offering provision to children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. |
| [Ofsted: coronavirus (COVID-19) rolling update](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update) | Ofsted guidance and information relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) for schools, early years, children's social care and further education and skills providers. |
| [Education plans from September 2020](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-plans-from-september-2020) | Guidance for education providers about Ofsted’s phased return to inspection. |
| [Guidance for full opening: schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools) | It continues to be the aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time throughout the autumn term. This guidance is intended to support schools, both mainstream and alternative provision, to prepare for this. |
| [Find coronavirus financial support for your business](https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder) | Use this business support finder to see what support is available for you and your business. |
| [Recovery Advice for Business](https://www.gbslepgrowthhub.co.uk/news/recovery-advice-for-business) | The Professional and Business Services sector and Enterprise Nation have teamed up for six months, supported by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, to offer SMEs free advice to help them recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. |
| [Guidance for parents](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term) | What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term |
| [Out of School Alliance](https://outofschoolalliance.co.uk/coronavirus-update) | Help and support for out of school clubs |
| [Early Years Alliance](https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/coronavirus-early-years) | Support for early years providers |
| [NDNA](https://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Knowledge_Hub/Coronavirus_for_nurseries_early_years.aspx) | Supporting nurseries across the UK |
| [Pacey](https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/coronavirus/) | Supporting everyone working in childcare |
| [Care Inspectorate Scotland](https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/coronavirus/) | Self-evaluation - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during COVID-19 |

# ***Glossary of terms***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Case*** | an individual case of Coronavirus |
| ***Cluster*** | 2 or more cases associated with a specific setting in the absence of evidence of a common exposure or link to another case |
| ***Outbreak*** | 2 or more confirmed cases associated with a specific setting with evidence of a common exposure or link to another case |
| ***Contact*** | A ***contact***can be:   * people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 * sexual partners * a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:   + being coughed on   + having a face-to-face conversation within one metre   + having skin-to-skin physical contact, or   + contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact * a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes * a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 |

# ***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/>

Please Do the Right Thing for Solihull **