

## **Guidance for full opening: schools**

*Updated 7 September 2020*

### **Introduction**

It is the Trust's plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term.

This guidance is intended to support our academies with this process. Separate guidance is available for early years.

The guidance also covers expectations for children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), including those with education, health and care plans, in mainstream schools.

This guidance is in 5 sections. The first section sets out the actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in our academies. This is public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

The rest of the guidance is focused on how the Department for Education (DfE) expects our academies to operate in this new context. This includes:

- school operations
- curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support
- assessment and accountability
- contingency planning to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak

DfE guidance has been prepared with input from school leaders, unions and sector bodies and in consultation with PHE and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The Trust will keep this guidance under review and update as necessary.

### **Welcoming children back to school**

Initially the Trust only opened to a small number of children. These were vulnerable and key worker children. This was done with the aim of reducing transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), to protect the NHS and save lives. As the situation improved, The DfE began to consider how schools could bring more children back. From 8<sup>th</sup> June our Trust welcomed children back to both Y1 and Y6 classes. We continued to offer provision for vulnerable and key worker children. All of these children worked in bubble groups. This offer helped some pupils to spend some time in school in small groups, with public health risk reduction measures in place. Due to the number of staff and classrooms available the Trust's academies were unable to bring other groups of children back before the summer holidays.



Government guidance now states that circumstances have changed. The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased, our NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and we are clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools.

DfE see that returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.

Government state that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. School is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families. Lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well-qualified workforce. This affects the standard of living that today's pupils will have over the course of their entire life. For many households school closures have also affected their ability to work. As the economy begins to recover, the government need to remove this barrier so parents and carers can return to work.

In relation to working in schools, **whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment**, the Office of National Statistics' analysis on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) related deaths linked to occupations](#) suggests that staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults.

Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). This guidance explains the steps our academies need to take to reduce the risks further. As a result, we can support the government's plan for all children to return and start to reverse the enormous costs of missed education. This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.

Pioneer Academies Community Trust (PACT) is expecting our academies to welcome all children back this autumn. While coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, this means making judgments at a school level about how to balance minimising any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19), by maximising control measures, with providing a full educational experience for children. Our academies should use their existing resources to make arrangements to welcome all children back.

The measures set out in this guidance provide a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff, which also ensure that all pupils receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. In welcoming all children back this autumn, our academies will minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission. Our academies will follow the guidance set out here and maximise control measures, they can be confident they are managing risk effectively.

While our aim is to have all pupils back at school in the autumn, each academy will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education.



## **Purpose of this guidance**

The first section of this guidance sets out the public health advice academies must follow to minimise the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission. It also includes the process that should be followed if anyone develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at school. This guidance has been developed with advice from PHE.

The public health advice in this guidance makes up a PHE-endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of protective measures that have been in use throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. When implemented in line with a revised risk assessment, these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

The system of controls provides a set of principles and if schools follow this advice and maximise the use of control measures, they will effectively minimise risks. All elements of the system of controls are essential. All schools must cover them all, but the way different schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances. Where something is essential for public health reasons, as advised by PHE, DfE have said 'must'. Where there is a legal requirement they have made that clear. This guidance does not create any new legal obligations.

PACT supported by our health and Safety competent officer have created a risk assessment format. However, there cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach where the system of controls describes every scenario. Academy leaders will be best placed to understand the needs of their schools and communities and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk. The system of controls provides a set of principles to help them do this and, if schools follow this advice and maximise the use of control measures, they will effectively minimise risks.

The Trust and our academies have worked closely with parents, staff and unions, as they normally would when agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances. Where the personal circumstances of parents or staff create added concerns, we have held appropriate discussions to resolve these. We want all pupils and staff to be back in schools, but understandably some people will understandably have worries that should be heard and addressed.

The rest of the guidance sets out more details on how DfE expects schools to operate in the autumn term. This covers:

- school operations, including attendance, workforce, estates, catering
- curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support
- assessment and accountability, including plans for inspection
- contingency planning in case of self-isolation of multiple pupils or staff or local outbreaks

## Section 1: Public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Our academies will not put in place rotas. Children will attend their setting every day. New starters will have a phased start in September to allow children to adjust to their new learning environments (Nursery and Reception classes)

Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

- grouping children together (bubbles in class groups)
- Grouping bubbles into phase pods but avoiding where possible contact between bubbles
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible

### Risk assessment

Our RA guidance will take reasonable steps to protect staff, pupils and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within the education setting. The legal requirement is that we should revisit and update our current risk assessments (building on the learning to date and the practices we have already developed), to consider the additional risks and control measures to enable a return to full capacity in the autumn term. We will implement sensible and proportionate control measures which follow the health and safety hierarchy of control to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level. Once procedures and protocols are in place academy senior leaders will have ongoing arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- effective
- working as planned
- updated appropriately considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice

Our risk assessment template has been developed by our consultant advisers for Health and Safety and is attached as Appendix 1. School leaders will use this document to develop their own bespoke site specific procedures and protocols. Risk Assessments will be checked and signed by the Trust's appointed competent officer.

## **The system of controls: protective measures**

Having assessed their risk, academies must work through the system of controls, adopting measures to the fullest extent possible in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their setting and allows them to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils, including full educational and care support for those pupils who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). If academies follow the guidance set out here they will effectively reduce risks in their school and create an inherently safer environment.

### **System of controls**

This is the set of actions academies must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection' and are outlined in more detail in the following sections.

#### **Prevention**

- 1) Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- 2) Where recommended, use of face coverings in schools.
- 3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.
- 4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- 5) Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach.
- 6) Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.
- 7) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Numbers 1 to 5 must be in place in all schools, all the time.

Number 6 must be properly considered and schools must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

## Response to any infection

- 8) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
- 9) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community.
- 10) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Numbers 8 to 10 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

## Prevention

### **1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school**

Ensuring that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#) or have tested positive in at least the last 10 days and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in schools and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

All schools must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), which sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10-day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) guidance.

As is usual practice, in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household bleach after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#).

Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

## **2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in schools**

The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools. Primary school children will not need to wear a face covering.

Academy staff have received training with regards teaching pedagogy. Trust guidance is that when staff members need to support individual children they should remain at least 1 metre distance and work with that child for 30 seconds to a minute. Where staff may work longer than this time the Trust has advised that teachers should wear the visor provided for their classroom support. The visor should be cleaned regularly.

Where it is essential for a visitor to come on to the school site during the school day they will wear a visor and adhere to good respiratory practice and hand sanitise as required. Contact with children will be avoided. Wherever possible visitors will be discouraged from visiting the site whilst staff and children are present.

Trust staff will conduct most of their work remotely. The Trust's CEO will be based in PACT House and will only visit academy sites before or after the school day. He will wear a visor and follow systems of control. The Trust's director of teaching and learning has been deployed to one academy site. Academy PE support has been restricted to two sites to minimise contact across multiple sites. (Bespoke PE risk assessment has been created) IT support for the majority of the time is undertaken remotely. Visits to the site are before and after school when children are not present. The IT technician will wear a visor when visiting and will follow the systems of control.

### **Access to face coverings**

All staff have access to appropriate PPE and have received training.

### **Safe wearing and removal of face coverings**

Schools should have a process for removing face coverings when those who use face coverings arrive at school, and when face coverings are worn at school in certain circumstances. This process should be communicated clearly to pupils and staff.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on – and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between uses. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Pupils must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it and they must dispose of temporary face coverings in a ‘black bag’ waste bin (not recycling bin) or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom.

### **Further guidance on face coverings**

- [Safe working in education, childcare and children’s social care provides](#)
- [Face coverings in education settings](#)

### **3. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. Schools must ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Our academies will:

- Ensure they have enough hand washing or hand sanitiser ‘stations’ available so that all pupils and staff can clean their hands regularly
- Supervise the use of hand sanitiser given risks around ingestion. Small children and pupils with complex needs will continue to be helped to clean their hands properly.
- Build these routines into school culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure younger children and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

#### **4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach**

The ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach continues to be very important, so academies must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available in the school to support pupils and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, staff must ensure younger children and those with complex needs are helped to get this right and all pupils understand that this is now part of how the school operates. The [e-Bug coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#) contains free resources for schools, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Some pupils with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example, those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. Where this is the case leaders must complete a bespoke risk assessments in order to support these pupils and the staff working with them and is not a reason to deny these pupils face-to-face education.

Face coverings are required at all times on public transport, except for children under the age of 11. Further information can be found in the [face coverings](#) guidance.

#### **5. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach**

Our academies will:

- Put in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:
  - more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas that are used by different groups
  - frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- Ensure toilets are cleaned regularly and pupils must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet. Where possible different groups have been allocated their own toilet blocks.

Public Health England has published revised [guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings](#) to advise on general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning those settings when there is a suspected case.

#### **6. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible**

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts and schools must consider how to implement this. Schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in ‘bubbles’) and through maintaining the distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on:



- children's ability to distance
- the lay out of the school
- the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary)

It is likely that for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups and for older children, it will be on distancing. For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff where possible.

The points to consider and implement are set out in the following sections.

#### **a. How to group children**

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group. They have been used in schools in the summer term in recognition that children, especially the youngest children, cannot socially distance from staff or from each other and this provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate and keep that number as small as possible.

However, the use of small groups restricts the normal operation of schools and presents both educational and logistical challenges, including the cleaning and use of shared spaces, such as playgrounds, boarding houses, dining halls, and toilets, and the provision of specialist teaching. This is the case in both primary and secondary schools but is particularly difficult in secondary schools.

In this guidance for the autumn term, maintaining consistent groups remains important, but given the decrease in the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the resumption of the full range of curriculum subjects, schools may need to change the emphasis on bubbles within their system of controls and increase the size of these groups.

PACT academies will maintain class bubbles. Children within these groups will not mix with children from other bubbles. Our bubbles will form part of phase pods. This will mean that if required staff can work across bubbles within a pod group. These activities, will be kept to a minimum but will allow leaders to deploy staff to have maximum impact to help recover lost learning. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults. (This is not likely to be possible with younger children)

Older children should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Sites with the capability to do it should take steps to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible. When using larger groups the other measures from the system of controls become even more important, to minimise transmission risks and to minimise the numbers of pupils and staff who may need to self-isolate. We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all-or-nothing' options and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. Endeavoring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between children will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

#### **b. Measures within the classroom**

Maintaining a distance between people whilst inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face contact lowers the risk of transmission. It is strong public health advice that staff working with older children maintain distance from their pupils, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other, and from children. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger children, but if adults can do this when circumstances allow that will help. In particular, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. Similarly, it will not be possible when working with many pupils who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These pupils' educational and care support should be provided as normal. Where staff are working in close proximity for a period of time the Trust advises that staff wear visors.

For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest children and some children with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow. Schools doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time, will help.

When staff or children cannot maintain distancing, particularly with younger children in primary schools, the risk can also be reduced by keeping pupils in the smaller, class-sized groups.

Schools should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

#### **c. Measures elsewhere**

Groups should be kept apart, meaning that academies will avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces between groups). All children attending PACT academies will eat their lunch in their classrooms

Academies will also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. Use of staff rooms will be timetabled thus ensuring staff have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

#### **d. Measures for arriving at and leaving school**

Our academies will introduce staggered starts, adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. This information has been communicated to parents via parent handbooks, emails and text messages. Visiting the school site without an appointment is not allowed. Procedures are in place at each school office.

#### **e. Other considerations**

Some pupils with SEND (whether with education, health and care plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that this will involve, so teachers and special educational needs coordinators should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories. More information on pupils with education, health and care plans can be found in [annex B](#).

PACT academies will not use ad hoc supply teaching staff. Where there is a need for cover leaders will work with a designated agency to ensure the regulatory use of the same teacher.

Peripatetic music teachers will not return to our academies at the start of the academic year. Leaders will review the use of such staff.

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND will be allowed to provide interventions as usual. Leaders will ensure that all parties are aware of the relevant procedures and protocols.

PACT academies will consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, and ensure that the risks associated with managing contractors, visitors, catering staff and deliveries, as well as cleaning staff on site who may be working throughout the school and across different groups, are addressed. This will require close cooperation between both schools and the other relevant employers. Schools should have discussions with key contractors about the school's control measures and ways of working as part of planning for the autumn term. Schools should ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors.

As normal, schools should engage with their local immunisation providers to provide immunisation programmes on site, ensuring these will be delivered in keeping with the school's control measures. These programmes are essential for children's health and wellbeing and can also provide benefits for staff.

Equipment and resources are integral to education in schools. During the summer term, their use was minimised, many were moved out of classrooms, and there was significant extra cleaning. That position has now changed for the autumn term, because the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased and because they are so important for the delivery of education. For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

Outdoor playground equipment should be more frequently cleaned. This would also apply to resources used inside and outside. It is still recommended that pupils limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, hats, coats, books, stationery and mobile phones. Bags are allowed. Pupils and teachers can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to pupil education and development. Similar rules on hand cleaning, cleaning of the resources and rotation should apply to these resources.

## **7. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**

PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases, including:

- The use of visors when staff are working closer children for a prolonged period
- When administering first aid
- Where an individual child or young person becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at schools, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- Where a child or young person already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

Guidance on [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) has more information about preventing and controlling infection, including when, how PPE should be used, what type of PPE to use, and how to source it.

## **Response to any infection**

### **8. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process**

Academies have been provided with a toolkit produced by Barnsley Alliance which outlines local NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact their local [Public Health England health protection team](#). Schools must ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- [Book a test](#) if they or their child are displaying symptoms. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS [testing and tracing for coronavirus](#) website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. More details on new testing avenues will be released as and when they become available and will work with schools so they understand the quickest and easiest way to get a test. DfE have provided our academies with a small number of home testing kits that they can give directly to parents/carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school, or staff who have developed symptoms at school, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. Advice will be provided alongside these kits.

Schools should ask parents and staff to inform them immediately of the results of a test and follow this guidance.

1. If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
2. If someone tests positive, they should follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

## **9. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community**

Our academies will take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Leaders will contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact schools directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with schools in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, DfE recommend schools keep a record of pupils and staff in each group, and any close contact that takes places between children and staff in different groups (see [section 6 of the system of control](#) for more on grouping pupils). This should be a proportionate recording process. Schools do not need to ask pupils to record everyone they have spent time with each day or ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

A template letter will be provided to schools, on the advice of the health protection team, to send to parents and staff if needed. Schools must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They should get a test, and:

- If the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.
- If the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

Leaders 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.

In the majority of cases, schools and parents will be in agreement that a child with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending school, schools can take the decision to refuse the child if in their reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect their pupils and staff from possible infection with coronavirus (COVID-19). Any such decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and the current public health advice. Further guidance is available on [testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

#### **10. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice**

If academies have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If schools are implementing controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.

## Section 2: School operations

This section covers guidance on matters related to transport, attendance, workforce, safeguarding, catering and estates.

### Transport

Social distancing has significantly reduced available transport capacity. This guidance sets out a new framework for supporting transport to and from schools from the autumn term. Further guidance is set out in the [transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020](#).

DfE are making a distinction between dedicated school transport and wider public transport:

- by dedicated school transport, we mean services that are used only to carry pupils to school - this includes statutory home to school transport, but may also include some existing or new commercial travel routes, where they carry school pupils only
- by public transport services, we mean routes which are also used by the general public

### Dedicated school transport, including statutory provision

This is not applicable to any PACT academy

### Wider public transport

Our academies have had a critical role to play in supporting collaboration between all parties - providers, local authorities, parents and pupils. Further information on managing capacity and demand on [public transport is set out in the transport to school and other places of education: autumn term 2020](#) guidance.

Our academies have encouraged parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school if at all possible. Families using public transport should refer to the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#).

## Attendance

### Expectations

Now the circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

### Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

Government officers know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future, there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school.

PACT academies acknowledge that:

- A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Shielding advice for all adults and children was paused on 1 August 2020 which means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who were shielding - read the [current advice on shielding](#)
- If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, may be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and, therefore, they may be temporarily unable to attend
- Pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional are likely to discuss their care with their health professional at their next planned clinical appointment - you can find more advice from the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#)

Specialists in pediatric medicine have reviewed the latest evidence on the level of risk posed to children and young people from coronavirus (COVID-19). The latest evidence indicates that the risk of serious illness for most children and young people is low. In the future, we expect fewer children and young people will be included on the shielded patient list.

Patients can only be removed from the shielding patient list by their GP or specialist, following consultation with the child and their family, and other clinicians where appropriate. If a child or young person is removed from the shielded patient list in due course, they will no longer be advised to shield in the future if coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission increases. Discussion by a clinician with those previously advised that they were a clinically vulnerable child or young person but can now be removed from the shielded patient list, and with their families are ongoing. Since shielding advice has paused nationally, except in a very few areas where the implementation of local restrictions is ongoing, all previously affected children should be able to return to school except where individual clinical advice not to do so has been provided.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, academy leaders will immediately offer them access to remote education. Leaders will monitor engagement with this activity as set out in the [action for all schools and local authorities section](#).

Where children are not able to attend school as parents and carers are following clinical or public health advice, for example, self-isolation or family isolation, the absence will not be penalised.

### **Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school**

PACT leaders will bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, leaders will discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school. Leaders will be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

### **Action for all schools and local authorities**

There's separate guidance on recording attendance at [addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year](#).

DfE are asking schools to work with families to secure regular school attendance from the start of term as this will be essential to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

We are asking schools and local authorities to:

1. Communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the summer ahead of the new school year.
2. Identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with the school regularly during the pandemic.
3. Use the additional catch-up funding schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance.
4. Work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

## School workforce

DfE have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and PHE to develop this specific guidance for school settings. The PHE and DHSC endorsed system of controls outlined in this document sets out the measures that school leaders and all school staff should follow when planning for full return in September.

Where schools implement the system of controls outlined in this document, in line with their own workplace risk assessment, PHE and DHSC confirm that these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

As a result, on current evidence, PHE and DHSC advise that schools are not currently considered high risk settings when compared to other workplace environments. Rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) are now reduced to levels below those seen when shielding was introduced, and shielding measures will be paused from 1 August 2020, with the exception of areas where local lockdown means that shielding will continue. It is therefore appropriate for teachers and other school staff to return to their workplace setting.

Most school-based roles are not ideally suited to home working and schools may expect most staff to return to work in settings. Some roles, such as some administrative roles, may be conducive to home working, and school leaders should consider what is feasible and appropriate.

All staff should follow the measures set out in the system of controls section of this guidance to minimise the risks of transmission. This includes continuing to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene and maintaining social distancing in line with the provisions as set out in section 5 of the 'prevention' section.

Academy leaders have used INSET development training to explain to staff the measures the school is putting in place to reduce risks. These measures are based closely to government guidance and are set out in each academy's bespoke risk assessment. Additional site specific procedures and protocols have also been developed to provide further clarity.



PACT leaders have met with staff who are concerned, including those who may be clinically vulnerable, clinically extremely vulnerable or at increased comparative risk from coronavirus,

### **Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable**

Rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) are now reduced to levels below those seen when shielding was introduced. Shielding measures were paused from the 1 August 2020, with the exception of areas where local lockdown means that shielding will continue. Therefore, DfE advise that those who are clinically extremely vulnerable can return to school in the autumn term. In all respects, the clinically extremely vulnerable should now follow the same guidance as the clinically vulnerable population, taking particular care to practice frequent, thorough hand washing, and cleaning of frequently touched areas in their home or workspace.

### **Staff who are clinically vulnerable**

Clinically vulnerable staff can return to school in the autumn term. While in school they should follow the sector-specific measures in this document to minimise the risks of transmission.

This includes taking particular care to observe good hand and respiratory hygiene, minimising contact and maintaining social distancing in line with the provisions set out in section 6 of the 'prevention' section of this guidance. This provides that ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from others, and where this is not possible avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others. While the risk of transmission between young children and adults is likely to be low, adults should continue to take care to socially distance from other adults including older children.

People who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace.

### **Staff who are pregnant**

Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category and are generally advised to follow the above advice, which applies to all staff in schools. Leaders should conduct a risk assessment for pregnant women in line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW).

The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (RCOG) has published [occupational health advice for employers and pregnant women](#). This document includes advice for women from 28 weeks gestation or with underlying health conditions who may be at greater risk. DfE advise employers and pregnant women to follow this advice and to continue to monitor for future updates to it.

## **Staff who may otherwise be at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), as set out in the [COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes report](#), which looked at different factors including age and sex, where people live, deprivation, ethnicity, people's occupation and care home residence. These staff can return to school in the autumn term as long as the system of controls set out in this guidance are in place. The reasons for the disparities are complex and there is ongoing research to understand and translate these findings for individuals in the future.

People who live with those who have comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) can attend the workplace.

## **Employer health and safety and equalities duties**

Academy leaders have a legal obligation to protect their employees, and others, including children, from harm and should continue to assess health and safety risks and consider how to meet equalities duties in the usual way. Following the steps in this guidance will mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to children and staff and help schools to meet their legal duties to protect employees and others from harm.

The Health and Safety Executive published guidance on [first aid](#) during coronavirus (COVID-19) which will support local risk assessments and provides guidance for first aiders. It is clear that treating any casualty properly should be the first concern. Where it is necessary for first aid provision to be administered in close proximity, those administering it should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands?

## **Supporting staff**

The Trustees and members of the local governing body have regard to staff (including the head teacher) work-life balance and wellbeing. Leaders at all levels should ensure they have explained to all staff the measures they are proposing putting in place and involve all staff in that process.

All employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their mental health. Schools already have mechanisms to support staff wellbeing and these will be particularly important, as some staff may be particularly anxious about returning to school. DfE is providing additional support for both pupil and staff wellbeing in the current situation. Information about the [extra mental health support for pupils and teachers](#) is available.

The [Education Support Partnership](#) provides a free helpline for school staff and targeted support for mental health and wellbeing.

## **Staff deployment**

Leaders may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly, to welcome back all pupils at the start of the autumn term. Managers should discuss and agree any changes to staff roles with individuals.

It is important that planning builds in the need to avoid increases in unnecessary and unmanageable workload burdens. This could include a review of existing practices in this respect and schools may wish to draw on DfE's [workload reduction toolkit](#).

DfE has also published a range of resources, including [case studies to support remote education](#) and help address staff workload, this includes case studies on managing wellbeing.

### **Deploying support staff and accommodating visiting specialists**

Leaders should ensure that appropriate support is made available for pupils with SEND, for example by deploying teaching assistants and enabling specialist staff from both within and outside the school to work with pupils in different classes or year groups.

Where support staff capacity is available, schools may consider using this to support catch-up provision or targeted interventions. Teaching assistants may also be deployed to lead groups or cover lessons, under the direction and supervision of a qualified, or nominated, teacher (under the Education (Specified Work) (England) Regulations 2012 for maintained schools and non-maintained special schools and in accordance with the freedoms provided under the funding agreement for academies). Any redeployments should not be at the expense of supporting pupils with SEND. Head teachers should be satisfied that the person has the appropriate skills, expertise and experience to carry out the work, and discuss and agree any proposed changes in role or responsibility with the member of staff. This includes ensuring that safe ratios are met and specific training undertaken, for any interventions or care for pupils with complex needs where specific training or specific ratios are required.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published guidance on [making the best use of teaching assistants](#) to help primary and secondary schools.

When deploying support staff flexibly it is important that head teachers consider regulated activity and ensure only those who have the appropriate checks are allowed to engage in regulated activity. Full guidance is provided in part 3 of [keeping children safe in education](#).

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment should continue as usual. The government's [Teaching Vacancies](#) service can help schools to list vacancies for both permanent and fixed-term teaching staff quickly. The free national service for searching and listing teaching roles will be directing newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and job seeking teachers to this service.

DfE recommend that schools continue to recruit remotely over the summer period. Interviewing remotely may be a new experience for many schools. The DfE teaching blog provides some information on the [experience of implementing interviews remotely](#). There is also advice that can be sent to candidates on [how to prepare for remote interviews](#).



When recruiting, schools must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre-appointment checks. We refer schools to part 3 of the statutory guidance [keeping children safe in education](#). Initial teacher training (ITT) providers have worked flexibly to ensure this year's NQTs are ready and prepared to enter the classroom. They will also be supported by materials DfE is making available to all schools based on the [early career framework reforms](#), to support them as they start their teaching career.

### **Supply teachers and other temporary or peripatetic teachers**

At this moment PACT academies are not fully utilising supply, peripatetic and temporary workers. Where this has been necessary it has been discussed with the Trust's CEO. To minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering the school premises, and secure best value, the Trust encourages the appointment of longer assignments with supply teachers.

### **Expectation and deployment of ITT trainees**

Our academies have not agreed to host ITT trainees.

### **Performance management and appraisal**

The Trust continues to adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. Trust leaders will use their discretion and take pragmatic steps to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances. Leaders will ensure that teachers are not penalised during the appraisal process or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions as a result of the decision to restrict pupil attendance at schools, such as where this has had an impact on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives.

Appraisals and performance management for support staff should be carried out in accordance with the employee's contract of employment. DfE does not specify pay or terms and conditions of employment for support staff.

### **Staff taking leave**

DfE recognise that school staff have been working extremely hard throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and will be working hard to prepare for all pupils to return from the start of the autumn term. Many staff will want to take a holiday over the summer period, which may involve travelling abroad. The government has set a requirement for people returning from some countries to quarantine for 14 days on their return. The latest guidance on quarantine can be accessed at [coronavirus \(COVID-19\): how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK](#).

As would usually be the case, staff will need to be available to work in PACT academies from the start of the autumn term.



## **Other support**

PACT leaders will not allow volunteers to work in our settings

## **Safeguarding**

The Trust will be reviewing and updating its child protection policy (led by their Designated Safeguarding Lead) in light of the return of more pupils and to reflect the updated statutory safeguarding guidance, [keeping children safe in education](#).

Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) have been provided with more time, especially in the first few weeks of term, to help them provide support to staff and children regarding any new safeguarding and welfare concerns and the handling of referrals to children's social care and other agencies where these are appropriate, and agencies and services should prepare to work together to actively look for signs of harm.

Communication with school nurses is important for safeguarding and supporting wellbeing, as they have continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in school.

## **Catering**

Our catering staff are supported by the Trust's catering contractor (CMC) they have received all necessary training and up to date information with regards reopening kitchens following a close down period. School kitchens can continue to operate but must comply with the [guidance for food businesses on coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

At the start of the autumn term PACT academies are asking children to bring a packed meal from home. Those children entitled to benefits related free school meal will be offered a packed meal. This may be a warm sandwich.

Children will eat their lunches in their bubble classrooms. These will be cleaned afterwards and before afternoon learning sessions begin.

## **Estates**

All children's learning will take place on academy sites.

Prior to reopening for the autumn term, all the usual pre-term building checks were undertaken to make the school safe. Where buildings had been closed or had reduced occupancy site staff maintained legionella procedures. Advice on this can be found in the guidance on [legionella risks during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

Additional advice on safely reoccupying buildings can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on [emerging from lockdown](#).



Academy staff will ensure that whilst in operation there is good ventilation and maximising this wherever possible, for example, opening windows and propping open doors, as long as they are not fire doors, where safe to do so (bearing in mind safeguarding in particular). Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on [air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

## **Educational visits**

At this moment in time the Trust has advised its academies to not go on any educational visits.

This decision will be reviewed later in the autumn term. If this is allowed then this will be done in line with protective measures, such as keeping children within their consistent group, and the COVID-secure measures in place at the destination. As normal, schools should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be done safely. As part of this risk assessment, schools will need to consider what control measures need to be used and ensure they are aware of wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. Schools should consult the [health and safety guidance on educational visits](#) when considering visits.

## **School uniform**

Our academies will request pupils to attend school in their school uniforms. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

Leaders will consider how they manage non-compliance, taking a mindful and considerate approach in relation to parents who may be experiencing financial pressures.

## **Wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity**

The Trust has advised its academies to not open wrap around care facilities at the start of the autumn term. This decision will be reviewed later in the term. Our academies have also worked closely with external wraparound providers which Trust pupils use, to ensure as far as possible, children can be kept in a group with other children from the same bubble they are in during the school day.

# **Section 3: Curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support**

## **Curriculum expectations**

This section sets out some key principles and expectations for curriculum planning in school based nursery, mainstream, and special schools, and alternative provision (AP), so that all pupils – particularly disadvantaged, SEND and vulnerable pupils – are given the catch-up support needed to make substantial progress by the end of the academic year.

The key principles that underpin our advice on curriculum planning are as follows.

### **Education is not optional**

All pupils receive a high-quality education that promotes their development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

### **The curriculum remains broad and ambitious**

All pupils continue to be taught a wide range of subjects

### **Remote education**

The Trust has asked its academies to prepare remote learning packages that when needed, are of a high-quality and safe, and align as closely as possible with in-school provision.

DfE asks that our academies meet the following key expectations when considering revising their school curriculum for academic year 2020 to 2021.

1. Teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content. Up to and including key stage 3, prioritisation within subjects of the most important components for progression is likely to be more effective than removing subjects, which pupils may struggle to pick up again later. In particular, schools may consider how all subjects can contribute to the filling of gaps in core knowledge, for example through an emphasis on reading.
2. Aim to return to the school's normal curriculum in all subjects by summer term 2021. Substantial modification to the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year, so teaching time should be prioritised to address significant gaps in pupils' knowledge with the aim of returning to the school's normal curriculum content by no later than summer term 2021.
3. Plan on the basis of the educational needs of pupils. Curriculum planning should be informed by an assessment of pupils' starting points and addressing the gaps in their knowledge and skills, in particular making effective use of regular formative assessment (for example, quizzes, observing pupils in class, talking to pupils to assess understanding, scrutiny of pupils' work) while avoiding the introduction of unnecessary tracking systems.
4. Develop remote education so that it is integrated into school curriculum planning. Remote education may need to be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum for some pupils, alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local lockdown.

All schools are therefore expected to plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and so make good progress.

Schools may consider it appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils in exceptional circumstances. Schools should be able to show that this is in the best interests of these pupils and this should be subject to discussion with parents during the autumn term. They should also have a coherent plan for returning to their normal curriculum for all pupils by the summer term 2021.

Relationships and health education (RHE) has become compulsory from September 2020, and schools are expected to start teaching this by at least the start of the summer term 2021.

### **Specific points for early years foundation stage (EYFS) to key stage 3**

For children in nursery settings, teachers should focus on the prime areas of learning, including: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and physical development. For pupils in Reception, teachers should also assess and address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary. Settings should follow updates to the [EYFS disapplication guidance](#). For nursery settings and Reception, consider how all groups of children can be given equal opportunities for outdoor learning.

For pupils in key stages 1 and 2, school leaders are expected to prioritise identifying gaps and re-establish good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely, and developing their knowledge and vocabulary. The curriculum should remain broad, so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, humanities, the arts, physical education/sport, religious education and relationships and health education.

### **Music, dance and drama in school**

The Trust has advised its academies to not teach any lessons where pupils are singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments, dance and drama takes place. Lessons delivered by peripatetic tutors will not take place. This decision will be reviewed later in the autumn term.

### **Minimising contact between individuals**

Academy leaders and their staff will do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing. Our overarching objective is to reduce the number of contacts between pupils/students and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in bubbles) and through maintaining the social distance between individuals. These are not alternative options. Both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the age of pupils, the layout of the building, and the feasibility of keeping groups separate from each other while offering a broad curriculum. If staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults.

Additionally, staff will not raise their voices.



## Performances

The Trust has advised its academies to not undertake assemblies or school performances

## Peripatetic teachers

The Trust has advised its academies to not undertake individual lessons and performance in groups

## Physical activity in schools

Our academies will continue to offer PE lessons. The Trust's PE coordinator has collaborated with Head teachers to develop bespoke procedures for teaching physical activity. These are in line with school risk assessments and include all necessary control measures.

Competitive sports games will not be reintroduced.

Pupils will be kept in consistent groups, sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different pods.

Outdoor sports will be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible) distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise. External facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities.

Leaders will refer to the following guidance:

- [guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation](#) and guidance from [Sport England](#) for grassroots sport
- advice from organisations such as the [Association for Physical Education](#) and the [Youth Sport Trust](#)
- guidance from Swim England on school swimming and water safety lessons available at [returning to pools guidance documents](#)
- [using changing rooms safely](#)

## Catch-up support

Our academies have registered their interest in the [National Tutoring Programme](#),

## **Behaviour expectations**

PACT academies have updated their behaviour policies with new rules setting clear, reasonable and proportionate expectations of pupil behaviour. These are based on the government's guidance on [behaviour and discipline in schools](#). The policy clarifies the consequences for poor behaviour and deliberately breaking the rules. This is particularly the case when considering restrictions on movement within school and new hygiene rules. Our leaders have worked with staff, pupils and parents to ensure that behaviour expectations are clearly understood and consistently supported, taking account of individual needs and should also consider how to build new expectations into their rewards system.

Academy behaviour expectations are listed on the Home/School agreements. This document has to be signed and agreed before children return back to school.

We acknowledge that some pupils will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns and some children, particularly vulnerable groups such as children with a social worker, previously looked-after children who left care through adoption or special guardianship, and young carers, will need additional support and access to services such as educational psychologists, social workers and counsellors. Additionally, provision for children who have SEND may have been disrupted during partial school closure and there may be an impact on their behaviour. Schools will need to work with local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place for a smooth return to schools for pupils.

The disciplinary powers that schools currently have, including exclusion, remain in place. Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort. Where a child with a social worker is at risk of exclusion, their social worker should be informed and involved in relevant conversations.

Any disciplinary exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must be consistent with the relevant legislation.

With regard to statutory guidance on exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, head teachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding any looked-after child. Where a looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, the designated teacher should contact the relevant authority's virtual school head as soon as possible to help the school decide how to help the child and avoid exclusion becoming necessary. Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, the designated teacher should speak with the child's parent or guardian and seek advice from their virtual school head to avoid exclusion where possible.

## **Pupil wellbeing and support**

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust to school, others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return, a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.



The return to school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing.

The government has recently launched the [Wellbeing for Education Return programme](#), which will provide training and resources for teachers and staff in all state-funded schools to respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). The training provides practical examples to support staff, children and young people within a school.

Local authorities have received funding to employ skilled staff to deliver the training to schools and provide ongoing advice and support from the autumn until March 2021.

Our academies can prepare by nominating a lead to receive the training, and who will then have the capability to disseminate the learning and practice to staff and pupils within the school. The training will be available in the autumn term.

DfE, Public Health England and NHS England hosted a free webinar for school and college staff on 9 July 2020 to set out how to support returning pupils and students. A recording of this is available:

[View webinar](#)

This includes experts discussing the impacts of the pandemic on pupils' mental wellbeing and recovery techniques, and education leaders discussing the actions they have been taking.

The Trust has accessed materials from Whole School SEND (WSS) including webinars and leaflets to have conversations with schools about [successful returns following a period of absence](#) and about [transition planning for post-year 11 destinations](#). WSS have also produced resources to support the schools' workforce to prepare for the return, such as the [COVID-19 SEND review guide](#) which academies can use to reflect on their provision and a [handbook](#) to support teachers to take a whole school approach to supporting pupils following a traumatic event. Other resources include; [Whole School SEND Resource page](#) of the SEND Gateway and professionals in the schools' workforce can [sign up to the Community of Practice](#) to be kept up to date with further information.

DfE has also published the first of the relationships, sex and health education training modules for teachers to support them in preparation to deliver content on mental health and wellbeing. The training module on [teaching about mental wellbeing](#), which has been developed with clinical experts and schools, will improve teacher confidence in talking and teaching about mental health and wellbeing in the classroom. It has been published early given the importance of supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing at this time.

Academies should also provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified that individual pupils may need help with, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. Leaders should also consider support needs of particular groups they are already aware need additional help (for example, children in need), and any groups they identify as newly vulnerable on their return to school. To support this, teachers may wish to access the free [MindEd learning platform for professionals](#), which contains materials on peer support, stress, fear and trauma, and bereavement. MindEd have also developed a [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) staff resilience hub](#) with advice and tips for frontline staff. Where there is a concern a child is in need or suffering or likely to suffer from harm, the school (generally led by the Designated Safeguard Lead or deputy)

should follow their child protection policy and part 1 of the statutory safeguarding guidance [keeping children safe in education](#) and consider any referral to statutory services (and the police) as appropriate.

Academies should consider how they are working with school nursing services to support the health and wellbeing of their pupils; school nursing services have continued to offer support as pupils return to school – school nurses as leaders of the [healthy child programme](#) can offer a range of support including:

- support for resilience, mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, bereavement and sleep issues
- support for pupils with additional and complex health needs
- supporting vulnerable children and keeping children safe

Academies and school nurses need to work together to ensure delivery of the healthy child programme (which includes immunisation), identifying health and wellbeing needs which will underpin priorities for service delivery.

## Section 4: Assessment and accountability

This section covers assessment and accountability.

### Inspection

The intention is for Ofsted inspections to remain suspended for the autumn term. However, during the autumn term, inspectors will visit a sample of schools to discuss how they are managing the return to education of all their pupils. These will be collaborative discussions, taking into account the curriculum and remote education expectations set out in this document and will not result in a judgement. A brief letter will be published following the visit. The insights that inspectors gather will also be aggregated nationally to share learning with the sector, the government and the wider public. In addition, Ofsted has the power to inspect a school in response to any significant concerns, such as safeguarding.

It is intended that routine Ofsted and ISI inspections will restart from January 2021, with the exact timing being kept under review.

### Primary assessment

DfE recognise that pupils will have missed a critical period of their education in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. Maintaining national curriculum assessments in the 2020 to 2021 academic year will allow the department to measure the remaining impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on this cohort of pupils nationally and help target support to local areas, schools and pupils that need it the most.

DfE are, therefore, planning on the basis that statutory primary assessments will take place in summer 2021. The early years foundation stage profile and all existing statutory key stage 1 and 2 assessments, should return in 2020 to 2021 in accordance with their usual timetables. This includes:

- the phonics screening check
- key stage 1 tests and teacher assessment
- the year 4 multiplication tables check
- key stage 2 tests and teacher assessment
- statutory trialing

For 2020 to 2021 academic year only, schools will be required to administer a past version of the phonics screening check to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2020 autumn term. Year 2 pupils who meet the expected standard in the autumn check will not be required to complete any further statutory assessments in phonics. Year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the autumn check will be expected to take the statutory check in June 2021. Further guidance for schools will be published by the Standards and Testing Agency in September 2020.

The statutory rollout of the reception baseline assessment has been postponed until September 2021. During the summer term 2020, schools had the opportunity to sign up to the 2020 to 2021 early adopter year.

In light of the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the 2020 to 2021 academic year will be a transitional year (subject to the necessary legislation being made) to allow schools time to prepare for, and start embedding, the engagement model. The engagement model is the new attainment framework (replacing P scales 1 to 4) for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and not engaged in subject-specific study.

The 2020 to 2021 academic year will be a transitional year where schools that have prepared to implement the engagement model will be able to report against it and schools that need more time to implement this change will have the option to assess against P scales 1 to 4, for one final year. The engagement model will become statutory from September 2021 and further information can be found at [the engagement model](#).

### **Accountability expectations**

Performance tables are suspended for the 2019 to 2020 academic year and no school will be judged on data based on exams and assessments from 2020. Until the new data release is available, all those working with schools, including Ofsted and DfE regional teams, should refer to the 2019 data. DfE will continue to use 2019 data as a starting point for any conversation about support for schools with Ofsted judgements below good. More information is set out at [coronavirus \(COVID-19\): school and college accountability](#).

## Section 5: Contingency planning for outbreaks

This section covers the process for local outbreaks, contingency plans and remote education.

### Process in the event of local outbreaks

If a local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, appropriate authorities will decide which measures to implement to help contain the spread. DfE will be involved in decisions at a local and national level affecting a geographical area, and will support appropriate authorities and individual settings to follow the health advice. We will provide more information on this process in due course.

### Contingency plans for outbreaks

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, remote education plans will be in place. These should meet the same expectations as those for any pupils who cannot yet attend school at all due to coronavirus (COVID-19). See section on [remote education support](#).

In local areas, where restrictions have been implemented for certain sectors (from national direction), we anticipate that schools will usually remain fully open to all.

However, there may be exceptional circumstances in which some level of restriction to attendance at schools is required in a local area. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has updated their [Contain framework](#) to include an overview of the tiers of intervention for education settings when managing local outbreaks and implementing restrictions.

In the event of local restrictions on education settings being required, we will publish further operational guidance for education settings in the affected area, in order to notify them of restrictions and support them to implement their contingency plans in their local context.

### Remote education support

Where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there is a local lockdown requiring pupils to remain at home, DfE expect schools to have the capacity to offer immediate remote education. Academies are expected to consider how to continue to improve the quality of their existing offer and have a strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision by the end of September. This planning will be particularly important to support a scenario in which the logistical challenges of remote provision are greatest, for example where large numbers of pupils are required to remain at home.

In developing these contingency plans, DfE expect academies to:

- use a curriculum sequence that allows access to high-quality online and offline resources and teaching videos and that is linked to the school's curriculum expectations
- give access to high quality remote education resources
- select the online tools that will be consistently used across the school in order to allow interaction, assessment and feedback and make sure staff are trained in their use
- provide printed resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, for pupils who do not have suitable online access
- recognise that younger pupils and some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so schools should work with families to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum

When teaching pupils remotely, DfE expect academies to:

- set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practiced in each subject
- provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher in the school or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos
- gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, using questions and other suitable tasks and set a clear expectation on how regularly teachers will check work
- enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding
- plan a programme that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, ideally including daily contact with teachers

DfE expect academies to consider these expectations in relation to the pupils' age, stage of development or special educational needs, for example where this would place significant demands on parents' help or support. DfE expect academies to avoid an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities.

The government will also explore making a temporary continuity direction in the autumn term, to give additional clarity to schools, pupils and parents as to what remote education should be provided. DfE will engage with the sector before a final decision is made on this.

The following range of resources to support schools in delivering remote education is available.

### **Video lessons**

From that start of the autumn term, Oak National Academy will make available video lessons covering the entire national curriculum, available to any school for free. These are being developed in partnership with a wide group of teachers and school leaders to develop lessons in the popular topics. The resources will be as flexible as possible, allowing schools to reorder topics and lessons, to match their own plans and curriculum.



## **SEND**

Oak National Academy specialist content for pupils with SEND. This covers communication and language, numeracy, creative arts, independent living, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech and language therapy. Their provision for next academic year will include an expanded range of content for the specialist sector.

## **Digital education platforms**

There's government-funded access to one of 2 free-to-use digital education platforms: Google for Education or Microsoft Office 365 Education. Schools can apply through [The Key for School Leaders](#). The Key also provides feature comparison and case studies on how schools are making the most of these platforms.

## **EdTech Demonstrator programme**

This is a network of schools and colleges for help and support on the effective use of tech for remote education that can be accessed through the [EdTech Demonstrator Programme](#).

## **Laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers**

Laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers were made available to local authorities and academy trusts to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children (specifically, care leavers, children and young people with a social worker, and disadvantaged year 10 pupils) between May to July 2020. Local authorities and academy trusts will continue to own these devices.

Following pupils returning to school in the autumn term, [laptops and tablets will be distributed directly to schools affected by a local coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). These will be available for disadvantaged pupils in years 3 to 11 and clinically extremely vulnerable children from all year groups unable to attend school. These devices will be owned by the school.

## **Wifi hotspots**

In addition to 4G routers provided to local authorities and academy trusts, DfE is working in partnership with BT to offer free access to BT wifi hotspots for disadvantaged pupils. We are also working with the major telecommunications companies to expand this offer and provide access to free additional data to families who rely on a mobile internet connection while the response to coronavirus (COVID-19) requires pupils to learn from home and access social care services online. More information on [increasing internet access for vulnerable and disadvantaged children](#) is available.

Support on delivering remote education safely is available from:

- [Safe remote learning](#), published by SWGfL
- [Online safety and safeguarding](#), published by LGfL, which covers safe remote learning
- The National Cyber Security Centre, which includes [which video conference service is right for you](#) and [using video conferencing services securely](#)
- [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), published by DfE
- annex C of [keeping children safe in education](#)

## **Annex A: Health and safety risk assessment**

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific**

All Trust academies need to assess and manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). This means school employers and leaders are required by law to think about the risks the staff and pupils face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising they cannot completely eliminate the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). School employers must therefore make sure that a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the measures needed to reduce the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) so far as is reasonably practicable and make the school COVID-secure. General information on how to make a workplace COVID-secure, including how to approach a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment, is provided by the [HSE guidance on working safely](#).

PACT academies supported by the Trust's designated Health and Safety consultants (ProAktive) have completed a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment by considering the measures in this guidance to inform their decisions and control measures. The risk assessment helps academy leaders and employers decide whether they have done everything they need to. Academy leaders have consulted with their employees on health and safety in good time and have provided training opportunities for all staff to be updated on procedures. All documentation has been shared with parents via academy websites.

### **Monitoring and review of risk controls**

It is important that leaders know how effective their risk controls are. Each academy undertakes ongoing quality assurance activities to ascertain where practice is good and where adjustments need to be made.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

All employers are required by law to protect their employees, and others, from harm. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum employers must do is:

1. Identify what could cause injury or illness in the organisation (hazards).
2. Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk).
3. Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk.

The DfE have set out what the existing DfE [Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools](#) guidance states about the roles and responsibilities for health and safety in schools. The Trusts appointed consultants support the CEO for the health and safety of school staff and pupils. The day-to-day running of the school is delegated to the head teacher and the school management team.



ProActive have been appointed as our competent person to ensure the Trust meets our health and safety duties. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of head teachers and employers in the guidance [The role of school leaders - who does what](#) and a simple guide to who the employer is in each type of school setting in its [FAQs section](#), under 'Who is accountable for health and safety within a school?'

### **Wider guidance on the risk assessment process**

Health and safety risk assessments identify measures to control risks during education and childcare setting activities. Health and safety law requires the school employer to assess risks and put in place measures to reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The law also requires employers to record details of risk assessments, the measures taken to reduce these risks and expected outcomes.

Academies need to record significant findings of the assessment by identifying:

- the hazards
- how people might be harmed by them
- what they have in place to control risk

Records of the assessment should be simple and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

Risk assessments consider what measures you need to protect the health and safety of all:

- staff
- pupils
- visitors
- contractors

Academies will need to think about the risks that may arise in the course of the day. This could include anything related to the premises or delivery of its curriculum or activities, whether on-site or in relation to activities offsite.

### **Consulting employees (general)**

Due to the ever-changing nature of COVID-19 the Trust has provided copies of academy risk assessments to BMBC. It has been agreed that the Alliance Board would make all educational risk assessments available for Unions if they wish to access them. Academies have also put risk assessments onto the school websites. Academies are seeking staff representatives to engage in health and safety dialogue. This is proving difficult during the pandemic. Leaders recognise that the full involvement of staff creates a

culture where relationships between employers and staff are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, staff should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer. Consultation does not remove the employer's right to manage. They will still make the final decision but talking to employees is an important part of successfully managing health and safety.

Academy leaders have continuously consulted with staff, updating them on new guidance. INSET training days were used to provide staff with valuable updates.

### **Resolving issues and raising concerns**

Employers and staff should always come together to resolve issues. As academies widen their opening, any concerns in respect of the controls should be raised initially with line management and trade union representatives and employers should recognise those concerns and give them proper consideration. If that does not resolve the issues, the concern can be raised with [HSE](#). Where the HSE identify employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. The actions the HSE can take include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

### **Approach to risk estimation and management**

Some types of control are more effective at reducing risks than others. Risk reduction measures should be assessed in order of priority as set out below; schools should not simply adopt the easiest control measure to implement. Controls should be practical to be implemented and, ideally, should be able to be maintained easily over time. It is critical to remember that it will only rarely be feasible to eliminate individual risks completely. The combination of controls introduced should aim to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable and prioritise structural, environmental interventions over individual level ones. This does not just mean considering risks of transmission, but also balancing these against risks to wider health and well-being and to education. Schools have the flexibility to respond to risks in a way that suits their circumstances whilst complying with their duties under health and safety legislation. Schools should work through the following steps to address their risks, considering for each risk whether there are measures in each step they can adopt before moving onto the next step:

1. Elimination: stop an activity that is not considered essential if there are risks attached.
2. Substitution: replace the activity with another that reduces the risk. Care is required to avoid introducing new hazards due to the substitution.
3. Engineering controls: design measures that help control or mitigate risk.
4. Administrative controls: identify and implement the procedures to improve safety (for example, markings on the floor, signage).
5. Having gone through this process, PPE should be used in circumstances where the guidance says it is required.

## **Annex B: education, health and care (EHC) plans**

### **SEND legislation**

From 1 May to 31 July, Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 was modified by a notice issued under the Coronavirus Act 2020. Local authorities and health commissioners were required to use their ‘reasonable endeavours’ to secure or arrange the specified special educational and health care provision within EHC plans. To ensure that children and young people receive the support they need to return to school, we will not be issuing further notices to modify this duty unless the evidence changes. Our focus is now on supporting local authorities, health commissioning bodies and education settings to restore full provision for all children and young people with EHC plans.

The temporary changes to the law on the timescales for EHC needs assessments and plans, which give local authorities and others who contribute to the relevant processes more flexibility in responding to the demands placed on them by coronavirus (COVID-19), will expire as planned on 25 September 2020. Further information on the temporary changes to the law on EHC needs assessment and plan processes is available at [changes to the law on education, health and care needs assessments and plans due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

DfE remain committed to listening to and working with local authorities, parent carer representatives and specialist SEND organisations, to ensure that the lifting of the temporary changes is managed in a way that supports the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Many children and young people will have found lockdown exceptionally difficult socially and emotionally. Settings should consider any challenging behaviours or social or emotional challenges arising as a response to the lockdown (following discussion with the parents or young person) and offer additional support and phased returns where needed, as a reasonable adjustment to support a disabled child to return successfully to school.

### **Risk assessments for children and young people with education, health and care plans (EHC)**

Following the partial closure of educational and childcare settings from March 2020, DfE asked local authorities to consider the needs of all children and young people with an education, health and care plan and to carry out a risk assessment. Local authorities were asked to work with schools and parents or carers, to determine whether children and young people would be able to have their needs met at home and be safer there than attending a school.

Risk assessments may prove useful now and over the autumn term, in identifying what additional support children and young people with education, health and care plans need to make a successful return to full education. Risk assessments may also prove useful if children and young people have to self-isolate, or if a local outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) requires a school to return to more limited attendance, or temporarily close.

Whether individual risk assessments are used to help plan for the autumn term or not, schools should, in the spirit of coproduction, contact parents and involve them in planning for their child’s return to their school from the start of the autumn term. They should also contact and involve young people over 16 who have education, health and



care plans. That might include visits to the school, social stories, and other approaches that specialist settings normally use to enable a child or young person with SEND, who has spent some time out of education, to return to full provision.