

Coronavirus New Phase 1 of the Recovery Strategy – School's FAQs

Which children will be entitled to go to school from 1st June 2020?

Since 23rd March 2020 schools have been open for [vulnerable children](#) and [children of critical workers](#). Where Critical workers could keep their children at home they were encouraged to do so. The new Government advice is that all eligible children should attend school and no longer stay at home.

In addition, schools are reopening for children in Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6.

Secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges are to offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 and year 12 students who are due to take key exams next year, alongside the full time provision they are offering to priority groups.

It is important to note that the plan to re-open schools is subject to other conditions being met and the timeline and plan may alter. Schools should make plans in line with the current guidance taking account of the reasonable practicable steps needed to enable a safe workplace. Any difficulties with re-opening should be discussed at the earliest stage with the Local Authority Director of Education.

The government advice has not considered the 3-tier school system in Worcestershire, as the transition for these schools will be for Year 4 and 8 children and not year 1 and 6. What should these schools do?

This has been raised with the LGA and we are awaiting further clarification on the matter. There is some concern that year 6 pupils returning in a middle school setting does not have the same benefit as it does in the context of a transition year group. The current government guidance still recommends year 6 pupils return to middle school and does not mention year 4 and year 8 transition pupils. It is possible for a school to decide to allow different year groups to return as the guidance is not legally binding and you may wish to make preparation for year 4 and year 8 pupils to return, however WME do recommend that no decisive action is taken on this without further national guidance.

What are the protocols and eligibility for testing?

Staff and pupils in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households. A negative test will enable children to get back to childcare or education. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting. Those who are clinically vulnerable, or are living with someone who is, should follow the governments [protective measures guidance](#).

Access to testing is already available to all essential workers. This includes anyone involved in education, childcare or social work – including both public and voluntary sector workers, as well as foster carers. See the [full list of essential workers](#). Education settings as employers can book tests

through an online digital portal. There is also an option for employees to book tests directly on the portal [here](#)

Is there any indication of staff working over the Summer Holiday period?

There does not appear to be any indication of this at the moment but the aspiration for the government is to bring all primary year groups back to school before the summer holidays. We will keep you updated on timelines and decisions taken on this through an update to this FAQ.

Which staff should be attending school?

Staff who have been classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions](#) have been advised to shield. It is not expected that people in this category will be attending school and they should continue to work at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) staff should work from home where possible, and refer to the detail in the protective measures' guidance

- a member of staff who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend school
- if a staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the [guidance on shielding](#), it is advised they only attend school if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, it is advised for those staff to not attend. They should be supported to work at home
- staff should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household
- protective measures will be put in place for staff and pupils, as far as is possible, to ensure that the risk of transmission is reduced

What changes have been made to the shielded and clinically vulnerable adults' advice?

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are advised not to work outside the home. We are strongly advising people, including education staff, who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been advised by their clinician or through a letter from the NHS) to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. Staff in this position are advised not to attend work. Read [COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#) for more advice.

Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions as set out in the [Staying at home and away from others \(social distancing\) guidance](#)) have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. Education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this, for example by asking staff to support remote education, carry out lesson planning or other roles which can be done from home. If clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available on-site roles, staying

2 metres away from others wherever possible, although the individual may choose to take on a role that does not allow for this distance if they prefer to do so. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

What are the suggested protected measures that the Government has suggested that schools should put in place?

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools, or colleges
- cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene - promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times)

When should Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) be used?

Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This does not apply to schools or other education settings. Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings. Further advice on use of PPE can be seen under the Health & Safety advice section.

How will the Staff workload and wellbeing be monitored?

Governing boards and senior leaders should be conscious of the wellbeing of all staff, including senior leaders themselves, and the need to implement flexible working practices in a way that promotes good work-life balance and supports teachers and leaders.

Workload should be carefully managed, and schools and colleges should assess whether staff who are having to stay at home due to health conditions are able to support remote education, while others focus on face-to-face provision. Senior leaders and boards will want to factor this into their resource and curriculum planning and consider where additional resource could be safely brought in if necessary.

How should staff manage class or group sizes

It is recognised that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children

back to early years and schools, this has been considered. Staff should therefore work through the hierarchy of measures set out above and including:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and this can be achieved by reducing transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.

For primary schools, classes should normally be split in half, with no more than 15 pupils per small group and one teacher (and, if needed, a teaching assistant). If there are any shortages of teachers, then teaching assistants can be allocated to lead a group, working under the direction of a teacher. Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in other year groups should also be split into small groups of no more than 15. Desks should be spaced as far apart as possible.

Planning & Organising

What planning guidance has been provided to be prepared for June 1st reopening of schools?

The full Government advice can be found [here](#) - Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings. The below table captures the planning and organising that staff will have to do and put in place prior to 1st June.

Planning and organising Step detail	Comment	Completed
Refresh your risk assessment and other health and safety advice for children, young people, and staff in light of recent government advice, identifying protective measures (such as the things listed below). Also ensure that all health and safety compliance checks have been undertaken before opening		
Organise small class groups, as described in the 'class or group sizes' section above		
Organise classrooms and other learning environments such as workshops and science labs for those groups, maintaining space between seats and desks where possible		

Refresh the timetable		
Decide which lessons or activities will be delivered		
Consider which lessons or classroom activities could take place outdoors		
Use the timetable and selection of classroom or other learning environment to reduce movement around the school or building		
Stagger assembly groups		
Stagger break times (including lunch), so that all children are not moving around the school at the same time		
Stagger drop-off and collection times		
for secondary schools and colleges, consider how best to supplement remote education with some face to face support for students		
Plan parents' drop-off and pick-up protocols that minimise adult to adult contact		
In addition, childcare settings or early years groups in school should:		
Consider how to keep small groups of children together throughout the day and to avoid larger groups of children mixing		
Consider how play equipment is used ensuring it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously		
Remove unnecessary items from classrooms and other learning environments where there is space to store it elsewhere		
Remove soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean (such as those with intricate parts)		
Consider how children and young people arrive at the education or childcare setting, and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport		

where possible (guidance will shortly be published on safe travel)		
Institutions offering residential provision will also need to consider the maximum number of children or young people they can safely accommodate in residences		

Further advice on the planning and preparing for the reopening of schools can be found [here](#)

Health & Safety Questions

What cleaning protocols have been put in place to minimise infection?

The national guidance on cleaning and hygiene for schools specifically can be found [here](#). This should be read in conjunction with [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#)

The ideas and protocols suggested by the national guidance has captured the activity during a school day and suggests measures schools can locally adopt.

What happens if someone becomes unwell in an educational or childcare setting?

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#).

PPE should 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). In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#).