

Wider Re-opening of Schools – FAQs

New Additions made 02/07/2020 – highlighted yellow

Question	Answer
Who should be attending school?	
<p>The secretary of state has said that the government don't intend to bring back all primary school children before the summer holiday, but also said that they 'would like to see schools who have the capacity bring back more pupils where possible before the summer holiday'.</p> <p>Does this mean that if I have the capacity to bring back children in other year groups I can?</p>	<p>Primary Schools</p> <p>The government planning guidance for primary schools on the 15th June states that;</p> <p><i>'There is no expectation on primary schools to welcome back additional children where they do not have capacity to do so.'</i></p> <p><i>'Primary schools should only welcome back additional children where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• they have already made provision available for children of critical workers, vulnerable children, and children in nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6 and have ensured as many as possible are able to attend (especially for those who would particularly benefit from being in school because of other disadvantage)</i><i>• they can accommodate more children while still following the approaches set out in the protective measures guidance and their own risk assessment</i><i>• they do not require additional funding, staff or classrooms to do so. If schools have access to space on other school sites (for example, local secondary schools, if that is feasible alongside the secondary offer) they may use this, taking care to ensure children stay in allocated groups. However, other community buildings (such as village halls) should not be used to expand capacity this term, while they remain closed in line with the government's roadmap'</i><p><i>'Where schools have capacity, they may choose to welcome back additional pupils. It is up to schools to decide which pupils to prioritise, based on their knowledge of their children and communities. They may choose to welcome back pupils in another year group.'</i></p><p>On this basis, our advice at this time, would be that primary schools can now consider bringing back further year groups before the end of the summer term, only if they can meet the criteria above and continue to follow the rest of the guidance. For example, moving staff between bubbles to enable other year groups to return should not be considered nor should moving to part-time provision for priority groups and year groups in order to invite back pupils in other year groups. We would also encourage schools to ensure that, where possible, they consider some 'over-staffing' before considering welcoming back further year groups in order to be able to react to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. a member of staff taking ill).</p>

Secondary Schools

The government guidance from secondary schools on the 15th June states that;

'We are unable to welcome back more children to secondary school at this time, beyond the face-to-face support schools can now offer year 10 and 12 pupils, and provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. We are not asking secondary schools with capacity to invite further year groups to return this term.

We know that secondary schools are keen to invite pupils in other year groups in for a face-to-face meeting before the end of this term, where it would be beneficial. As long as this happens in line with this and wider protective measures guidance, and guidance on the numbers of pupils permitted on-site at any one time, we would encourage this where possible. This time can be used to check-in on pupils, and ensure they are supported before a return to school from September or moving into employment or the next stage of education.'

What should we do if we have more vulnerable learners and children of key workers who want places than we can safely accommodate? We have not yet opened more widely to other groups.

The government guidance states that that these two groups continue to have priority. If schools are intending to bring back pupils from other year groups but have not yet done so, schools should first reconsider this in order to accommodate their vulnerable learners and children of key workers.

If schools still have demand that outstrips capacity, they should then consider a priority system for children of key workers in order to accommodate as many pupils as they feel that they able to do safely. We would recommend prioritising those children of key workers that have no alternative childcare provision, rather than prioritising particular types of key workers.

We would strongly recommend that all vulnerable learners are all offered places as a first priority.

We had accommodated all the vulnerable children and children of key workers who wanted places before opening up more widely. We have since re-opened more widely and are full. We have some children who are either in our vulnerable category or children of key workers whose parents didn't originally want places, but now do. We can't accommodate them all. What should we do?

We recognise that schools will be doing all they can to accommodate priority groups, whilst opening up the school to further cohorts and liaising with parents where there is a change in circumstance.

However, it is not reasonable for schools to be asked to accommodate additional children at very short notice when parents have already been consulted and not needed/wanted the provision but later have a change in circumstance that means they would now need/like to access this provision. In order to make this manageable for schools, we are recommending that schools who are full, inform parents that they are implementing a two-week notice period for any changes in circumstance. We believe this is a reasonable time-frame in order to ensure that the schools have the time needed to make alternative arrangements or inform other parents and children whose eligibility to attend may be impacted upon.

	<p>Vulnerable children and children of key workers continue to be the first priority, therefore in the two-week notice period we are recommending, schools will have to consider how they can accommodate additional children in these groups.</p> <p>Alternative arrangements that schools may wish to consider include exploring local solutions (for example, asking if another primary school locally can offer space or exploring if there is a secondary school nearby that can offer some classroom space). Schools may have to withdraw some provision for other year groups if there are no alternatives in order to accommodate these priority groups.</p>
<p>We asked all our parents in nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 if they wanted a place. Once we had accommodated all those that wanted a space, we began to offer places to other year groups. We've since had parents in year 6 ask if they can change their mind – can they?</p>	<p>Where a parent of a child in nursery, reception, Year 1 or Year 6 has been consulted and has confirmed that they do not want to accept their place but later changes their mind, schools are not obliged to accommodate them this term if they are full.</p> <p>The government guidance states:</p> <p><i>'When deciding how to welcome additional pupils back before the summer, schools should consider how they will communicate to parents, including those with children in reception, year 1 or 6 who have not yet taken up their offer of a place. Schools should ascertain if those parents want to take up the offer, making it clear that if they indicate that they do not, or do not respond, schools may offer this capacity to another pupil in which case they won't subsequently be able to take up a place this term. They should ensure they are still able to accommodate vulnerable children and children of critical workers.'</i></p>
<p>Now that there are more shops opening, I have more parents who are saying that they are a now a key worker when they weren't before. Has the key worker definition changed?</p>	<p>The key worker definition has not changed, however those that had previously been identified as key workers are now being encouraged to send their children to school, regardless of if they can be safely looked after at home. The government states;</p> <p><i>'We strongly encourage children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend, as requested by their school or college, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions).'</i></p> <p>As more shops, services and amenities open back up requests for places may go up, schools may find it helpful to remind parents that key workers continue to be only those working in the shops or amenities as identified as critical in the government guidance.</p>

Social distancing	
<p>If we have organised small ‘bubbles’, do we still need to maintain the 2 metre social distancing rule?</p>	<p>The government guidance for parents from the 11th June states;</p> <p><i>‘We know 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, we are taking this into account. Schools should, therefore, work through the hierarchy of controls to reduce the risk of transmission – crucially minimising contact and mixing by keeping children and staff in small consistent groups and keeping groups away from each other.’</i></p> <p>Or advice would echo that of the government guidance.</p>
<p>What is classed as a rota? We can open up more widely by having one year group in one day and another the next. Is this a rota?</p>	<p>The government have not clarified their definition of a rota. However, the use of rotas has been discouraged from a safety perspective and also to ensure those children in priority groups or year groups have consistency.</p> <p>In order to minimise risk, staff should not routinely be rotated between bubbles as this would increase the risk of cross-contamination (except in secondary schools where it is acknowledged that this can happen if required in order to provide pupils with a subject specialist teacher). Schools should also not consider having two different cohorts of children in the same space on the same day as this would also increase the risk of cross-contamination unless they can ensure that this can be done with no additional risk.</p> <p>In order to offer consistency to priority groups and year groups as set out in the government guidance, schools should be wary of considering reducing the offer to these children in order to bring back pupils from other year groups.</p> <p>However, if schools are able to offer opportunities for other year groups to return on a part-time basis, we do not consider this a ‘rota’, but rather fitting in with the government’s guidance for some face-to-face meetings that they are encouraging this term.</p> <p>For primary schools this is;</p> <p><i>‘We know that many primary schools are keen to invite in pupils who are not returning to school at this time for face-to-face meetings, before the end of term. This time can be used to check-in on pupils, and ensure they are supported before a planned return to school from September. Where this happens, this contact needs to be in line with the current guidance on protective measures.’</i></p> <p>For secondary schools this is:</p> <p><i>‘We know that secondary schools are keen to invite pupils in other year groups in for a face-to-face meeting before the end of this term, where it would be beneficial. As long as this happens in line with this and wider protective measures guidance, and guidance on the numbers of pupils permitted on-site at any one time, we would encourage this where possible. This time can be used to check-in on pupils, and ensure they are</i></p>

	<i>supported before a return to school from September or moving into employment or the next stage of education.'</i>
We have some key worker 'bubbles' that are not full yet. We now have parents who are key workers who want to return their children to us. Can we add to our existing bubble?	<p>The purpose of the bubble is to minimise risk to staff and pupils so children should not be moved between bubbles.</p> <p>However, schools may have bubbles that are not full and in this case they can add to an existing bubble up to the maximum that they have deemed safe in their risk assessment.</p>
Do we need to maintain consistent groupings in secondary schools?	<p>The government guidance clarifies that one of the reasons that they are limiting the proportion of secondary students in school at any one time is because <i>'they are also typically educated in mixed groups for their studies and the scientific advice indicates we currently need to minimise mixing between groups'</i>.</p> <p>We would advise schools to minimise the mixing of groups wherever possible and ensure stringent social distancing and effective cleaning of spaces before and after any mixing of groups takes place.</p>
We would like to plan a short outdoor leavers' event with our children and their parents/carers. We have plans in place to socially distance family groups and made it clear that the school premises are not available for use e.g. toilets, drinks etc. Are we allowed to do this?	<p>The government guidance has stated that no gatherings of larger than 30 will be allowed, even after lockdown eases on the 4th July. Under the present circumstances and restrictions, we cannot support any leavers' events that would exceed this number, regardless of any social distancing measures that the school is able to put in place.</p> <p>Should any accidents or incidents occur and emergency services be called to assist they would have a duty to report a gathering not compliant with governmental guidance.</p> <p>Our advice at the time is to consider a virtual leavers' event and arrange for children to return to school at a later date when rules have been relaxed further.</p>
Staffing	
Should I be asking staff who are shielding to provide documentation to prove that they are in the clinically extremely vulnerable category?	Schools should refer to our 'Headteacher Guidance on Staff with Special Circumstances - Updated 18th May 2020' for detailed information on all matters relating to staff with special circumstances
Transport	
Will pupils and drivers be expected to wear face masks on home to school transport?	<p>From 15th June 2020 it is the law that you must wear a face covering when travelling in England on public transport including a bus, coach, tram or train. Where travel with children is necessary, such as to an education setting, consider whether children could walk or cycle, accompanied by a responsible adult or carer, where appropriate. The law requiring passengers to wear face coverings does not apply to children under the age of 11. Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3, for safety.</p> <p>Children, even if they are over 11, are not required to wear face coverings on school transport. School transport is that provided by local authorities, academy trusts or schools for the specific purpose of transporting children to and from their home and school.</p>

The Department for Transport's guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

PPE	
What do I do if I have a member of staff or a pupil who say that they will only attend if they are allowed to wear a face mask?	<p>We are recommending that face coverings are not routinely worn in school in line with government guidance.</p> <p>The wearing of face coverings is not deemed necessary in school as other preventive measures, such as social distancing and the creation of fixed groupings (i.e. bubbles/pods) are recommended instead. The wearing of a face covering in a school could lead to an increased risk of transmission if children are not effectively trained in how to use the face covering safely and there could be a further risk of cross-contamination if say a covering is left on a desk or dropped on the floor if it needs to be removed at any time e.g. to eat or get a drink.</p>
Positive COVID-19 Cases	
Can you remind me what we should do if a pupil or member of staff is suspected of having or indeed tests positive for having COVID-19	You should follow the latest 'Test and Trace' Flowchart. A link to the chart is here .
Preparing for a New School	
How can we provide support children who will be moving to a new school when schools return?	<p>Children and parents may rightly be concerned about moving to a new school at such a difficult time and we are producing guidance on appropriate strategies and aspects to consider when preparing children to move to a new school or leaving your own school or setting.</p> <p>Until our guidance is complete, we are asking all schools to continue to follow the government's guidance on the wider re-opening of schools. When schools are making plans we ask them to ensure that they familiarise themselves not only with the guidance relevant to their own intake of children but also any guidance that may be different for their feeder schools/settings, particularly where there are differences. School should ensure that there is good communication between all parties so any issues or concerns can be addressed before plans are rolled out.</p>
Summer holidays	
We do not want to open over the summer. What is the LA's response to this? We have parents enquiring about this and want to confirm that we aren't planning to offer anything.	Schools are under no obligation to have organised any clubs or activities for the summer holidays. Teachers are not expected to deliver summer programmes and the prime minister has confirmed that schools will not be asked to offer this.
Although the government stated that schools will not be open over the summer, including for key workers, but we want to offer this to our community. Are we allowed to do this?	We are awaiting further guidance from the government on summer provision and will provide further advice once this has been made available.
My SEA has been asking questions about summer provision in my area. Is this a sign that we might be asked to volunteer to offer provision?	No, we are carrying out a scoping exercise to collate potential summer provision within and around North Yorkshire until the government announce their plans for 'summer clubs'.