

FAQs regarding preparing for wider opening from 1st June 2020

Please refer to the latest guidance issued by the DfE. Information provided below is based on guidance at the date of preparation and further Government guidance may have been issued subsequently.

The DfE published a “Planning guide for early years and childcare settings” on 24th May 2020 to be used by settings to inform plans to open more widely. Every setting is different and it is not a requirement to use all or parts of the toolkit. Settings may use their professional judgement, and choose to follow alternative approaches depending on their particular circumstances, but at all times will need to take account of relevant public health guidance to maximise safety for those in the environment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings>

The planning guide should be read in conjunction with the following guidance:

- [Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June](#)
- [Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)
- [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) coronavirus disapplications](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children’s social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment](#)

The DfE released “Planning guide for primary schools” is this relevant to early years settings?

The government released this document on 14th May for those responsible for mainstream primary schools. The DfE released “Planning guide for early years and childcare settings” on 24th May. This was distributed to all early years and childcare settings by email through the Families Information Service (FIS).

What was the latest guidance regarding childminders opening for non-priority group children?

The government issued new clarification on 13th May regarding childminders being able to open for children of one household even if they do not fall into the priority groups of being either a vulnerable child or a child of a critical key worker.

“The Government has amended its guidance to clarify that paid childcare can be provided to the children of one household in any circumstance. This would include nannies, for example, and childminders may also choose to provide childcare on this basis if not already providing care for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. This should enable more working parents to return to work. It is already the case that registered childminders and nurseries can look after key worker and vulnerable children.”

Can a child attend more than one setting?

Section 7 in the Planning Guide “Identify the likely numbers of children returning to the setting” states ***To minimise contact between groups of children and staff, children should attend just one setting wherever possible and parents and carers should be encouraged to minimise as far as possible the number of education and childcare settings their child attends. Childminding settings should consider how they can work with parents and carers to agree how best to manage any necessary journeys, for example pick-ups and drop-offs at schools, to reduce the need for a provider to travel with groups of children.***

As part of each individual setting’s risk assessment, consideration should be given to when children attend more than one setting. Where possible, parents should be encouraged to minimise as much as possible the number of childcare settings their child attends. Where possible children should attend one setting unless it is essential that they attend different settings to accommodate parent or carer working patterns or because it is essential for their health and wellbeing.

You may wish to consider which other setting(s) the child attends and liaising with them to ensure that clear communication about possible outbreaks of Coronavirus are discussed immediately. You should risk assess in relation to current government guidance.

Government guidance states: *in childcare settings, providers will be asked to welcome back all children below statutory school age from the week commencing 1 June 2020. Demand for childcare is likely to be lower than usual at first, and existing space requirements and staff to child ratios for these age groups should allow for small group working. Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept at a safe distance apart, we expect practitioners to exercise judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained. In some cases, it may be necessary for providers to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised. From 1 June 2020, childminders can look after children of all ages, in line with usual limits on the number of children they can care for.*

If necessary, settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then, to support children’s early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children as follows:-

Early years settings – 3 and 4 year olds followed by younger age groups.

Can childminders do school pick ups and drop offs?

Childminder settings should consider how they can work with parents to agree how best to manage any necessary journeys, for example pick-ups and drop-offs at schools, to reduce the need for a provider to travel with groups of children.

How can you implement social distancing with very young children?

The government guidance states *“We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2m apart from each other and staff, For preschool children in early years settings, the staff to child ratios within Early Years Foundation Stage continue to apply, and we recommend using these to group children. Where settings can keep children and young people in those small groups 2m away from each other, they should do so.”*

It is recognised that the practicalities of this can be very difficult, particularly for those settings with early years and primary age children. Stopping the spread of coronavirus has to continue to be a top priority. The Government released the guidance document [implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings](#) which provides advice to support staff working in schools and other childcare settings with measures that can be implemented to help limit the risk of the virus entering and spreading within the setting.

In order to continue to manage and reduce the risks it is important to consider what additional measures could be taken and these should be identified and your risk assessment reviewed and amended accordingly. Open windows where possible to allow fresh air to circulate in the rooms you are in.

Will NYCC supply any templates for risk assessments?

NYCC will provide a template for completing a risk assessment. Government guidance states “Every setting should carry out a risk assessment before opening” and “Each setting’s circumstances will be slightly different” including consulting staff. Following government guidance, each individual setting should risk assess their own individual setting based on their unique situation and circumstances. Most settings already have their own risk assessments in place which they should adapt and refresh in light of government advice and identifying protective measures (using government guidance). All settings should ensure all health and safety compliance checks have been undertaken before opening.

Will NYCC be providing further advice?

NYCC follows the latest guidance as issued by the Government. The LA has provided a range of materials to support settings prepare for wider opening. However, settings should take account their own individual circumstances and the needs of their community.

How many children do you advise we should we have in each room?

Please refer to the “Class or group sizes” section in the guidance and sections 2 and 8 in the “Planning guide for early years and childcare settings” guidance. Early years settings should follow EYFS ratios as stated in the statutory framework and in the EYFS: coronavirus disapplications guidance. Please take into account your own situation, the size and layout of the building, access to outdoors, access to toilets and hand washing facilities as well as staffing levels and the needs of individual children. Where possible, children should be kept in small groups (“bubbles” or “cohorts”) of 8 children. Providers are expected to ensure that there are no more

than 16 children in a group at a time. The key aim is to keep groups small and keep groups consistent to avoid contamination.

Where children attend only one or two days a week, they should be allocated into a group (or bubble) for the days that they attend which should be consistent with the days they attend where possible.

If children attend different sessions, how are same groups to be managed?

Providers should anticipate for this as part of the risk assessment and in accordance with government guidance. Where possible providers should endeavour to ensure that children remain within consistent groups.

Is there any further Early Years specific guidance coming out soon?

The government continues to issue updates and guidance relating to the Coronavirus situation which relates to education and all childcare settings. Guidance will be shared by Families Information Service when available. Providers should sign up to the .Gov website to receive guidance directly to their inbox.

There is a staff member who is pregnant, should they be working?

The NHS advice provides information about categories of vulnerable people <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Refer to Section 3 of the “Planning guide for early years and childcare settings – Reviewing your staff for availability to work in the setting (if applicable)”.

Providers would need to risk assess based on identifying the risks and put in place protective measures based. Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. This includes pregnant women.

Can someone return to work if they are classed at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)?

Refer to Section 3 of the guidance as above. If you or a member of staff has received a letter from the NHS advising that you/they are classed as high risk, they should not be leaving their own home until it is safe to do so (also known as shielding) and are advised not to attend the setting.

I am trying to find a set of PPE as recommended in the guidance.

Refer to sections 2 and 4 in the “Planning guide for early years and childcare settings”. Providers should source their own PPE equipment from their usual supply in order to provide intimate care as per their usual practice. Government guidance states that wearing a face covering or face mask is not recommended. Refer to government guidance on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

Staff have asked that the settings provides masks, aprons and gloves. Is this required?

See above. The guidance states that it is not necessary for staff to wear masks, gloves and aprons unless they are carrying out activities that would usually require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) or if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs supervision until they can return home. A facemask should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from a child who is symptomatic and awaiting collection and, if contact is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a facemask should be worn.

Does the guidance relate to Ofsted registered Out of Schools Clubs?

Yes, the Out of School Alliance has had confirmation from the DfE that out of school clubs are included in the types of childcare setting that can open from 1 June, despite only early years settings being mentioned in the initial guidance documents. More guidance on re-opening is expected from the DfE shortly, and should include clarification about what types of childcare are included. For further information <https://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/coronavirus-update>

We normally run breakfast and after school clubs as part of our ‘wrap-around’ provision. Are we required to re-start them?

Guidance in the Planning Guidance for primary schools states you are not required to do so. You should only run such provision if you are able to keep children within the groups they are in during the day or safely distanced.

[\[Planning Guide for primary schools - FAQs\]](#)

I am a NYCC government funded provider and have a query early years government funding, who should I contact?

If your query is about early years government funding, please contact the Early Years Funding team at eyft@northyorks.gov.uk

Am I expected to continue to support children who do not attend the setting after I re-open?

Yes, sections 9 and 10 in the “Planning guide for early years and childcare settings” states the arrangements providers should put in place for supporting children who have been absent from the setting or who are still absent from the setting. This includes safeguarding vulnerable and disadvantaged children, children with SEND and supporting the learning of children at home who are not attending the setting.

I have a specific question relating to Coronavirus who should I contact?

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children’s social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows: Phone: 0800 046 8687
Opening hours: 8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday
10am to 4pm – Saturday and Sunday

Please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the helpline.

Is the guidance on handwashing still in place?

Yes, It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside) but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides. The latest guidance and video on hand washing can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

What if parents do not observe social distancing outside the provision?

As part of the risk assessment, consideration should be made to the possibility of staggering the start and end times for children. Clear communication, including if possible or appropriate through signage, to all parents reminding them of the government requirement to observe social distancing. Refer to section 6 of the “Planning for early years and childcare settings” regarding communicating with parents about your plans for wider opening and also what your expectations are that parents must or must not do.

Can providers direct staff to return to work?

It is natural that some staff will be worried about coming back into work even if the risks for them are low. You will know your staff best and will be in the best position to work out how to proceed in individual cases, in some circumstances more reassurance, understanding and discussion may be required. It is always best, if at all possible, to work out a sensible way forward in individual cases that acknowledges any specific anxieties but which also enables the setting’s responsibilities to be effectively carried out.

Other useful resources to support re-opening:

FAQs PACEY have put together can be found at <https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/coronavirus/faqs-coronavirus/>

FAQs the NDNA have put together can be found at https://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Knowledge_Hub/Coronavirus_for_nurseries_early_years.aspx

FAQs the Early Years Alliance have put together can be found at <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/nurseries-childminders-reopen-coronavirus-lockdown>

Sign up to the Foundation Years website for vodcasts and latest information from the DfE at www.foundationyears.org.uk

Information from the Out of School Alliance can be found at <https://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/coronavirus-update>

Updated 27/5/2020

You may find it helpful to access a [free webinar](#) organised by Family which includes a talk from a Danish practitioner who shares her nursery's experience of reopening.

<https://family.co/blog/covid-19/denmark-reopening-child-care-corona/>

https://family.co/blog/covid-19/reopening-child-care-how-to-get-everyone-on-board/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ES%20Email%20%5BUK%5D%3A%20Weekly&utm_content=Module%201&autopilot_id=helen.smith%40northyorks.gov.uk

27/05/2020