

FAQ – for schools during the National Lockdown

Attendance	
<p>Which pupils are expected to be in school?</p>	<p>During the period of national lockdown, schools and colleges should only allow vulnerable children and the children of critical workers to attend (recognising that the characteristics of the cohorts in special schools and alternative provision will mean these settings continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate). All other pupils and students should not attend and should learn remotely until February half term.</p> <p>Early years provision should continue to remain open and should continue to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetable hours. This includes early years registered nurseries and childminders, maintained nursery schools, as well as nursery classes in schools and other pre-reception provision on school sites. Only vulnerable children and children of critical workers should attend on-site reception classes.</p> <p>Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.</p> <p>Schools should speak to parents and carers to identify who needs to go to school. If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip.</p> <p>Every school will have a different number of children of critical workers who need to attend. It is important that on-site provision is provided for these pupils, and there is no limit to numbers of these pupils who may attend and schools should not limit attendance of these groups. This is because we are reducing overall social contact across areas and the country rather than individually by each institution.</p> <p>Schools should strongly encourage parents/carers of vulnerable children and young people to take up their place within school.</p> <p>The attendance of vulnerable children will be monitored by the Local Authority and The Department for Education.</p>
<p>What if a school doesn't have enough staff for Critical Worker / Vulnerable pupils what do they do? Do they make a priority list and bring in those they can?</p>	<p>Schools must accommodate all Critical Worker and vulnerable pupils who wish to attend and meet the criteria.</p> <p>Schools will already have a risk assessment in place to allow them to operate safely at full capacity (this will have been used for the Autumn term).</p> <p>During this lockdown there is no current guidance that implies the requirement to revert back to maximum class sizes of 15 like March 2020.</p> <p>Staff absences (Covid or otherwise) should be managed in the usual way.</p>
<p>Should school-based nurseries remain closed or reopen? And what about maintained nursery schools?</p>	<p>All early years settings can open for all children. The guidance provides flexibility where for logistical or operational reasons a school-based nursery in a primary school setting needs to follow the primary school arrangements but we would encourage them to open like other EY providers. If any restrictions are deemed</p>

	<p>necessary these should be for a limited period of time with nurseries reopening for all children as soon as possible.</p> <p>Maintained nursery schools should follow the early years guidance and remain open for all children. We understand a number of maintained nursery schools will have been open throughout December and EY provision should continue as normal in January.</p>
<p>What if I have a member of staff who is clinically extremely vulnerable and is shielding?</p>	<p>Clinically extremely vulnerable staff are advised that they should not attend the workplace. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are those identified through a letter from the NHS or a specialist doctor That member of staff should work from home, if this is a teacher they could carry out their role remotely.</p> <p>Schools may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly. Managers should discuss and agree any changes to staff roles with individuals. If schools are short on staff in school to supervise / teach students agency staff and HLTAs etc. can be utilised.</p> <p>Clinically vulnerable staff can continue to attend school where it is not possible to work from home. While in school they should follow the sector-specific measures in this document to minimise the risks of transmission.</p> <p>For specific advice around pregnant staff</p> <p>If you need support access HR services: https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19-human-resources If you require further assistance: NYHR@northyorks.gov.uk</p>
<p>Can schools use volunteers?</p>	<p>Volunteers may be used to support the work of the school, as would usually be the case. It is important that they are properly supported and given appropriate roles. Where schools are using volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in the volunteer section in part 3 of keeping children safe in education.</p> <p>Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Mixing of volunteers across groups should be kept to a minimum, and they should remain 2 metres from pupils and staff where possible.</p>
<p>What if staff have said they will not attend due to the Section 44 right?</p>	<p>The national lockdown means that where numbers of staff and pupils in schools are reduced, the H&S concerns of staff are likely to have diminished.</p> <p>Where employees are still raising concerns under Section 44, we would encourage Headteachers to discuss them an individual basis with their employees. The letter template issued by unions originally stated that staff would work with both vulnerable and CW pupils.</p>
<p>What if a vulnerable child does not attend?</p>	<p>Schools should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests • work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to

	<p>encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate</p> <p>Where schools grant a leave of absence to a vulnerable child or young person they should still speak to parents and carers, and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions should focus on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.</p>
Do vulnerable / Critical Worker pupils have to attend?	<p>All pupils who are not eligible to be in school should be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice.</p> <p>As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know. The DfE expects schools to grant applications for leave of absence given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as Code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.</p> <p>Schools should not plan for rotas or allow children other than those who are vulnerable or whose parent or carer is a critical worker to attend on-site, even if the school believes it can accommodate more children safely.</p> <p>Reminder: From Monday 11 January 2021 schools need to complete the DfE daily attendance return. This is vital as this information will also be used to calculate the number of Lateral Flow Tests needed for the school moving forward.</p>
How do we get access to digital devices for our pupils?	<p>These are being made available directly to schools through the DfE. All secondary schools have been invited to order through the Get help with technology service. They will invite primary schools to order over the coming weeks, starting with the most disadvantaged areas in England. The DfE will contact each school as soon as they can order. More information - https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/devices/how-to-order.</p>
Operating hours	<p>We expect schools to operate for their normal hours. In addition, schools should continue to offer wraparound provision, such as breakfast and afterschool clubs, for those children eligible to attend school. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children of critical workers, where it is reasonably necessary to enable their parents or carers to go to work, search for work, attend education or training, or attend a medical appointment • vulnerable children and young people <p>Resuming this provision is important to ensure that parents and carers who are critical workers can continue to work, as well as to provide enriching activities for vulnerable children that improve their wellbeing or support their education.</p> <p>Schools should also work closely with any external wraparound providers which these pupils may use, to ensure as far as</p>

	<p>possible, children can be kept in a group with other children from the same bubble they are in during the school day. However, where it is not possible, or it is impractical to group children in the same bubbles as they are in during the school day schools and external providers may need to group children with others from outside their school day bubble or from a different school, where children from multiple schools are attending provision. If schools or external providers need to do this, they should seek to keep children in small, consistent groups with the same children each time, as far as this is possible.</p> <p>Vulnerable children can continue to access wraparound childcare as normal; and children of critical workers can continue to access these settings where it is reasonably necessary to enable their parents / carers to work, search for work, to undertake training or education, or to attend a medical appointment or address a medical need.</p>
<p>What is a Head teacher is worried about the safety of pupils or staff in school.</p>	<p>Limiting attendance does not suggest that schools and colleges have become significantly less safe for young people. Instead limiting attendance is about supporting the reduction of the overall number of social contacts in our communities. We have resisted restrictions on attendance at schools since the first lockdown but, in the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce all our social contacts wherever possible.</p> <p>If there are concerns around supporting the needs of a specific student with SEND during the lockdown (both attending school and learning remotely) please contact the SEND Hub. If the child is already known to them, as they will be able to support with individual cases.</p>
<p>What are the plans for testing?</p>	<p>The coronavirus (COVID-19) testing programme should be continued to enable weekly testing for staff and daily close contact testing for those staff and pupils attending secondary schools and colleges. This programme also allows schools and colleges to test pupils on return.</p> <p>The testing in primaries will be rolled out at such a time home testing is available. Weekly testing for staff will roll out sometime after Jan, although there is no confirmed date at the moment.</p>
<p>What is the approach for the issuing of Free Schools Meals?</p>	<p>During the period of national lockdown, schools should continue to provide meal options for all pupils who are in school. Meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils and pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are in school.</p> <p>Schools should also continue to provide free school meal support to pupils who are eligible for benefits related free school meals and who are not attending school. Extra funding will be provided to support schools to provide food parcels or meals to eligible children.</p> <p>Where schools cannot offer food parcels or use local solutions, the DfE will ensure a national voucher scheme is in place so that every eligible child can access free school meals while their school remains closed, this will reopen shortly. Further Guidance on FSM (food parcels)</p>

	<p>Schools are strongly encouraged to work with their school catering team or food supplier to adopt a food parcel first approach. Vouchers will only be available through the national voucher scheme from the point it re-opens, however, any support provided since 4 January 2021 through food parcels or locally arranged vouchers can be claimed back from DfE.</p> <p>We would encourage schools to continue working with their school catering team or food supplier to provide food parcels for the duration of the national lockdown where this remains feasible.</p>
What are the expectations of schools in relation to Remote Education	<p>Click on the link for the latest remote education expectations guidance from the DfE.</p> <p>NYCC will shortly circulate a Remote Learning Exemplar Policy for schools to adapt if they would like.</p>
How do you contact the DfE regarding Covid related queries?	<p>The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) is available to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.</p> <p>Phone: 0800 046 8687</p>
Safeguarding	<p>It is expected that schools and colleges will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible, and where this is the case there are two options to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school or college can be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home but must be available to come onto site if needed • sharing trained DSLs (or deputies) with other schools or colleges (to be available to be contacted via phone, online video or come onto site if needed) <p>Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school and college staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them. The trained DSL (or deputy) must also be available to come on site if the need arises.</p>
School Uniform	<p>Some schools may feel it is appropriate to relax their uniform policy whilst smaller groups of pupils are attending school and other are learning remotely. This is a decision for school leaders.</p>