

Summary of the main points from Government Guidance for informing parents about returning to school.

The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased since schools restricted their opening to most pupils in March. The NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and we understand more about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments.

The scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults of becoming severely ill. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults. However, there will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community.

To manage the risks, things will be a bit different when children and young people return to education. We have asked nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to put in place a range of protective measures to help reduce the risks.

Your child's nursery, childminder, school or college will be able to give you more information about the changes they have made.

Attendance at school

It is vital that children and young people return to school, for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School attendance will be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. This means that it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child (if they are of compulsory school age) to school regularly.

Self-isolation and shielding

A small number of children and young people may be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they:

- are self-isolating
- have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

If your child is unable to attend school for these reasons, ask your school what support they can provide for remote education.

Shielding advice for all adults and children was paused from 1 August. This means that children and young people can return to school or college if they:

- are on the shielded patient list
- have family members who are shielding

Actions that nurseries and schools will take

We have asked nurseries and schools to:

- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school, in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days by their school (based on advice from their local health protection teams) if they have been in close, face to face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus
- ensure that everyone cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - this should be done for 20 seconds with soap and running water or hand sanitiser
- promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach, to ensure good respiratory hygiene
- enhance cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often

Actions you can take

Do not send your child to their school if:

- they are showing [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#)
- someone in their household is showing symptoms

[Arrange a test](#) if you or your child develops symptoms. Inform your nursery or school of the results.

If the test is positive, follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

It is really important that you help nurseries and schools and to implement these actions by following the advice set out here and wider public health advice and guidance.

Curriculum

We have set out what we expect schools to teach when pupils return in the autumn. Schools will provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects.

There may need to be changes to some subjects, such as PE and music, so that schools can teach these subjects as safely as possible.

Schools will also make plans for providing remote education if needed. This means that if your child needs to stay at home, due to shielding or self-isolation, their school will support them to continue learning.

We have already announced a catch up package worth £1 billion to ensure that schools have the resources they need to help pupils make up for lost teaching time, with extra support for those who need it most.

Mental health and wellbeing

Nurseries and schools will understand that some children may be experiencing feelings such as anxiety, stress or low mood as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

There are online resources available to help you and your child with mental health, including:

- [MindEd](#), a free educational resource from Health Education England on children and young people's mental health
- [Rise Above](#), which aims to build resilience and support good mental health in young people aged 10 to 16
- [Every Mind Matters](#), which includes an online tool and email journey to support everyone to feel more confident in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing
- [Bereavement UK](#) and the [Childhood Bereavement Network](#), provide information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff

It is also vital to report any safeguarding concerns you have about any child. Contact the [NSPCC helpline](#) or [Barnardo's support service](#).

Education, health and care (EHC) plans

During the outbreak, we needed to make some of the specified special education and health care provision within EHC plans more flexible.

This flexibility has now ended, which means that if your child has an EHC plan they should receive the support they need as usual when they return to school.

Local outbreaks

Nurseries and schools will contact their local health protection team if they:

- have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) among pupils or staff within 14 days
- see an increase in children or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The local health protection team will advise what action is required. Usually, closure will not be necessary, but some groups may need to self-isolate.

If an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched. They will test everyone 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.

If your local area sees a spike in infection rates that results in localised community spread, the government will decide what actions need to be taken.

Your child's school should provide remote education if:

- groups of pupils need to self-isolate
- a larger restriction of attendance at school or college is needed

