



Department
for Education

Out-of-school settings: COVID-19 guidance for parents and carers

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Changes to the previous version

Changes to the guidance since its 5 January 2022 publication include:

- update to [tracing close contacts and isolation section](#) to clarify the advice for under 5s
- update to [face coverings section](#) to reflect removal of recommendation to wear face coverings in classrooms and communal areas
- update to [mandatory certification section](#) to reflect that this is no longer in place, as of 27 January
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Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for parents and carers of children (those who were under the age of 18 on 31 August 2021) who attend:

- wraparound childcare - for example, breakfast and after-school clubs
- holiday clubs
- tuition
- community activities

This guidance explains steps parents can take to help minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 when using these settings for their children.

Who can attend wraparound childcare and out-of-school settings

Out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare providers can accept all children, without restriction on the reasons for which they may attend.

Out-of-school settings include:

- tuition and learning centres
- extra-curricular clubs - for example, sports, dance, art and drama clubs
- uniformed youth organisations - for example, Scouts, Guides and cadet forces
- supplementary schools
- private language schools
- religious settings offering education - for example, madrassahs, yeshivas and Sunday schools

Providers should follow the [COVID-19: Actions for Out-of-school Settings guidance](#).

Vaccinations

We recommend all adults and eligible children and young people take up the offer of a vaccine.

You can find out more about the in-school vaccination programme in the [COVID-19 vaccination programme for young people: guidance for parents](#).

Children with health concerns

Following expert clinical advice and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, people previously considered to be particularly vulnerable, clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), and high or higher-risk are not being advised to shield again. Children and young people who were previously identified as being in one of these groups, are advised to continue to follow the guidance contained in [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#).

Children and young people previously considered CEV may attend out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare and should follow the same [COVID-19 guidance](#) as the rest of the population. In some circumstances, a child or young person may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and they should continue to follow that advice.

Choosing after-school clubs and out-of-school activities for your child

You should:

- keep a record of where and when your child attends a setting to help [NHS Test and Trace](#) identify contacts
- check with the provider that they are following the [relevant after-school clubs guidance](#) to reduce the risk of infection

For more information on choosing a setting for your child, please read the [guidance for parents and carers on safeguarding children in out-of-school settings](#).

Group sizes

Wraparound childcare and other organised activities for children may happen in groups of any number. We do not recommend that it is necessary for children to be kept in consistent groups.

Educational visits

Out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare providers may undertake educational visits in groups of any number and children no longer need to be kept in consistent groups.

We recommend that you consider whether to go ahead with planned international educational visits at this time, recognising the risk of disruption to education resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK. You should refer to the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice](#) and the [guidance on international travel](#) before booking and travelling.

Parent attendance at out-of-school settings and wraparound childcare

We no longer advise that providers limit the attendance of parents and carers at sessions. You should continue to ensure that the provider has your most up-to-date contact details in case of an emergency.

Performances

Providers can host sports events, performances and other events with an audience.

If attending an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance or event in front of a live audience, you should follow the measures which providers have put in place to manage audiences and carry out performing arts safely.

Providers should follow the latest advice in the [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\): events and attractions guidance](#).

Mandatory Certification

From 27 January, mandatory certification is no longer in place and so venues and events are not required by law to use the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry, but some may do so voluntarily. Further information on this is available: [Using your NHS COVID Pass for travel abroad and at venues and settings in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Education and childcare settings should not use the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry for education or related activities such as exams, teaching, extra-curricular activities, or any other day-to-day activities that are part of education or training.

Face coverings

From 20 January, face coverings are no longer advised for children, staff and visitors in classrooms or during indoor activities. From 27 January, face coverings are no longer advised for children, staff and visitors in communal areas.

Until 27 January, adults and children aged 11 and above attending out of school settings or wraparound childcare in community premises where there is a mandatory requirement to wear a face covering (for example community centres, youth centres, public libraries, and places of worship) must continue to comply with any legal requirements on the use of face coverings in these premises where these apply. These requirements may not apply if a child or staff member is exempt or they have a reasonable excuse – The [guidance on Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own](#) provides a list of indoor settings in England where you must wear a face covering, including the circumstances where people are not required to wear them. They will also be exempt from wearing a face covering in such settings when they are in a private activity room or a private classroom, or where the premises have been hired out for the sole use of the provision.

The government will remove requirements to wear face coverings in law. From 27 January, children should follow [wider advice](#) on face coverings outside of their out-of-school setting, including on transport to and from the setting.

In circumstances where face coverings are recommended

A director of public health might advise an out-of-school setting that face coverings should temporarily be worn in communal areas or classrooms or during indoor activities (by children, staff and visitors, unless exempt).

In these circumstances, transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn. Transparent face coverings may be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. However, the evidence to support this is currently very limited. Face coverings (whether transparent or cloth) should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles.

The main benefit from a transparent face covering is that they can aid communication, for example enabling lip-reading or allowing for the full visibility of facial expressions, but this should be considered alongside the comfort and breathability of a face covering that contains plastic, which may mean that the face covering is less breathable than layers of cloth.

Face visors or shields can be worn by those exempt from wearing a face covering but they are not an equivalent alternative in terms of source control of virus transmission.

They may protect the wearer against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are unlikely to be effective in preventing the escape of smaller respiratory particles when used without an additional face covering. They should only be used after carrying out a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be cleaned appropriately.

The use of face coverings may have a particular impact on those who rely on visual signals for communication. Those who communicate with or provide support to those who do, are exempt from any recommendation to wear face coverings in education and childcare settings.

Tracing and self-isolation

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the person to identify close contacts. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. As parents or carers, you may be contacted to help identify close contacts.

Adults who are fully vaccinated and all children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 are strongly advised to take a LFD test every day for 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result. Daily testing of close contacts applies to all contacts who are:

- fully vaccinated adults – people who have had 2 doses of an approved vaccine
- all children and young people aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccination status
- people who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons
- people taking part, or have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine

Children under 5 years who are identified as close contacts are exempt from self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily testing of close contacts. They are advised to take a PCR test if the positive case is in their household.

Children with SEND identified as close contacts should be supported by their school and their families to agree the most appropriate route for testing including, where appropriate, additional support to assist swabbing. For further information please see [SEND guidance](#).

Further information is available in [NHS Test and Trace: what to do if you are contacted](#) and in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

Eighteen years olds are treated in the same way as children until 6 months after their 18th birthday. This will allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated, at which point they will be subject to the same rules as adults. If they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Children can return to wraparound childcare and out-of-school settings as soon as isolation rules allow.

Asymptomatic testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection.

Staff and secondary aged children should continue to test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3 to 4 days apart.

Further information on Daily Rapid Testing can be found in the [Contact Tracing Section](#).

There is no need for primary age children (those in year 6 and below) to regularly test, unless they have been identified as a contact for someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and therefore advised to take lateral flow tests every day for 7 days.

Testing remains widely available for everyone, with home test kits available by either:

- collecting them from your local pharmacy
- [ordering online: Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests](#)

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms.

Parents and visitors are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before entering wraparound childcare or out-of-school settings.

Confirmatory PCR tests

You should follow the latest [government guidance](#) on confirmatory PCR tests following a positive LFD test.

What to do if your child is displaying COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Do not send your child to their out-of-school or wraparound childcare setting if:

- they are showing one or more COVID-19 symptoms
- they have had a positive test
- there are other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19

If your child becomes unwell while at a setting, the provider should call you immediately to collect them. When you collect your child, you should take them straight home. Avoid public transport.

You should follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#), or contact NHS 119 by phone if you do not have internet access.

If your child tests positive, [NHS Test and Trace](#) may contact you or your child directly to ask for information on where your child has been recently and who they have been in

close contact with. They may then speak directly to those that have been in contact with your child to offer advice, subject to the details provided to NHS Test and Trace.



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