



May 2020

Social Distancing Guidance & Signposting to Resources for Schools and Education Settings

Social Distancing Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings published

Class or group sizes

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. Schools should therefore work through the hierarchy of measures:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand washing with soap and water and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings and high contact surfaces
- minimising contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups, this is commonly termed as a “Bubble”.

Where settings can keep children and young people in those “Bubbles” 2 metres away from each other, they should do so. While in general “Bubbles” should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk.

For primary schools, classes should normally be split in half, with no more than 15 pupils per “Bubble” and one teacher (and, if needed, a teaching assistant). If there are any shortages of teachers, then teaching assistants can be allocated to lead a “Bubble”, working under the direction of a teacher. Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in other year groups should also be split into “Bubbles” of no more than 15. Desks should be spaced as far apart as possible, ideally at least 2 metres apart.

For secondary schools and colleges, the same principle of halving classes will normally apply. It is also sensible to rearrange classrooms and workshops with sitting positions 2 metres apart. Where very small classes might result from halving, it would be acceptable to have more than half in a class, provided the space has been rearranged. Again, support staff may be drawn on in the event there are teacher shortages, working under the direction of other teachers in the setting.

Each setting’s circumstances will be slightly different. Any setting that cannot achieve these “Bubbles” at any point should discuss options with their Area Schools Officer or trust. This might be because there are not enough classrooms or spaces available in the setting or because they do not have enough available teachers or staff to supervise the groups. Solutions might involve children attending a nearby school. 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:

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- Children of critical workers
- Vulnerable children
- early years settings - 3 and 4 year olds followed by younger age groups
- infant schools - nursery (where applicable) and reception
- primary schools - nursery (where applicable), reception and year 1

This advice will be reviewed when the science indicates it is safe to invite more children back to settings, schools and colleges.

Planning and organising

Consider the following steps:

- refresh your risk assessment and other health and safety advice for children, young people and staff in light of recent government advice, identifying protective measures (such as the things listed below). Also ensure that all health and safety compliance checks have been undertaken before opening
- organise “Bubbles” and class groups, as described above
- organise classrooms and other learning environments such as workshops and science labs for those groups, maintaining space between seats and desks of at least 2 metres where possible
- refresh the timetable:
 - decide which lessons or activities will be delivered
 - consider which lessons or classroom activities could take place outdoors
 - use the timetable and selection of classroom or other learning environment to reduce movement around the school or building
 - stagger assembly groups
 - stagger break times (including lunch), so that all children are not moving around the school at the same time
 - stagger drop-off and collection times
 - for secondary schools and colleges, consider how best to supplement remote education with some face to face support for students
 - plan parents’ drop-off and pick-up protocols that minimise adult to adult contact
- in addition, childcare settings or early years groups in school should:
 - consider how to keep “Bubbles” together throughout the day and to avoid larger groups of children mixing
 - consider how play equipment is used ensuring it is appropriately cleaned between “Bubbles” using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously
- remove unnecessary items from classrooms and other learning environments where there is space to store it elsewhere
- remove soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean (such as those with intricate parts)
- consider how children and young people arrive at the education or childcare setting, and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport where possible. Read the DfE [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)

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- institutions offering residential provision will also need to consider the maximum number of children or young people they can safely accommodate in residences

When open

Keep cohorts together where possible and:

- ensure that children and young people are in the same “Bubbles” at all times each day, and different “Bubbles” are not mixed during the day, or on subsequent days
- ensure that the same teacher(s) and other staff are assigned to each “Bubble” and, as far as possible, these stay the same during the day and on subsequent days, recognising for secondary and college settings there will be some subject specialist rotation of staff
- ensure that wherever possible children and young people use the same classroom or area of a setting throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day. In schools and colleges, you may want to consider seating students at the same desk each day if they attend on consecutive days.

Reduce mixing within education or childcare setting by:

- accessing rooms directly from outside where possible
- considering one-way circulation, or place a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep groups apart as they move through the setting where spaces are accessed by corridors
- staggering breaks to ensure that any corridors or circulation routes used have a limited number of pupils using them at any one time
- staggering lunch breaks - children and young people should wash their hands beforehand and enter in the “Bubble” they are already in. “Bubbles” should be kept apart as much as possible and tables should be cleaned between each “Bubble”. If such measures are not possible, children should be brought their lunch in their classrooms – these should be collected by adults within the “Bubble” to reduce contact with other adults working in kitchens.
- ensuring that toilets do not become crowded by limiting the number of children or young people who use the toilet facilities at any one time
- noting that some children and young people will need additional support to follow these measures (for example, routes round school marked in braille or with other meaningful symbols, and social stories to support them in understanding how to follow rules)

Use outside space:

- for exercise and breaks
- for outdoor education, where possible, as this can lower the risk of transmission and more easily allow for social distancing between children and staff

- outdoor equipment should not be used unless the setting is able to ensure that it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children and young people using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously. Read DfE [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#)

For shared rooms:

- use halls, dining areas and internal and external sports facilities for lunch and exercise at half capacity. If class groups/ “Bubbles” take staggered breaks between lessons, these areas can be shared as long as different “Bubbles” do not mix (and especially do not play sports or games together) and adequate cleaning between “Bubbles” is in place, following the DfE [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#)
- stagger the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy

What happens if someone becomes unwell at an educational or childcare setting?

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#).

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE (disposable gloves, disposable plastic apron, fluid repellent surgical mask, and eye protectoin if there is a risk of splashing) should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection **if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained and they need direct personal care** (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). PPE (disposable gloves and disposable plastic apron) should also be worn by staff cleaning the area where the child has been waiting.

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak

Children will need to stay with their “Bubble” wherever possible and settings should implement a range of protective measures including increased cleaning, reducing ‘pinch points’ (such as at the start and end of day), and utilising outdoor space.

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Children or adults with symptoms or who are in the ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ group as set out in the [Shielding guidance](#), should NOT attend a setting for any reason.

For children, where someone in their household is ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ as set out in the [Shielding guidance](#), **they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to.**

For adults, where someone in their household is ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ as set out in the [Shielding guidance](#), it is advised they should only attend work **if stringent social distancing can be adhered to.** If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, they should be supported to work from home.

For children and adults who are in the ‘clinically vulnerable’ group, as set out in the [Stay at Home](#) guidance, they need to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. Education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this, for example by asking staff to support remote education, carry out lesson planning or other roles which can be done from home. If clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available on-site roles, staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, although the individual may choose to take on a role that does not allow for this distance if they prefer to do so. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

DBS checked 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.

Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020

Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow “Bubbles” 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.

Class sizes and staff availability

It is still important to reduce contact between children and staff as far as possible, and settings can take steps to achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, and staff where possible, mix in a “Bubble” and keep that “Bubble” away from other people and “Bubbles”.

For pre-school children in early years settings, the staff to child ratios within Early Years Foundation Stage continue to apply, and we recommend using these to create “Bubbles”.

In mainstream schools and college settings the basic principle is that classes should be halved. Normally one teacher should be allocated to a “Bubble” but if there are any teacher shortages then support staff may be used to lead “Bubbles”, under the direction of a teacher. More detail is provided in DfE [protective measures guidance](#).

Transport

Parents and children and young people should be encouraged to walk or cycle where possible, and avoid public transport particularly at peak times.

They should refer to DfE [guidance on safe travel, particularly on public transport](#).

Home to school transport provided or organised by schools, trusts or local authorities varies. Schools, trusts and local authorities should work together and with relevant transport providers to put in place arrangements which fit the local circumstances, including the measures being put in place to reduce contact. The School Transport team can be contacted via passenger.transport@surreycc.gov.uk.

Further guidance is available in DfE [Guidance on implementing protective measures](#)

Guidance referred to in compiling this document:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures?utm_source=ff2d8d9d-2d96-444e-b822-0f33cb999bb9&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

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Resources to use with children to encourage social distancing and hand washing

As stated in the social distance guidance it is accepted that early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. Groups should, where at all possible, be kept at least 2 metres apart.

With this in mind it may be helpful to explain to children that they are in a “Bubble” with their identified peers and members of staff and that bubbles must not join together.

Children should still be encouraged to social distance where this is appropriate and there are resources available to help young children understand the concept of social distancing from various sources, some examples are:

TWINKL has a range of posters:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?term=social+distancing+posters>

The Surrey SEND Local Offer website has a range of resources:

<https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/advice.page?id=s8d0HI3q3O0>

The PHE e-Bug website provides a range of resources for schools:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

The Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health resources & poster:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-resources-parents-carers>

The Hampshire CAMHS website also includes some useful resources including:

- An information and workbook for young children
- Social distancing stories

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/professionals/coronavirus-help-support-and-advice/>

The popular “Thank You Baked Potato” song by Matt Lucas. The link below is for a video of Matt Lucas with Rob Brydon, other versions are available.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTLGIwNqEXs>