



COVID-19: Guidance and FAQs around education for pupils with SEND

Second lockdown in England

Since the reopening of educational settings in September 2020, there have been various updates to the guidance that the government has issued. These have applied to children and young people, including where there is an EHCP in place.

Educational Settings to remain open during second lockdown

Settings must update their risk assessments to ensure that pupils and staff are kept as safe as possible from COVID-19.

The government is regularly updating its guidance – the below links all go to the latest information. Guidance around the latest lockdown is has been updated, and links to the relevant sections are added below.

- The Government have released full guidance on the re-opening of schools and how the lockdown will affect them [here](#), with relevant updates [here](#).
- There is also separate guidance for education and childcare settings, which is available [here](#), with relevant updates [here](#).
- Additional guidance is available for [early years and childcare providers](#), and [further education colleges and providers](#), with relevant updates [here](#).

If your child or any other member(s) of your household presents with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, even mildly, they must follow NHS advice and self-isolate for at least 7 days, and arrange to have a COVID-19 test to see if they have coronavirus. Other members of the household should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first experienced symptoms. If at all possible, you should try to keep them in a separate room from other people in the house.

How will risks to children, teachers and families be managed?

The Government guidance for all education settings sets out what they should do to reduce the risk of transmission, which includes:

Prevention:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- 2) Where recommended, the use of face coverings in schools.
- 3) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 4) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- 5) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 6) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 7) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) 8) Always keeping occupied spaces well ventilated.

Numbers 1 to 5 and number 8 must be in place in all schools, all the time.

Number 6 must be properly considered, and schools must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection:

- 9) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- 10) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- 11) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Numbers 9 to 11 must be followed in every case where they are relevant. Schools are expected to have implemented all of the above by 09/11/20

Will staff and pupils be provided with PPE?

The Government guidance states that wearing face masks or coverings in an education setting is not universally recommended for either staff or pupils. Schools teaching children in years 7 and above, will require face coverings for pupils, staff, and visitors in enclosed spaces where social distancing is difficult, as well as when moving around the school. Primary school children are not required to wear a face covering, but headteachers will have the discretion to ask staff and visitors to wear them.

Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in year 7 and above when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college.

They say that there are a “small number of cases” where PPE may be required:

- *“children, young people and students whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way*
- *if a child, young person, or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn”*

What if I don't feel it is safe for my child to return to school?

Speak to your child's setting about your concerns and ask for their specific plans for creating a safe return for the pupils and their families. It may be that once you speak with them, you feel reassured.

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the Government made it clear that no parent/carer would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's nonattendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, and from November 2020, the government state that they “... will not be closing schools, colleges or universities.”

School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence

- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

What about home to school transport?

Statutory home to school transport is expected to be fully operating by September 2020 and during the second lockdown. Guidance on that is available [here](#).

Because these are dedicated services and pupils do not mix with the general public, the advice to for those using dedicated home to school transport routes to maintain a social distance of 2 metres from people outside their household/support bubble, or a “one metre plus” approach where this is not possible, does **not** apply from on dedicated transport. However, the local authority must consider social distancing, and make efforts to maintain it. Principles underpinning the guidance for schools should also be adopted by transport services. This will include the availability of hand sanitiser, additional cleaning of vehicles, organised queuing and boarding where possible, and distancing within vehicles wherever possible.

While children & young people over the age of 11 are not legally required to wear a face covering on public transport, it is recommended. This does not apply to those who are exempt.

If your child or young person uses wider public transport to get to and from school, they should follow the guidance of adopting a social distance of 2 metres from those outside of their household or support bubble, or a ‘one metre plus’ approach where this is not possible. The Government are also encouraging schools to think creatively about how they can reduce the numbers of pupils using public transport at any one time; this includes the consideration of staggered start times, and encouraging parents/pupils to cycle or walk to settings.

Anyone on public transport should also use a face mask, with the following exemptions:

The requirement to wear a face covering does not apply to:

- a child under the age of 11

You also do not need to wear a face covering if you have a good reason not to. This includes:

- if you have a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability that means you cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering

- if putting on, wearing, or removing a face covering would cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with, or providing assistance to, someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- if you are travelling to avoid injury or escape the risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- if you need to remove it during your journey to avoid harm or injury or the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others
- if you need to eat, drink, or take medication you can remove your face covering
- if you are asked to remove your face covering by a police officer or other official, for example to check your railcard

Amendments in law relating to EHC plan provision and EHC needs assessments

My child has an EHC plan – what about the legal duty on LA’s to secure the provision in their EHC plan?

The Coronavirus Act, which was introduced on 1 May 2020, stated that local authorities no longer had an absolute legal duty to secure provision. This amendment has now ceased. This means that as of 31st July 2020, local authorities once again have an absolute legal duty to secure provision in an EHC plan.

Parents who consented to changes to, or reductions in, their child’s provision during that time will not be considered to have agreed a permanent change to what their child needs in their EHC plan.

What about EHC needs assessments?

From 1st May 2020, the Coronavirus Act introduced a relaxation of the statutory timescales for EHC needs assessments. Those changes were in force until 25th September 2020 and have now ceased.

Many children and young people will have found restrictions exceptionally difficult socially and emotionally. Settings should consider any challenging behaviours or social or emotional challenges arising as a response to restrictions (following discussion with the parents or young person) and offer additional support and phased returns where needed.

How can SENDiass4BCP support me during this time?

Currently, SENDiass staff are working remotely. We have changed our answerphone message to advise parent/carers to email their enquiry rather than telephone, as our offices aren't being staffed as per normal. We are working to bring an Adviceline back into action as soon as possible. You can email us at sendiass@bcpouncil.gov.uk

SENDiass staff will continue to offer telephone and/or email support rather than face to face, with the need to maintain safe distance between individuals.

So, we are changing our methods of contact based on wider advice – but at the current time it's business as usual in terms of offering information and advice.

Please check our website, www.sendiass4bcp.org - it will contain updates, as the situation changes. Our website also contains links to information that you may find helpful at this time, and a wide range of other information resources.

Information correct as of 02/11/2020 15:40pm