

Up-to-speed on: what schools need to know about the coronavirus (COVID-19) national restrictions from 5 November 2020

The DfE has released guidance on how the national restrictions to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) impact schools. The measures come into effect from 5 November until 2 December. This article breaks down what schools need to know.

Key points

The key points are as follows:

1. [Schools will remain open throughout the national lockdown](#)
2. [Early years settings will remain open](#)
3. [FE colleges will remain open](#)
4. [Face coverings should be worn in certain circumstances in schools with pupils in Year 7 and above](#)
5. [Clinically extremely vulnerable children and staff should not be on site](#)
6. [Clinically vulnerable children and staff can be on site](#)
7. [Travelling to deliver and access education is permitted](#)
8. [The national restrictions do not affect the Summer 2021 exams](#)
9. [Music, dance, drama and physical activity can be delivered](#)
10. [There are some specific measures that affect early years settings](#)

Read on to learn more about each key point.

Schools will remain open throughout the national lockdown

Schools will remain open to all pupils for the duration of the national lockdown. There are currently no plans for school closures or to implement rota systems. The government has also confirmed that its '[contain framework](#)' will not apply for schools during the national lockdown.

Schools should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in the '[Guidance for full opening: schools](#)'.

The DfE expects schools to ensure that any changes required in light of the national restrictions are in place as soon as practically possible, and by Monday 9 November at the latest.

Early years settings will remain open

Early years settings will remain open and parents can continue to use these settings as normal. Parents can also access other childcare activities (including wraparound care) where

reasonably necessary to enable them to work, seek work, attend education or training, or for the purposes of respite care for carers.

Early years settings should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in the '[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)' guidance.

FE colleges will remain open

FE colleges will remain open to on site delivery for the duration of the national restrictions. Colleges should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in the '[Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)'.

For 16-19 study programmes, providers should continue to seek to deliver the majority of education on site unless they have had written public health advice to move some groups to remote teaching. Providers should preserve on-site provision for students who need it, including children of key workers and students without access to devices/connectivity at home.

Face coverings should be worn in certain circumstances in schools with pupils in Year 7 and above

There is no change to the current position on wearing face coverings in early years settings, primary schools and settings teaching pupils in Year 6 and below. It is not mandatory for adults (including staff and visitors) to wear face coverings on these sites. Settings have the discretion to recommend that adults wear face coverings where social distancing between adults is not possible.

In schools and colleges teaching pupils in Year 7 and above, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms and in communal areas where social distancing cannot be maintained. These measures were already in place in schools that were in areas where the local COVID alert level was 'high' or 'very high'. Pupils in this age group should also wear face coverings when travelling on dedicated school transport.

Schools and colleges should be sensitive to the needs of people exempt from wearing face coverings.

Clinically extremely vulnerable children and staff should not be on site

Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Settings should advise parents to speak to their child's GP or specialist clinician to understand whether the child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend school or their early years settings during the national lockdown. Schools need to make appropriate arrangements for these pupils to continue their education at home.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home. These individuals will have received a letter from the NHS or their GP. Schools should work with these staff members to discuss how they will be supported, including supporting them to work from home where possible.

Children and staff who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable should still attend their setting.



Clinically vulnerable children and staff can be on site

Children and staff who are clinically vulnerable or have underlying health conditions but are not clinically extremely vulnerable may continue to attend their setting in line with current guidance.



Travelling to deliver and access education is permitted

Under national restrictions, travelling to deliver and access education is permitted. Staff and pupils should be encouraged to walk or cycle to and from school where possible. Public transport should also be avoided; however, where this is not possible, peak times should be avoided.

Existing [guidance](#) sets out a framework for LAs and schools to follow when arranging transport to and from school.

Pupils aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport. Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in Year 7 and above when travelling on dedicated school transport. This does not apply to exempt individuals.



The national restrictions do not affect the Summer 2021 exams

The government has been clear that exams will go ahead in Summer 2021 and has not stated that the national restrictions will change this.

Exam resits that started in colleges on 2 November should continue and the DfE's exam support service will help colleges manage this process. Schools and colleges should implement the DfE's existing [public health guidance](#) on delivering the Autumn exams.



Music, dance, drama and physical activity can be delivered

Music, dance and drama can be delivered in school, so long as safety precautions are undertaken as outlined in existing [guidance](#).

The government has stated the importance of pupils remaining active. Schools have the flexibility to decide how PE, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls.

Schools must only provide team sports listed on the return to [recreational team sport framework](#). Competition between different schools should not take place.

During sport activities, pupils should be kept in consistent groups and equipment should be thoroughly cleaned between each use by different groups. Outdoor sports should be

prioritised, and large indoor spaces should be used where this is not possible. Schools should maximise natural ventilation, ensure distance between pupils, and pay attention to cleaning and hygiene.

External facilities can be used for sports, in line with government guidance. Schools can work with external coaches, clubs and organisations where they are satisfied that it is safe to do so.

Schools should only offer before- and after-school clubs where it is reasonably necessary to support parents to work, search for work, or undertake training or education, or where the provision is being used for the purpose of respite care. Schools should consider how these arrangements can operate within their protective measures.



There are some specific measures that affect early years settings

Are visitors allowed?

Only visits to the setting that are absolutely necessary should take place. Settings should suspend parent visits for new admissions, settling in children and attending organised performances.

Are disapplications in place?

Specific [disapplications](#) relating to the EYFS are in place for settings that cannot comply with the EYFS requirements in full due to the restrictions imposed by the national lockdown.

Can early years settings access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)?

The CJRS will be extended for the duration of the national restrictions – early years providers' access to the scheme remains as published. The Job Support Scheme, which was due to be implemented from 1 November, has been postponed until the furlough scheme ends.

Business premises forced to close in England are to receive grants worth up to £3,000 per month under the Local Restrictions Support Grant. Additionally, £1.1 billion is being given to LAs to enable them to support businesses more broadly.



What's next?

- Read the guidance in full [here](#).
- The DfE has said it is reviewing its '[Guidance for full opening: schools](#)' in line with the national restrictions – we will keep you up-to-date with any changes.
- We will be updating our relevant resources in line with the government's guidance, including our Coronavirus (COVID-19): Risk Assessment for Schools. Click [here](#) and add this risk assessment to your 'Watch list' to be notified when it has been updated.

Bibliography

DfE (2020) 'Education and childcare settings: New National Restrictions from 5 November 2020' <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020>> [Accessed: 4 November 2020]

DfE (2020) 'New guidance for schools, colleges and early years'
<<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-early-years>>
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Schools Week (2020) 'Face coverings mandatory in communal areas of all secondary schools'
<<https://schoolweek.co.uk/face-coverings-mandatory-in-communal-areas-of-all-secondary-schools/>> [Accessed: 5 November 2020]