



Department  
for Education

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

**November 2021**

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## Changes to the previous version

Changes to the guidance since its 27 September 2021 publication include:

- updated advice on isolation to reflect the change in measures for close contacts of suspected or confirmed Omicron cases
- updated advice on [face coverings](#) to reflect the change in measures— they are now recommended in communal areas in all wraparound childcare and out-of-school settings for adults and for children who were aged 11 and over on 31 August 2021
- replacement of references to Public Health England with references to the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA)
- updated information in the [Vaccinations](#) section on vaccination of under 18 year olds
- an updated [Educational visits](#) section to advise consideration of any international educational visits

## Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for parents and carers of children (those who were aged 18 or under 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 relevant [protective measures 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

Clinical studies have shown that children and young people, including those previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), are at very low risk of serious illness if they catch the virus. The UK Clinical Review Panel has recommended that no children and young people under the age of 18 should be considered CEV and under-18s should be removed from the Shielded Patient List. The chief executive of the UK Health Security Agency and head of NHS Test and Trace has written to parents of these children to inform them.

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. However, if a child or young person has been advised to isolate or reduce their social contact by their specialist, due to the nature of their medical condition or treatment, rather than because of the pandemic, they should continue to follow the advice of their specialist.

# 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. Children are no longer advised 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](#).

## Face coverings

Face coverings help protect the wearer and others against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of COVID-19.

Where children in year 7 (which would be children who were aged 11 on 31 August 2021) and above are educated or cared for, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by children, staff and adult visitors when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms or activity rooms, such as in corridors and communal areas. This is a temporary measure.

Children in these settings should also wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and dedicated transport to and from the setting. We do not advise that children and staff wear face coverings in classrooms.

Health advice continues to be that children under 11 should not wear face coverings. Where children of primary-school age are educated or cared for (which would be children who were under age 11 on 31 August 2021), we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and adults (including visitors) when moving around in corridors and communal areas.

See [Circumstances where people are not able to wear face coverings](#) for exceptions.

Face coverings do not need to be worn when outdoors.

## Circumstances where people are not able to wear face coverings

There are also some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Some people are less able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

In relation to education and childcare settings, this includes (but is not limited to):

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- people for whom putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
- people speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others
- you are also permitted to remove a face covering in order to take medication.



## 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.

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test. They will be informed by the local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace if they fall into this category and provided details about self-isolation.

For everyone else, isolation rules are unchanged. Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to [take a PCR test](#).

We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Children and young people aged under 18 years and 6 months, who usually attend an out-of-school setting, and have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, can continue to attend the setting as normal. Instead, NHS Test and Trace will:

- contact the child
- inform them they have been in close contact with a positive case
- advise them to take a PCR test

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 will be 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 that has not been identified as the Omicron variant.

## **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.

There is no need for primary age children (those in year 6 and below) to test.

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.

## **Confirmatory PCR tests**

Anyone with a positive lateral flow (LFD) test result should self-isolate in line with the Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They will also need to get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19.

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test. In this situation, your child can return to their setting, as long as they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

## **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 (for example, they are required to quarantine or they are a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of 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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