

# Return to School - September 2020

## FAQ's

Guidance from the Department of Education about the full opening of schools is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

### School

#### **1. Does my child have to go to school?**

**Yes** – As of September 2020 the department of Education has reapplied the law. It is compulsory for your child to receive a full-time education. There is guidance available from the Department for Education (see above). With the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lockdown for England planned to commence on the 5 November 2020, Schools are to remain open and therefore children are expected to attend daily.

#### **2. Why does my child have to go to school?**

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development. Lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well-qualified workforce. This affects the standard of living that today's pupils will have over the course of their entire life.

#### **3. What is the risk to my child?**

Evidence suggests that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school.

#### **4. Will my child be safe in school?**

**Yes** – each school is different, but all schools are following Government guidelines on reopening schools to children. Schools will have a bubble and your child will stay in this bubble. They will also have completed a risk assessment, and this will be regularly updated by them. They will also have enhanced cleaning arrangements. You can help by asking your child to wash their hands regularly, not touch their face, cough into their elbow, use tissues and bin after use and to do what school asks them to do to ensure their safety.

#### **5. Can my child wear a mask/PPE in school?**

In primary schools and education settings teaching year 6 and below, there is no change to the existing position. It is not mandatory for staff and visitors to wear face coverings. In situations where social distancing between adults in settings is not possible (for example when moving around in corridors and communal areas), settings have the discretion to recommend the use of face coverings for adults on site, for both staff and visitors.

In schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. This was already the case for pupils in year 7 and above, staff and visitors for those schools that were in areas where the local alert level was classed as 'high' and 'very high'.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings and we expect adults and pupils to be sensitive to those needs.

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

**6. What if another child in the class has symptoms?**

Schools will be following Government guidance if this happens. The child will be sent home and asked to self-isolate. Children who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless the child tests positive, your child develops symptoms themselves or you have been requested to do so by NHS Test & Trace. Your child will be asked to wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser and the area around the person with symptoms will be cleaned with normal household disinfectant after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

**7. My children have different start times – why is this?**

Schools will be trying to reduce contact between children at particular pressure points in the day. These include drop off and collection times. Please follow the guidance that school gives you. Children will still receive a full education – school will have adjusted the timetable or start/end times to accommodate this. If this causes problems, please talk to your school. Schools will be asking you not to gather at the school gate.

**8. Will I be allowed to go into my child's school?**

School will inform you what to do if you need to visit. It may be that you need to make an appointment. If you need to collect an ill child, you may be asked to wait outside, and staff will bring your child to you. However, your school arranges a visit, this will be to reduce the risk for everyone involved.

**9. My child attends 2 schools – will this still be allowed?**

Yes - the 2 schools will have discussed what needs to be done to reduce any risk. A risk assessment will have been created to manage this arrangement.

**10. I am concerned about my child sharing school resources. How can this be safe?**

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, your child may be provided with their own items. Alternatively, you can provide these basic items in a pencil case, for your child. Secondary children are expected to have their own stationery and it is important that

you provide these. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between bubbles.

**11. Will my child's 'bubble' have separate toilet facilities?**

This is unlikely – but schools will be cleaning the toilets regularly and children will be encouraged to wash their hands.

**12. I know of someone with Covid 19 and they are sending their child to school. What can I do?**

Inform school of this. School will then be able to talk to the parents to undertake a risk assessment, and if there IS a confirmed case of Covid19, the child will stay at home until symptoms have passed as per Government guidelines. Parents will be instructed to keep their child at home by the school.

**13. Will my child have their temperature taken?**

Public Health England does not recommend this as this is an unreliable method for identifying Covid19, however we are aware that some school have chosen to do this. Please discuss with your child's school for further clarification.

**14. Will my child still receive the full curriculum?**

Schools will be trying to ensure that this occurs. Modifications to the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year, with the aim of returning to a normal curriculum content by no later than the summer term 2021.

**15. Will my child be in the same classroom all day?**

Primary aged children already spend most of the day in one classroom and this will continue. Secondary children may find that movement around the school is reduced or that they are asked to proceed around school on specific routes. School may adopt staggered break times and lunch times and have time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups. Passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk.

**16. Will my child have the same teacher?**

If your child is being taught in smaller groups, it may be that they will not be with the same teacher. Please contact your school to discuss if this is the case and what can be done to help your child if they feel anxious about this.

**17. What will happen if I don't send my child to school?**

From September onwards, the usual rules on school attendance will apply. This includes the parents' duty to secure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil, the schools' responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence and the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

**18. Can my child attend for just a few days each week?**

No - the guidance states that schools should not put in place rotas and it is compulsory for your child to receive a full-time education.

**19. Can I home school my child?**

Yes – Please discuss this option with your child’s school, alternatively please contact the Education Access Service on 01743254397 to discuss further, or visit <https://shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance-or-exclusion/elective-home-education/> for more information.

**20. Will online/remote education continue if I home school my child?**

No – if you choose to home school your child, you are responsible for all provision.

**School support visits**

**21. What will happen if a professional needs to visit my child in school**

**(SEN/EP)?** Professionals will be able to visit schools if essential but there is a protocol in which they must follow.

**Transport**

**22. Will school Transport still be running?** Yes – please contact your school for individual arrangements. Please note that if your transport has been allocated under the transport vacant seats scheme you may find that you lose this.

**23. Will my child be safe on school transport?** Yes – transport companies and schools will have put in place the precautions needed to keep your child safe. Children and young people 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 to secondary school or college. This does not apply to those who are exempt. This may also require grouping, use of sanitiser, additional cleaning, organised queuing and boarding or distancing within the transport. Your school will be able to advise you on transport arrangements.

**24. My child uses the public bus service. Will this be safe?** Government guidance for using public transport should be followed and can be found [here](#). You may want your child to use a face covering or consider whether cycling, walking or car sharing is a viable option.

**School Lunches**

**25. Will school lunches still be available?** Yes – school kitchens will be fully open from the start of the autumn term. School kitchens are required to comply with the guidance for food businesses, which has been put in place to ensure safe practices. To achieve this, lunch and break times may be

organised differently. Your child may for example have breaks at slightly different times or be asked to eat in their classroom.

## **Medical Conditions**

**26. What if my child is anxious about going into school?** You can get information that will help you support your child from these sites: [Kooth](#) [Young Minds](#) [BEAM](#) [Explore Learning](#) Alternatively, you may like to discuss this with your school or contact their allocated Education Welfare Officer (details available in school). Families can get more information and support if they visit <https://shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/the-local-offer/> to look at The Local Offer. Alternatively, you can access Shropshire Council's Family Information service on <https://shropshire.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare/parents-and-carers/shropshire-family-information-service-0-19-years/> for free advice and guidance.

**27. I'm really anxious about my child returning to school.** This is a time where everyone has anxieties. Be assured that your child's school will be following Government guidance and taking every precaution to ensure the safety of everyone working within the school. This includes all children, all staff and any visitors to school. Try not to show your child that you are anxious and if you find yourself continuing to worry you may like to contact [the Samaritans](#) for support. The Anna Freud Organisation has range of support and guidance which you may find useful which can be found on: <https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/> You can also access the Local Offer and Family Information Service for list of resources.

**28. My child was identified in the first national lockdown as clinically extremely vulnerable, what do we have to do?**

More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19), even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Parents are advised to speak to their child's GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable. Parents of identified clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter to confirm if they are still in this category. If no letter is received and / or confirmation that your child is no longer in this category then they should still attend school as normal.

**29. My child has a serious condition and the medical professionals have advised against a return to school.**

Parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter shortly confirming the following advice:  
For children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable they are advised not to attend education whilst the national restrictions are in place.

Schools will need to make appropriate arrangements to enable them to continue their education at home.

**30. My children lives with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, do they have to attend school?**

**Yes** - Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, are still required to attend education.

**My child's school has been notified of a positive case.**

**31. What are the requirements for Bubbles to isolate?**

You will be notified by your child's school if your child's bubble is required to self-isolate. School will also inform you how long they must self-isolate for. You do not need to get a test for your child unless they begin to show Covid symptoms.

**32. Does my child have to complete work sent from school if they are self-isolating?**

Yes. We need to ensure that both school and parents are complying with medical/public health advice, and as such schools will be able to immediately offer your child access to remote education. These activities will be monitored.

**33. Are other family members from the same household required to self-isolate if my child is sent home from school?**

There is no requirement for any other family member to self-isolate unless they show symptoms related to Covid. If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then their household must self-isolate.

The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

**34. If there is a positive case in my child's school can I choose to self-isolate my child?**

Your child's school will inform you if your child is required to self-isolate. If the school do not make contact your child must attend school.

**35. Local lockdown**

If rates of the virus rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Schools will communicate any changes with parents.

**36. We live in Wales, but my child attends a Shropshire School, can he/she still attend school?**

Yes. If you attend school, college or university in England, which is not covered by the firebreak, it is a reasonable excuse to travel there and will be allowed during the firebreak period, if you are unable to access your education online for this period. For more information about the fire break in Wales please visit the welsh government website:

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-firebreak-frequently-asked-questions>

**DfE addendum 2020/21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>**

**DfE guidance published 04 November 2020 ahead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Lockdown <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020>**