**Guidance for Early Years Settings for September 2020**

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| ***The DfE Guidance: Actions for Early Years and Childcare Providers during the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak was updated on 2.7.20***<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures> *The new guidance should be read alongside the following existing guidance:** [Safe working in education, childcare and children’s social care settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe)
* [Planning guide for early years and childcare settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings)

*The new guidance also lists other relevant guidance relating to vulnerable children, funding etc.**The guidance will be kept under review as the DfE continue to monitor the situation over the summer.****This document*** *is not a checklist but attempts to highlight the key messages and some possible considerations for you.*The DfE guidance states that from 20th July * **Early years settings will** **no longer be required to keep children in small, consistent group within settings**
* **Settings should still consider how they can minimise mixing within settings**
* **All other protective measures must remain in place**

This change is possible due to progress made in tackling the coronavirus. The prevalence of coronavirus is down. The NHS Test and Trace system is up and running. In addition, early years settings are on average much smaller than schools, allowing a less restrictive approach to mixing within settings than schools. Returning to their early years setting is vital for children’s wellbeing and education. Settings are being asked to open more widely so that more children can be welcomed back. Settings should try to be as flexible as possible for parents and carers who work shifts or atypical hours and especially for parents who are critical workers.However, if you feel you are unable to open, perhaps due to high levels of staff sickness or very low demand, please contact the local authority so we can work with you to discuss different options and to offer support to your families. Please email feeequeries@essex.gov.uk At the centre of the guidance is a Public Health endorsed **system of controls**. This provides a set of principles and if settings follow this advice you will effectively minimise risks. **All elements of the system of controls are essential. All settings must cover all elements**, but the way settings do this will differ based on their individual circumstances. |
| **Theme** | **Key points and considerations** | **Relevant documents** |
| **Risk assessment** | **The guidance states:**Settings must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place appropriate control measures.Settings should:* Thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessment in the light of wider opening
* Have arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are effective and working as planned
* Update plans as needed and as required by any changes in public health advice

***Considerations:**** How often will you review your risk assessment?
* Have you updated your daily risk assessments for inside and outside?
* How will you keep staff and parents, where appropriate, updated about any changes?
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| **Control measures****(overview)** | **The measures are listed below.****Prevention** (Measures 1-6)* Numbers 1 to 4 **must be in place in all settings, all the time.**
* Number 5 **must be properly considered** and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.
* Number 6 applies in all specific circumstances.

**Response to any infection** (measures 7-9)* Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.
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| **Prevention****Control measures**  | 1. **Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell**
* Ensure that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or have someone in their household who does, do not attend settings
* Ensure that those who have tested positive in the last 7 days do not come into the setting
* If anyone in the setting becomes unwell with coronavirus symptoms, they must be sent home and advised to follow the stay-at-home guidance
* Public Health England does not recommend routinely taking children’s temperatures as this is unreliable for identifying coronavirus.

***Considerations:**** Ensure that all staff (including those who may be returning after furlough) understand the procedures you have in place
* Ensure contact details and emergency contacts for families have been updated to reflect the current situation
 | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance><https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested> |
|  **Prevention****Control measures**  | 1. **Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual**
* Regular and thorough handwashing is going to be needed for the foreseeable future

***Considerations:**** Implement a consistent approach across staff team regarding handwashing throughout the day; for example, agree set times for hand washing in line with guidance such as on arrival, before and after eating, after toilet, before lunch, coming in from outside etc.
* Ensure that the setting has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser ‘stations’ available so that all children and staff can clean their hands regularly
* Consider how you will monitor the use of hand sanitisers and/or skin cleaning wipes to ensure children’s safety, particularly for younger children who may put things into their mouth
* Consider modelling appropriate hand washing techniques especially to new children in the setting for example, by having posters/prompts displayed around all hand washing stations
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| **Prevention****Control measures**  | **3) Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach*** Settings must ensure they have enough tissues and bins available in the setting.
* Settings must ensure that younger children are helped to get this right and that all children understand this is how the setting operates now.

***Considerations:**** Consider having lidded bins preferably operated by a foot pedal to avoid unnecessary contact
* Consider using visual reminders and/or songs to reinforce the messages around good respiratory hygiene
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|  **Prevention****Control measures**  | **4) Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach*****Considerations:**** Ensure that toilets and hand washing facilities are cleaned thoroughly more often than usual

 * Ensure an enhanced cleaning schedule is in place; all frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, toilets, sinks, light switches will need to be cleaned thoroughly several times a day using disinfection as appropriate.
* Ensure sufficient time is taken into account for this additional cleaning to be implemented both at the beginning and at the end of each day
* Ensure equipment and resources are cleaned more regularly than usual following your enhanced cleaning schedule.
* Risk assess resources to assess suitability. The Planning Guide still remains in place - see link opposite.
* Consider – can it be effectively cleaned or not? If not, use an alternative or use and then replace daily.
 | Public Health England will publish revised guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings by the end of the summer term.<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings> |
| **Prevention****Control measures**  | **5) Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.*** For example, where a setting has different rooms, do not allow mixing between the rooms.
* Parents and carers should be encouraged to limit the number of settings their child attends, ideally ensuring their child only attends the same setting consistently. This should also be the same for staff.
* Do not allow parents or carers into the setting unless this is essential, and arrange for children to be collected at the door if this is possible

***Considerations:**** Staggered drop off /pick up times if possible, for example limiting drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family
* Work with parents whose children may need support in settling in the setting to ensure that physical distancing between staff and parents is maintained
* Use of visual clues to remind parents around social distancing

**Visitors*** Wherever possible, settings are encouraged to avoid visitors entering their premises.
* In instances where settings need to use other essential professionals such as social workers, speech and language therapists or counsellors, or professionals to support delivery of a child’s EHC plan, settings should assess whether the professionals need to attend in person or can do so virtually. If they need to attend in person, they should closely follow the protective measures in the setting, and the number of attendances should be kept to a minimum. Where possible to do so, social distancing should be maintained.
* Settings that use external providers for sessions which are not directly required for children’s health and wellbeing should be suspended.

**Using the outdoor environment** * Consider maximizing the use of private outdoor space for all children in the setting
* Providers may take a small group of children to a public outdoor space such as parks on the provision that they can be kept 2 metres apart from other people and in line with wider government guidelines on the number of people who can meet in outdoor public spaces.

***Considerations:**** Outside resources need to be cleaned daily as well as between children from different rooms
* For setting with more than one room: consider timetabling slots for children from different rooms when accessing the outdoor learning environment
* Consider developing a bank of games which may require very few physical resources, such as “what’s the time Mr Wolf”.
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| **Prevention****Control measures**  | **6) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**Applies in all specific circumstances.The majority of staff in early years settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases, including:* where an individual child becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at a setting, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
* where a child requires routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used.
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| **Response to any infection** | **Response to any infection:****7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace** **8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the setting community****9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice**Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant***Considerations:**** If there is a confirmed case within the setting in a member of staff or child, you should inform Public Health.
* Please refer to the flowchart sent on 1.7.20 (see link in next column)
 | To notify a case(s) to PHE, settings can call Public Health England (PHE) in the East of England on 0300 303 8537 (option 1).If the matter is not urgent, settings can also email: eoe.crc@phe.gov.uk to notify PHE. |
| **Communications with parents/carers** | Providers should be mindful that some parents may be anxious about sending their child back to the setting. * Ensure that clear communication with parents is in place regarding the measures being taken to ensure the safety of their children, including the role that they play, as parents, in the safe operating procedures.
* Ensure communications are accessible to specific groups of parents (such as parents with English as an additional language) and parents of vulnerable children, so as to encourage attendance of these groups.
* Consider how to remain in contact with and support children and families who are not returning to the setting at present.
* How are you supporting transition for those children who will be starting school? Who will be joining your setting?
 | <https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/media/1879/covid-19-children-responseplan-summer-2020-guidance-for-eys-settings-260420.docx> <https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/media/1936/early-years-and-key-stage-1-transition-guidance-22-june-2020.docx>  |
| **Statutory EYFS requirements/ Staffing**  | **The disapplications of the EYFS still remain in place; this means that some requirements have been relaxed in light of the pandemic. Please refer to the link opposite** **EYFS (Learning and Development requirements)*** Settings need to use reasonable endeavours to deliver the learning and development requirements set out in the EYFS.
* Practitioners may wish to focus at this time on the prime areas of learning to support children’s development

**Qualifications*** The setting needs to make reasonable endeavours to meet the qualification requirements in line with current government legislation regarding temporary changes to the EYFS in response to Covid-19

**First Aid****0-24 months children on site*** The existing requirement remains in place – a practitioner with a full PFA certificate must be on site.

**2-5 years children on site*** The requirement is modified where children aged 2 to 5 are on site (with no children aged below 24 months) to a Best Endeavours duty to have someone with a full PFA certificate on site.
* If all steps set out in the guidance have been exhausted and settings cannot meet the PFA requirement, they must carry out a written risk assessment and ensure that someone with a current First Aid at Work or emergency PFA certificate is on site at all times.
* New entrants (level 2 and 3) will not need to have completed a full PFA course within their first 3 months in order to be counted in staff to child ratios

**Safeguarding** * The requirements around safeguarding still remain. The setting must still have access to a designated safeguarding lead.
* **DBS checks**
* The requirements set out at paragraph 3.11 of the EYFS remain in place.
 | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications> |
| **Ofsted** | **Routine Inspections are due to start in January 2021 (subject to review)****From September*** Registration visits will resume, and these will be on-site
* Ofsted will continue with emergency regulatory and enforcement work as concerns are raised.
* From September 2020, Ofsted will begin carrying out regulatory activity in providers that have been judged **inadequate or requires improvement** and have associated actions to fulfil
* These visits will not result in a judgement. However, Ofsted will publish a short summary to confirm what it found during the visit.
 | <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-plans-from-september-2020><https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-our-plans-for-the-autumn> |
| **Further support from the** **Local Authority** | The Early Years Education Partners can support you with advice around all aspects of practice and provision under the EYFS including: creating an exciting learning environment, teaching and learning, safe outdoor provision, etc. The EYEPs can support you:* Via email
* Via telephone conversation
* Via Whats App/facetime/ TEAMS
* Contact your quadrant EYEPs via the quadrant inbox

If you have a provision/ practice related query please, e-mail the relevant EYEP e-mail address for your area. If your query relates to funding, sustainability or sufficiency please email feeequeries@essex.gov.uk If you feel you are unable to open, perhaps due to high levels of staff sickness or very low demand, please contact the local authority so we can work with you to discuss different options and to offer support to your families. Please email feeequeries@essex.gov.uk  | North East (Colchester and Tendring)eyanortheast@essex.gov.ukSouth (Basildon, Brentwood, Castlepoint, Rochford)EYadviser.South@essex.gov.ukWest (Epping, Harlow and Uttlesford) EYFS.west@essex.gov.ukMid (Chelmsford, Braintree, Maldon)EYAdvisers.Mid@essex.gov.uk |