

Updated FAQs 13 September 2020

Following communication with our Local Health Protection Team (PHT), I have been advised to contact you to clarify a couple of points:

I am writing a procedure to be followed in the event of a confirmed case of Coronavirus and contacted our HPT as there was conflicting advice published. They have confirmed that should we have one confirmed case, we should contact our LA for support and guidance and we only contact our HPT if there is more than one confirmed case. I would therefore like a phone number to use in this situation which can be included in our procedure.

If you have a confirmed case and require support please use this inbox early.years@essex.gov.uk to notify us and request support.

We also require any setting that needs to partially or fully close, due to any confirmed cases of Covid-19, to inform us so we can keep an accurate central record by emailing the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox at FEEETquiries@essex.gov.uk

During the call, the following point was also clarified, should we have a confirmed case, we would need to identify all those children and staff members who were in close contact with the diagnosed person up to 48 hours prior to the symptom/diagnosis. These are the people who should self-isolate for 14 days. As our children all attend different sessions throughout the week, this would not necessarily be the entire bubble. I would welcome written confirmation from you on this point prior to amending our procedure.

As each setting's operating models are very different, it is expected that each setting undertakes individual risk assessments and the guidance you that should be followed is section 3 of the guidance below from the DFE.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures> this explains what steps to take if you have confirmed case.

We have also put through some template letters to use if you need to inform parents. These are attached the sector Covid-19 comms issued on the 13 September 2020

My other issue which the PHT was unable to help with is that currently we are sending children home who record a temperature of 37.6 or more. We are very aware that young children often have temperatures but are following, as far as possible, the guidelines. The problem is however, the guidelines do not detail what is deemed to be a temperature in this regard and in addition, having recently purchased 3 forehead digital infrared thermometers, they all record slightly different temperatures! The impact of this is significant; parents having to leave work and self-isolate until the results come through, babies and young children being subjected to possibly unnecessary testing and now a shortage of test kits.

We are unable to provide any further advice on what is deemed a temperature with regard to Covid-19 and so are unable to offer any further information other than referring you back to the guidance. However, regarding temperatures in the above guidance the Public Health England advise that “routinely taking the temperature of children is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19)” And therefore, temperature alone should not be relied on. The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- *new continuous cough and/or*
- *high temperature*
- *a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)*

If a child or staff member does develop symptoms, advice can be sought from NHS 111 at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111

Can we claim Autumn term funding for children who have been previously registered with us and whose parents have agreed to the funding for the Autumn Term - but still choose NOT to bring their child to pre-school at present?

To support providers financially in the Autumn term 2020 the DfE have given guidance for local authority to look at match funding Autumn 2020 funding with Autumn 2019 funding. Forms were sent out to providers where their interim 2020 funding was lower than interim 2019 funding in order to review funding.

Therefore, if children are not attending the setting for headcount then you will not be able to claim for them this term at actual headcount. It will be possible to claim for the children as a late claim when the adjustment headcount task opens if they are attending then. FEEE funding cannot be claimed for the autumn term if a child does not attend.

Is it mandatory for a setting to refund private fees paid for sessions missed due to COVID-19 closure from March to June?

This was an issue that the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) looked in during the lockdown period, and we would recommend that each setting should look at the terms and conditions in their own contracts and policies with regards to whether fees apply when the setting is closed in general or because of an emergency closure alongside the following report.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nursery-and-early-years-sector-covid-19-restrictions-and-consumer-law/nursery-and-early-years-sector-covid-19-restrictions-and-consumer-law-advice#issue-1-charging-high-or-full-fees-for-services-not-provided-during-lockdown>

Can we take childcare students for placements?

Childcare students should query with their college what guidance they have been issued with on this matter, and it is worth noting that there is advice from Government about student placements in schools continuing, via the usual Initial Teacher Training networks as far as is practically possible. Further Education guidance about placements states: "You should continue initial teacher education (ITE), including teacher training placements, where possible." We have asked Ofsted and they have confirmed that students should check with their college. Settings should then include their decision within their risk assessment.

Can 2 childminders meet up for educational benefits with their mindees?

Childminders should be limiting contact with others where possible in line with the guidance and their risk assessments. Any professional development between childminders could be done without minded children or virtually. From a child's educational point of view, it could be achieved virtually with parental consent. New guidance from Monday 14th September limits the number of people who can meet indoors or outdoors to 6.

If I have a child, whose sibling goes to a different school and the school have had to close due to possible Covid cases, do I stop the child who comes to my setting coming in or can the child continue to attend?

It is our understanding that whilst the child whose school has closed needs to self-isolate the rest of the household do not, therefore sibling can attend their setting/school. If the child subsequently has symptoms and is tested positive, then the child's whole household would need to self-isolate and the sibling would not be able to attend school/setting.

Government guidance says schools are to leave a sample of tests on school site to enable any parents to take a test home if a child is showing symptoms. Is this also something that can be left within my premises for my clients?

*From 26 August, all schools and FE providers will receive an initial supply of 10 home test kits. Home test kits should only be offered to individuals in the **exceptional circumstance** that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. The best and fastest way for students or staff to access a test is to visit a testing site, however this does not currently apply for Early Years Providers*

Do I need to include information on school-based EY provision?

The DfE have provided the following response to this query:

Please note that the schools' attendance collection asks for the total number of pupils attending schools only and does not provide details of how many early years children attend. Therefore, we do need you to provide details of the number of children attending school-based early years providers, and the number of these settings which are open and closed.

Now that collection is weekly do you still require daily data on the numbers of children attending or do you want data on the numbers for a whole week?

We require approximate numbers of children in attendance for any typical day in the week of your return. We have not specified which day so you can be flexible in how you collect the data, but ideally this should be the same day each week so that each week's data is directly comparable to the previous weeks. As we request the data from you each Thursday, it may make sense to use the data from Thursdays.