

Updated FAQs 3 January 2021

PLEASE NOTE

We are currently experiencing an exceptionally high volume of queries into the FEEE Entitlement Funding Queries inbox. We will answer these as soon as possible either via FAQ's or individually. Please do not re send your email.

Q Are Early Years providers expected to open, even in tier 4 areas where schools are closed?

A *The announcement states that **all** Early Years settings (including childminders) should continue to allow **all** children to attend as normal, and this includes Tier 4 areas. This decision has been queried with the DfE, but at this point there has not been any changes to the guidance issued*

In areas where the Contingency Framework is implemented and schools are closed, school-based nurseries in primary schools have discretion to follow arrangements for the primary school.

Schools in Colchester, Tendring and Uttlesford have been advised, today, to not fully open on Tuesday but instead move to a remote education day and only open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers

Q I run a private preschool on a school site, should I close if the school does?

A *The school should still remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers and therefore we would recommend you liaise with the school to ensure you are able to continue to open as normal. We will liaise with you and the school on this if needed*

Q The school where my setting is based has told me I can't open due to their risk assessment; will I still receive funding for this time?

A *We will liaise with you and the school to review this decision to see if there are alternative options. With regards to the funding, we are currently awaiting further guidance from the DfE concerning funding for the Spring term and will endeavour to update the sector as soon as we have received this.*

Q We have very low staff numbers (either due to isolation, being vulnerable, or staffs' own childcare issues) without the normal number of staff how can I be expected to operate as usual, maintaining the necessary staff: child ratio?

A *Members of staff are classed as critical/key workers and are entitled to a school place for their children so we would recommend that your staff with school aged children contact their school to request a place for their child (ren) in the first instance.*

If your risk assessment indicates that you need to limit your numbers, then it would be right to prioritise the children of key/critical workers and vulnerable children as a temporary solution.

Further communication on how the FEEE funding should be administered for the Spring 2021 term will be sent to all providers as soon as we receive updates from the DfE.

Q Please can you confirm our funding for next term? If we have lower numbers due to parental choice and/or necessary isolation, will we still receive our expected funding payment?

A The FEEE funding will continue to be paid for any children not attending due to parental choice to delay their child starting this term. We are currently awaiting further guidance from the DfE concerning funding for the Spring 2021 term and will update the sector as soon as we have received this.

Q We are all very, very concerned of the danger we are being asked to put ourselves in. If we decided to close for the first two weeks of the spring term what impact will that have on our funding?

A We are raising as a matter of urgency the sectors' concerns with the DfE on the decision for childcare settings to remain open, and will update on any responses received

We are also currently awaiting further clarification on the impact on funding if settings do not open as directed. This will be shared as soon as it is known.

Q As a childminder can we look after all children including primary children that won't be going back to school, or is it only early years and primary age children whose parents are critical workers.

A At this point the out of school guidance hasn't been updated to reflect the announcement on 30 December 2020. However, in the absence of updated guidance, our advice is that you should only offer wraparound childcare to vulnerable school aged children and the school aged children of critical workers at either end of the school day. We will update further as the guidance is updated

Q I have 2 members of staff who are pregnant, and concerned about returning to nursery as we are in a Tier 4. Can you please advise where I stand on this? I only employ 4 staff, therefore will be unable to open should the 2 members who are pregnant not want to work.

A Current guidance states:

Staff who are pregnant

Pregnant women are considered 'clinically vulnerable' or in some cases 'clinically extremely vulnerable' to coronavirus (COVID-19) and therefore require special consideration as set out in the [guidance for pregnant employees](#).

Employers should carry out a risk assessment to follow the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW). More information is available on [workplace risk assessment for vulnerable people](#).

Information contained in the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives guidance on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in pregnancy](#) should be used as the basis for a risk assessment.

Pregnant women of any gestation should not be required to continue working if this is not supported by the risk assessment.

Women who are 28 weeks pregnant and beyond or are pregnant and have an underlying health condition that puts them at a greater risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) at any gestation, should take a more precautionary approach. Employers should ensure pregnant women are able to adhere to any active national guidance on social distancing or advice for pregnant women considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (this group may previously have been advised to shield).

If a decision is made to close as a result, further clarification would need to be sought with regards to the FEEE funding for Spring term.