

Email from Carolyn Terry to Essex early years and childcare and childcare providers

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>

Sent: 23 August 2021 07:25

Subject: Please Read - Covid-19 Update 23 August 2021

Dear All

I hope you are enjoying the summer break and if you have remained open during this time you have been able to get some time off or benefit from some quieter periods.

The DfE have circulated a number of updates in this email which I have included in this email, and summarised the content below: -

- Attendance data collection for Autumn term
- Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey Reminder on claiming food vouchers for eligible children
- Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19
- Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) in education and childcare settings
- Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- EYFS staff:child ratios – DfE approved qualifications
- Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case in all education and childcare sectors
- Contingency planning in education and childcare sectors
- Contacting NHS Test and Trace on 119 for issues and queries about the supply, ordering and delivery of test kits for all settings that are part of the education rapid testing programme
- Additional Childminders Q&A
- Reminder to refer to the EYFS disapplications guidance

Attendance data collection for Autumn term - the DfE have informed us that they require local authorities to continue collecting regular attendance data from childcare settings and childminders during the Autumn term, due to the fact there unfortunately remains a number of variables, such as progress with the vaccination programme, the spread of the virus and its impact on workforce availability, potential for new variants and the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, meaning we are still facing a complex and uncertain picture as we move towards autumn term. We have therefore decided to continue with the existing data collection in the autumn. Due to this, the DfE will continue to collect this data in, but to reduce the frequency of the collection in recognition of the feedback they have received. In practice this means ECC need to collect the attendance data collections as follows: -

- w/c 13th September
- w/c 11th October

Additionally, there will be 1 date in November, and 1 date in December still to be advised

If the situation with the pandemic allows, the DfE have said they will then cease this data collection and move to new, less burdensome arrangements in 2022. They have also said that, given the highly uncertain future trajectory of the virus, they may change these plans and collect data more frequently if the situation necessitates. We will keep you updated in any feedback from the DfE on this

Childcare Sufficiency Parent Survey - thank you to all of you that have completed the provider childcare sufficiency survey. We also need to gather information in from parents on this too, so can you please forward the information below and link to the survey to your parents and ask them to complete this. **The closing date for the survey is 1st September 2021**

Essex County Council have a legal responsibility to make sure there are enough childcare places to meet all children's needs across Essex via a Childcare Sufficiency Audit.

As a parent of children aged 0-19 (or 25 if your child has special education needs or disabilities) living in Essex, your views and experiences of childcare and early years are essential for us to understand how to evolve our plans. We also want to hear from you whether you use formal childcare or not. As this is so important, we will be asking about a variety of topics in the survey which will take around 10 minutes to complete.

Please click on the following link to complete the survey:

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/tell-us-about-your-childcare-needs>

Reminder on claiming food vouchers for eligible children - thank you to everyone that has or is continuing to claim the food vouchers for eligible children. Just as a reminder that you are still able to apply for a £15 food voucher for 4 weeks for every pre-school child that attends your setting **who is in receipt of EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium) or FEEE2 or Children aged 0-4 (non-statutory school age) who attend your setting who you are aware may be experiencing financial hardship at this time.** This is a total of £60.00 per child. Please note the change from the previous £25 per voucher to £15 per voucher this time.

To access the £15 food vouchers, childcare providers with children in receipt of **EYPP and FEEE2 funding** need to submit the number of eligible children you have registered at your setting. You will then be allocated a number of vouchers and validation codes that can be downloaded and passed directly to parents. **Please go to:** visit <https://www.evouchers.com/> and click login in the top right hand corner to log in using your email address

Updates from the DfE

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) the DfE have removed outdated term references, removed the guidance on routine vaccines and teething. The local outbreaks, mixing, tracing close contacts and self-isolation and face coverings sections were also updated. **Updated 17th August**

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#) Updated information about tracing and isolation and travelling to boarding schools. **Updated 17th August**

[Managing coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in education and childcare settings](#) The DfE have updated the contingency framework ahead of the autumn term, in line with wider government guidelines. The updated framework includes the new thresholds at which you might consider seeking public health advice and taking further action to reinforce measures already in place, updates to the circumstances in which local health protection teams or directors of public health might recommend you introduce some additional measures, and annexed guidance for managing cases in settings from 23 August. **Updated 17th August**

[Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) Added section on 'tracing and self-isolation' to explain that children under 18 do not need to self-isolate if they're identified by NHS Track and Trace as a contact. **Updated 17th August**

[Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) Added section on 'tracing and self-isolation' to explain that children under 18 and fully vaccinated adults do not need to self-isolate if they're identified by NHS Track and Trace as a contact. **Updated 17th August**

[EYFS staff:child ratios – DfE approved qualifications](#)

Page summary: Lists of qualifications that meet DfE's criteria for counting in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework staff:child ratios.

Change made: We have updated the 'Early years qualifications: from 1 September 2014' spreadsheets at rows 16 and 35. **Updated:13 August 2021**

Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case in all education and childcare sectors - from Monday 16 August unvaccinated young people up to the age of 18 years and 6 months and fully vaccinated adults, are no longer required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Those identified as a close contact will be informed by NHS Test and Trace that they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We strongly encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so. There is no requirement to self-isolate while awaiting PCR test results and so individuals can attend their setting as usual.

Children and young people who attend an education or childcare setting and who have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend their setting as normal.

18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children and young people until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will

be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

We have updated the frequently asked questions on changes to contact tracing of close contacts and self-isolation. These can all be found on the document sharing platforms for [primary and early years](#), [secondary schools, further education and higher education](#) and [children's social care](#).

The DfE have also updated the following guidance to reflect the change:

- [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Higher education COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)
- [Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [Special schools and other specialist settings: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Responsibility for exams](#)
- [COVID-19: assessment processes for selective school admissions](#)
- [Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)
- [Dedicated transport to schools and colleges COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance for children's social care services](#)
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Contingency planning in education and childcare sectors - the DfE have now updated the [contingency framework](#), which outlines what should be covered within your setting's contingency plans. There is no expectation for you to create new documents or reformat any existing plans to specific templates, but plans should be up to date. We need to continue to find the right balance between protecting public health and living with COVID-19 as more of the population is vaccinated.

The updated framework also includes:

- the new thresholds at which you might consider seeking public health advice and taking further action
- updates to the circumstances in which local health protection teams or directors of public health might recommend you introduce some additional measures, (for example, in response to a COVID-19 outbreak)
- annexed guidance for managing cases in settings from 23 August
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Contacting NHS Test and Trace on 119 for issues and queries about the supply, ordering and delivery of test kits for all settings that are part of the education rapid testing programme - from this point on, please contact NHS Test and Trace on 119 for any issues or queries about the supply, ordering or delivery of test kits. The helpline is open 7:00am to 11:00pm, Monday to Sunday. Please note that the DfE COVID-19 helpline will no longer be able to respond to queries about test kit supply and logistics.

For all other enquiries about the rapid testing programme in education, please continue to contact the DfE COVID-19 helpline on 0800 046 8687. The helpline is open 8:00am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday and 10:00am to 6:00pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Additional Childminders Q&A – please see the attached additional information for childminders

Reminder to refer to *the [EYFS disapplications guidance](#) which confirms that the period in which the EYFS disapplications can be used ends on 31 August 2021. Please pay particular attention to the requirements for Paediatric First Aid requalification, as set out below: -*

Previously, if PFA certificate requalification training was prevented for reasons associated directly with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, or by complying with related government advice, the validity of current certificates could have been extended to 31 March 2021 at the latest. This applied to certificates expiring on or after 1 October 2020. This extension period has ended, and practitioners must attend PFA certificate requalification training in order to have a valid certificate if their previous certificate has expired.

From September 2021, we will be reverting back to using the email address Ofsted have on record for all childcare providers and childminders to share these communications, as opposed to any additional email addresses that you may have provided us with. Should you no longer wish to receive these emails, please email the FEEE mailbox (fеееqueries@essex.gov.uk) and we will remove you from the distribution list.

Best wishes

Carolyn

Carolyn Terry

EYCC Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager
Strategy, Planning and Performance
Education Directorate
Essex County Council
<https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/>

Please note my normal working days are Tuesday to Friday

T: 033 3013 6481

Mob: 078 2586 0004

E:: carolyn.terry@essex.gov.uk

