

Information for Parents (National Guidance)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

FAQs for Parents (Shropshire)

Why has my school not opened for all of the children in reception, year 1 and year 6?

Any 're-opening' should be incremental and driven by a risk assessment undertaken by the setting. There are a number of reasons why some settings might be unable to provide a place for all of the children including:

- not having enough staff available (e.g. unable to be in the setting due to 'shielding')
- limited space in the setting to ensure social distancing, even in groups

The government advice is up to 15 children in a classroom, why is my school taking less?

School building and designs vary across the country. Where a Headteacher has completed a risk assessment and concluded that social distancing is not possible with 15 children in a room the local authority supports their decision to have fewer children.

Why has my school introduced rotas of classes/year groups, which is against government advice?

The government advice is to try and avoid rotas of classes and year groups. However, for example, in many small rural primary schools limited classroom space can make this difficult to manage. Additionally, many Shropshire children travel to school by bus and maintaining social distancing for whole classes/year groups of children may not be possible as they travel to school. The local authority will support schools with implementing a phased integration if this is required, as we strive to get children back into school.

How will transport be provided for my child?

Your child's school will liaise with the transport provider in relation to children who use school transport. There may be changes to timetables and these will be shared with you by the school.

At what time will my child be expected to arrive at school and at what time will they need to be collected?

Schools may organise a staggered drop off and collection time for pupils. This will be based on the assessment of risk. Parents should adhere to guidelines that have been set out by schools. Only one parent or carer should accompany the child to school to minimise risk.

I'm a keyworker and my child has been in the childcare provision throughout. My child isn't in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or 6 what will happen to them?

Schools will still prioritise vulnerable and key worker children for school places, regardless of their year group.

My nursery/reception child won't understand about keeping 2 metres away from their friends, how will the school manage this risk?

It is understood by the government and schools that it would be impossible to keep young children apart, so the idea is to keep small groups of children together with the same adult/s, using the same equipment and resources in a so called "bubble". This attempts to limit as much as possible contact between groups of children.

Why is my child's school shut over half term?

Although schools have been shut for the majority of children throughout 'lockdown' they have been open for vulnerable and key worker's children. Where a number of staff are unable to be in school other staff have had to cover, often daily, including over Easter and bank holidays. Additionally, staff have been providing home learning materials and monitoring children's work throughout 'lockdown'. We do not expect schools to open over half term. Some schools have decided to remain open for the vulnerable & key worker children, but this is at the discretion of the Headteacher and Governors.

Who do I contact with questions about schools being open?

There is a Shropshire Council helpline for parents. The number is 0345 678 9008.

What is the latest position on free school meals?

The current arrangements will continue for children entitled to benefits related free school meals but not attending school. This will mean that your child's school will continue to provide vouchers, hampers or lunches.

If your child is attending school then they will receive a free school meal if they are entitled to a benefits related free school meal or a universal free school meal.

Will my child's school continue to set home learning if my child is not in school?

We are waiting for the DfE to clarify the expectations about home learning but it is highly likely that parents might see some changes to home learning especially in primary schools. This will be because more staff will be involved in teaching and therefore the setting of work might have to be done in a different way and by different staff.

What is happening with GCSE, A level and vocational course grades?

Since the Secretary of State for Education announced that the 2020 exam series in England would be cancelled to help fight the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) schools and colleges have been asked to provide centre assessment grades for their students for this summer's awards. These grades submitted to exam boards must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.

The evidence for the grades will be based on classwork, bookwork, the results of any assignments or mock exams and previous examination results. Each centre will then rank order the students within each grade for each subject – for example, for all those students with a centre assessment grade of 5 in GCSE maths, a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on.

Schools and colleges have been told that they must not share their centre assessment grades with students, parents or carers, under any circumstances, until after final results are issued.

The awarding organisation offering each qualification will use the centre assessed result, combined with other relevant information, to determine the most appropriate calculated result.

Does my child's school have to provide wrap-around care during the summer term?

We will be in a period of change and transition. Schools are not required to provide wrap around care during the remainder of the summer term.

My child is in year 10, when will they be back in school?

Schools have been asked to 'begin some face to face support with year 10 and 12 pupils' from 1 June at the earliest. Schools and colleges across Shropshire are preparing for this and how it will work best for their pupils. It is not anticipated that this contact will be on a full time basis at this stage. Schools and colleges will be in touch with parents and carers during the second half of the summer term.

Will all primary schools be opening to more pupils on 1 June?

The government has been clear that they will review the latest position on Thursday May 28 and only re-open to more pupils if the evidence supports the decision. Equally, schools will only open to more pupils once they have completed a risk assessment and put in place any safety measures that it identifies.

FAQs for parents (national guidance)

Which year groups are returning to school?

The Government has asked primary schools to welcome back children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 alongside priority groups. The Government's ambition is to bring all primary school year groups for the last month of the Summer half term if conditions nationally make it feasible. This will be kept under review.

Why were these Year groups chosen?

The reasoning given by the DfE for younger children returning is that the "moderately high scientific confidence in evidence suggests younger children are less likely to become unwell with Covid.19. Secondly because evidence shows the lack of time in education is most detrimental to them. Y6 children will benefit from the transition element of a return to school before Secondary schools.

Why aren't all the children coming back? Can my sibling attend with my child in one of these Year groups?

The DfE have based this on the need to reduce the rate of transmission of the virus. In doing so the DfE have taken account of the need to reduce numbers returning as a gradual process and thereby maintaining smaller groupings in classes. Sadly, siblings cannot attend unless they are in a priority group. This would raise the number of pupils attending the school and would affect the risk assessment that headteachers and governors are required to complete.

Does my child have to attend school?

No one with symptoms should attend for any reason. All children should attend unless self-isolating or shielding. Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time, the schools will not be held to account for attendance levels.

Will my child be taught with their existing class?

Schools are required, under the guidance, to form new groups of children. This will be based on the school's own risk assessment. It may be the unavoidable case that children have a different member of staff support them and not their usual class teacher until the end of term.

I am worried that my child is vulnerable or that a family member is, should I send them back to school?

Children and young people who are considered extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should continue to shield and should not be expected to attend.

Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Children and young people who live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and the child or young person is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Children and young people who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) as defined in the social distancing guidance and including those who are pregnant, can attend.

Will the school have assembly/acts of worship? What about other school events - leaver's assemblies, sports' day etc?

Schools may look and feel quite different during the next few months. The usual activities may have to be postponed. The school may consider inappropriate to hold such events based on their assessment of risk. At all times the health and safety of pupils, families and staff is paramount.

Will staff and children wear masks or PPE?

The following measures will be taken as directed by government to protect the children with masks deemed unnecessary:

“Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This does not apply to schools or other education settings. Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings”.

Schools have been provided with guidance on the use of PPE for certain tasks (supporting sick children, administration of first aid). Use of PPE outside of these occasions will be determined by the school’s risk assessments.

Will children and young people be eligible for testing?

The government advice is:

When settings open to the wider cohort of children and young people, all those children and young people eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. This will enable them to get back into childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. To access testing parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5.

Will teachers and other staff be able to get tested if they have symptoms?

Access to testing is already available to all essential workers. This includes anyone involved in education, childcare or social work – including both public and voluntary sector workers, as well as foster carers. See the full list of essential workers. Education settings as employers can book tests through an online digital portal. There is also an option for employees to book tests directly on the portal.

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who

are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

When the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.