

Frequently asked questions for parents/carers of children

Update: 22 September 2020

[I have concerns about the arrangements that the school is putting in place to respond to COVID-19?](#)

Schools are required to follow national guidance and carry out risk assessments to ensure that children, staff, and parents are kept as safe as possible. This means that each school needs to look at their circumstances and the physical layout of their school and make decisions about how best to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Schools therefore may have different plans from each other as each school building is different. All plans are following national guidance. If you have any concerns, please get in touch with your child's school to talk about your concerns.

[Does my child have to go to school?](#)

Yes, as of September 2020 the Department for Education has reapplied the law. It is compulsory for your child to receive a full-time education.

[Why does my child have to go to school?](#)

Returning to school is so important for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school impacts on children's learning, progress and social and emotional wellbeing. We know from the survey that many children and young people have missed their friends and have missed school.

[What is the risk to my child?](#)

Evidence suggests that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low, but that there are negative health impacts of being out of school.

[Will my child be safe in school?](#)

Yes, each school is different, but all schools are following Government guidelines on reopening schools to children. Schools will have a bubble and your child will stay in this bubble. They will also have completed a risk assessment, and this will be regularly updated by them. They will also have enhanced cleaning arrangements.

You can help by asking your child to wash their hands regularly, not touch their face, cough into their elbow, use tissues and bin after use and to do what school asks them to do to ensure their safety.

[How can I find out what the plan is for my child's school?](#)

You can visit the school's website or contact the Head Teacher.

[How many children are in a bubble?](#)

In primary schools, a bubble is usually a class of pupils. In secondary schools, a bubble is likely to be a whole year group. Secondary schools have larger bubbles to allow pupils to have access to the whole curriculum and specialist teachers.

Should my child wear a face covering in school?

Unless exempt, in education settings where students in Year 7 and above are educated, including middle schools, face coverings should be worn by staff, visitors and students when moving around in corridors and communal areas.

Children in primary schools do not have to wear a face covering.

Will my child's teacher be wearing a face covering?

In most cases teachers will not be wearing face coverings. However, there are a few situations where this may be required - for example if a member of staff must provide close medical care for your child.

What if another child in the class has symptoms?

Schools will be following Government guidance if this happens. The child will be sent home and asked to self-isolate. Children who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless the child tests positive, your child develops symptoms themselves or you have been requested to do so by NHS Test & Trace.

Your child will be asked to wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser and the area around the person with symptoms will be cleaned with normal household disinfectant after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

I'm worried, should I get my child tested?

You should not get your child tested unless they have symptoms – see below.

What if my child has symptoms?

If your child has symptoms of coronavirus (high temperature/hot to touch, new persistent cough, loss or change in sense of taste or smell) the child and their household need to follow the Government guidance on self-isolation (www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance) and arrange for your child to be tested (call 119 or book through www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test). You also need to inform the school.

There is also further guidance on our website here >

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus/Northumberland-schools.aspx#spottingthedifferencecommoncoldandcovid-19> which may help you determine if your child does have symptoms and what you should do if they have the common cold.

Will I be allowed to go into my child's school?

School will inform you what to do if you need to visit. It may be that you need to make an appointment. If you need to collect an ill child, you may be asked to wait outside, and staff will bring your child to you.

I am concerned about my child sharing school resources. How can this be safe?

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, your child may be provided with their own items. Alternatively, you can provide these basic items in a pencil case, for your child. Secondary children are expected to have

their own stationery and it is important that you provide these. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces.

Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between bubbles.

[My child is finding it difficult to go to school. What should I do?](#)

Talk to your school and explain why your child is finding it difficult to go to school. They will work with you to plan how best to support your child. Schools have access to advice and guidance on supporting children and young people who are anxious and can refer to different services based on the needs of your child if any additional support or advice is needed.

[Will my child still receive the full curriculum?](#)

Schools will be trying to ensure that this occurs. Modifications to the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year, with the aim of returning to normal curriculum content by no later than the summer term 2021.

[Will my child be in the same classroom all day?](#)

Primary aged children already spend most of the day in one classroom and this will continue. Secondary children may find that movement around the school is reduced or that they are asked to move around school on specific routes. School may adopt staggered break times and lunch times and have time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups. Passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk.

[My children have different start times – why is this?](#)

Schools will be trying to reduce contact between children at particular pressure points in the day. These include drop off and collection times. Please follow the guidance that school gives you. Children will still receive a full education; school will have adjusted the timetable or start/end times to accommodate this. If this causes problems, please talk to your school. Schools will be asking you not to gather at the school gate.

[What will happen if I don't send my child to school?](#)

From September onwards, the usual rules on school attendance apply. If your child is of compulsory school age it is a parents' duty to ensure that they attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. Your child's school is responsible for recording attendance and following up pupil absence. The aim would always be to work with parents/carers to resolve any issues or concerns around attendance.

[Can my child attend for just a few days each week?](#)

As a rule, no, as all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or

other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

[Are breakfast clubs and wrap around care re-starting?](#)

Yes, schools can now re-start breakfast clubs and wrap-around care. Pupils who attend these will be able to move from the activity into their normal bubble.

[I have just returned from holiday abroad, what should I do?](#)

Details about which countries can be visited without quarantine restrictions on return are constantly being updated, check for the latest position on [travel quarantine on the government website](#). If you find that your family is required to quarantine then your child must isolate at home for the necessary period. You should contact your child's school and let them know so that homework can be provided.

[I don't want my child to return to school. Can I continue to educate him/her at home longer as part of an informal arrangement?](#)

No. If your child normally receives their education from a school at which they are a registered pupil, then they must resume this education through attendance at the school from the first day of the Autumn Term.

[I am considering home educating my child rather than sending them back to school. What do I need to consider?](#)

We are aware that a number of families may be thinking about Elective Home Education. We encourage families to think carefully about this. Please read our leaflet linked below which provides more information about Elective Home Education.

[10 things you should know about Elective Home Education](#)

Medical conditions

[What if my child is anxious about going into school?](#)

It will be normal for some children to be worried about returning to school. Talk to them about their concerns and use the answers to these questions to help answer any questions they may have. If your child seems particularly anxious, talk to your school.

[My child has been shielding, can I keep them off school?](#)

No, shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August, after a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of Covid19. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. If you have concerns, you may like to talk to the consultant/paediatrician working with your child.

[My child has a serious medical condition which has required them to be shielded, will they be safe at school?](#)

Yes, your child's school will be following Government guidance and taking every precaution to ensure their safety. However, you may like to talk to the consultant/paediatrician working with your child for more specific information. Your school will work with you/the medical professionals to ensure any additional safety measures are put in place.

My child has a serious condition and the medical professionals have advised against a return to school. Will I get in trouble?

School would like the medical professionals to confirm this is the case. This could be by letter, phone call or email from the professionals. Then, and because they are complying with medical/public health advice, schools will be able to offer your child access to remote education. These activities will be monitored. Absence in this case will not be penalised.