

Overstone Park School

Covid Protective Measures Information – April 2022

Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children’s social care settings.

Introduction

This publication provides non-statutory guidance. It has been produced to help all education, childcare, and children’s social care settings respond to emergencies.

This guidance does not cover every aspect of what settings should do in relation to emergency planning. Settings must comply with their legal responsibilities, including under health and safety law and should seek legal advice as needed.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before April 2023.

What has changed

This guidance replaces the previous advice on emergency planning for education and childcare settings which only applied to schools and early years.

This guidance now applies to:

- early years.
- wraparound childcare and out of school settings.
- children’s social care residential providers.
- schools.
- further education.
- higher education.
- SEND and specialist settings.

This guidance does not apply to:

- nannies or au pairs, as they work in the child’s or children’s family home.

We have added information on:

- Making an emergency plan
- Prioritising education
- Significant public health incidents
- Workforce issues
- Supporting staff, children, pupils and students during and following an emergency in your setting
- Insurance
- Remote education
- Free school meals

Overview

Every emergency is different but, in all cases, educational and wellbeing impacts should be considered when taking any emergency and risk management actions.

The school will do our best to minimise the amount and length of any disruption to education or childcare, including maximising the number of children, pupils and students who are in face-to-face provision. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remains of paramount importance. The school will continue to have regard to any statutory safeguarding guidance that applies to the setting.

Making an emergency plan

All education, childcare, and children's social care settings should have emergency plans in place detailing what we would do and how we would respond if we need to take any temporary actions in the event of an emergency.

The aim of an emergency plan is to help the school and our staff respond effectively to an emergency at the setting or on an educational visit or outing while, where possible, continuing to prioritise and maximise face-to-face learning.

The emergency plan should be generic enough to cover a range of potential incidents occurring during, and outside, normal working hours including weekends and holidays.

These incidents include:

- public health incidents (e.g. a significant infectious disease incident)
- severe weather (e.g. flooding)
- serious injury to a child, pupil, student, or member of staff (e.g. transport accident)

- significant damage to property (e.g. fire)
- criminal activity (e.g. bomb threat)
- the effects of a disaster in the local community

The school also includes emergency procedures for:

- extended services, for example for school breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and
- holiday activities
- open days, transition or taster days
- live performances with an audience

A good plan should cover:

- roles and responsibilities
- when and how to seek advice should you need it
- details on the types of steps you might take in the event of an emergency and
- actions you would take to enact them quickly
- how you would ensure every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and
- quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled, including through remote education where appropriate
- how you would communicate any changes to children, pupils, students, parents, carers and staff; and how you would respond if your advice is not accepted

The planning process

Preparing for emergencies is an ongoing process involving:

- risk assessment
- planning
- training
- exercises
- reviewing

Throughout each stage of this process, it is important that you consult members of staff, management boards and governors (or their equivalent for your setting) to gain their involvement and support.

Significant public health incidents

A single suspected outbreak or incident of infectious disease will not normally constitute an emergency. Most infectious diseases in education, childcare, and children's social care settings can be managed by following the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) health protection in education and childcare settings guidance.

Emergency plans include a range of steps that the school might take in the event of a significant public health incident. They also include when we might consider seeking specialist advice from your UKHSA health protection team in line with the UKHSA health protection in education and childcare settings guidance.

Registered medical practitioners in England and Wales have a statutory duty to notify their local authority or local UKHSA health protection team of suspected cases of certain (notifiable) infectious diseases. Settings will be contacted if there are actions required within the setting as part of public health management.

In large-scale public health incidents where decisions about actions to take in education, childcare and social care settings are made at a national level, DfE will work with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), UKHSA, the Chief Medical Officer, and other government departments, as well as relevant local authorities and directors of public health.

Higher Education providers should also ensure that responses to the most serious public health incidents are discussed with the local director of public health and agreed in advance as part of contingency planning, for example for the start of academic years.

Severe weather

During severe weather conditions, such as flooding, storms, or snow, the school will remain open for as many children, pupils or students as possible.

However, it might be necessary to close temporarily due to inaccessibility or risk of injury. The school will do all we can to reopen as soon as possible.

Where the school is temporarily closed during severe weather, we will consider providing remote education for the duration of the closure in line with DfE guidance.

Providing remote education does not change the imperative to remain open, or to reopen as soon as possible.

If flooding or severe weather has significantly impacted the school and we require additional support, the school will contact the incident alert team who will be able to assist with getting the school reopened as quickly and safely as possible.

Email: incident.alert@education.gov.uk

Security-related incidents in school

It is important for the school to have a policy and plan in place to manage and respond to security-related incidents.

The school's security policy complements our safeguarding policy, particularly where it puts in place measures to protect students; and address the threat of serious violence. This forms part of our suite of policies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of students and staff including in relation to the online environment.

Staff and students should be familiar with what is required by the school's security policy and plan. Senior staff also have an awareness of relevant security networks and be able to evaluate and assess the impact of any new initiatives on the security policy and its day-to-day operation.

School security is non-statutory guidance for schools that covers a range of guidance and templates to help schools and colleges consider the risk from a range of security related threats, including crime and terrorism.

Supporting your workforce, children, pupils and students through an emergency

Workforce

The school is able to explain to our staff any steps taken to keep them safe at work as part of our emergency plans.

Our risk assessment already considers any risks to female employees of childbearing age and, in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers. Employers discuss concerns with staff where required.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has more information on managing risk and risk assessment in the workplace.

UKHSA's health protection in education and childcare settings guidance also contains practical advice on managing a range of infections, including for those who may be at higher risk of infection.

Staff shortages during an emergency

The school is best placed to determine the staff required to meet the needs of children, pupils and students in your setting.

Where the school is experiencing staff absences, in the first instance, we will follow your usual process for covering absences.

Early Years

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework sets the standards that schools and childcare settings must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old.

Settings that are experiencing staff shortages should:

- work with their local authority to identify how appropriate provision can be put in place while keeping staffing arrangements as consistent as possible where necessary, pool staff with another setting or take on qualified and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked staff from other educational settings (including local registered childminders) that have been closed, or invite local registered childminders to work with them at the setting – registered childminders can already do this under the 50 / 50 registration flexibility they have, providing they have approval from Ofsted.

In some cases, the nursery may choose to respond to staff and child absences by temporarily mixing age groups of children who would otherwise be educated or cared for separately.

Ratios are guided by all relevant requirements and by the needs of individual children within the group. For the purposes of meeting EYFS ratio and qualification requirements, all staff educating or caring for a mixed age group of children can be considered 'available to work directly with' all of the children who have been grouped together.

In all circumstances, the nursery remains responsible for maintaining the quality of care, safety and security of the children in your setting.

Wraparound and out of schools setting providers

Wraparound and out of schools setting providers may also consider:

- bringing together groups and classes with staff working together.

- using Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked staff or volunteers from other settings to provide cover supervision or oversee alternative activities.
- re-arranging sessions.
- working with the local authority to identify how appropriate provision can be put in place.

Schools and FE

As a school, if some of our teachers can't get to work due to an emergency, we may consider the following:

- Continuing to make use of temporary staff
- The way in which we deploy our staff and use existing staff more flexibly bringing together groups and classes with teachers and support staff working together.

When considering modifying our class arrangements, we will need to be mindful of the limits placed on group size by factors such as the school estate and the Infant Class Size Regulations. These regulations limit the size of an infant class to 30 pupils per 11 schoolteachers, subject to some limited exceptions set out in the School Admissions Code.

Prioritising places

In exceptional circumstances, if high levels of staff absence mean we need to temporarily prioritise places in the school (for example, where a setting is unable to operate at full capacity), priority will be given to vulnerable children and young people (see Annex A - Vulnerable Children and Young People) and children of critical workers (see Annex B – Critical Workers).

Early Years providers

Early years, wraparound provision, and out of school settings will then also give priority to 3- and 4-year-olds, in particular those who will be transitioning to Reception, followed by younger age groups.

Local authorities should work with settings to identify provision for children who need places.

Remote education

Where possible, the school will provide remote education to allow pupils and students to keep pace with their education when in-person attendance in school or college is either not possible or contrary to government guidance. We will therefore continue to be prepared to implement high-quality remote education so that any pupil or student who is well enough to learn from home, but unable to attend school in person, can continue to do so.

Some pupils and students with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so the school will work collaboratively with families to put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education appropriate for their level of need.

The school will refer to the guidance for remote education.

Recording attendance during an emergency

The school will continue to record pupil absence in the register in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations and school attendance guidance using the most appropriate code.

Where pupils are unable to attend school in exceptional circumstances they will be recorded as Code Y (unable to attend in exceptional circumstances) unless a more appropriate code applies.

Where pupils are unable to attend school because they are ill or have an infectious illness they will be recorded as Code I (illness).

Vulnerable Children and Young People

In all circumstances, vulnerable children and young people are prioritised for continued face-to-face education and childcare.

The school also continues to have regard to any statutory safeguarding guidance that applies, including:

- Keeping children safe in education
- Working Together to Safeguard children
- the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework

It is important that early years settings, schools (including mainstream and specialist settings) and further education providers put in place systems to keep in contact with vulnerable children and young people if they are not attending, particularly if they have a social worker.

This includes:-

- notifying their social worker (if they have one) and, for looked-after children, the local authority virtual school head.
- agreeing with the social worker the best way to maintain contact and offer support
- keeping in contact with vulnerable children and young people to check their wellbeing and refer onto other services if additional support is needed

In determining who is vulnerable, the definition of vulnerable children and young people in place during the COVID-19 pandemic is useful to keep in mind - which can be found at Annex A – Vulnerable Children and Young People.

Some children and young people may be vulnerable who are not officially in statutory systems, and the school will seek to support any children and young people who we believe may have challenging circumstances at home.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remains of paramount importance.

There will be no change to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, which remain the responsibility of the 3 safeguarding partners:

- local authorities
- clinical commissioning groups
- chief officers of police

In the event of an emergency, all local safeguarding partners are expected to be vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats with the aim of keeping vulnerable children and young people safe.

Safeguarding partners and designated safeguarding leads

The school continues to have regard to statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping children safe in education, and we have trained designated safeguarding leads (DSL) available on site.

Our designated safeguarding leads are as follows. Whilst primarily assigned to the areas stated; any of the designated safeguarding leads can deal with a safeguarding matter within all departments within the school.

Miss A West – Early Years

Mrs D York – Primary School

Mrs M Brown – Secondary School

In such cases where a DSL is not on site, the following option will be considered:

- a trained DSL (or deputy) from the setting to be available to be contacted via phone or online video, for example working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on-site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

Wellbeing and support

Some children, young people and adults may experience a variety of emotions in response to an emergency situation, such as anxiety, stress, or low mood. You can access useful links and resources of support on the MindED learning platform for professionals.

Other mental health resources for children and young people include:

- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- UKHSA's Every Mind Matters
- Become's care advice line for looked-after children
- NHS guidance resources and services for mental health, learning disabilities and autism

The school will work collaboratively with children, young people, adults, and their families who are anxious to reassure them. Discussions will have a collaborative approach, focusing on the welfare of the child or young person and responding to the concerns of parents, carers or young people.

Exam and assessment disruption

The school is prepared for possible disruption to exams or assessment as part of our emergency planning and staff members are aware of these plans.

In the very exceptional circumstances where the school might need to close, or if a pupil or student misses an exam or formal assessment due to circumstances beyond their control, we will discuss alternative arrangements with our awarding bodies.

In line with awarding body requirements, the school has contingency plans in place, including alternative venue arrangements, sufficient invigilator cover, and plans for if the exams officer is absent.

The school is responsible for making sure pupils, students, parents and carers know what has been agreed, for example:

- plans for using alternative venues.
- where a pupil or student is absent for acceptable reason, the opportunity to apply for special consideration to receive an exam result, based on the exams and non-exam-assessment that the student was able to complete.
- the opportunity for pupils and students to sit any missed exam or formal assessment at a later date, where their qualification allows it.

Assessments

If we have to close the school, or if a pupil misses a statutory assessment due to an emergency, the school will consider alternative arrangements in line with the relevant guidance from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) or the department.

The school is responsible for making sure parents, carers and children know what has been agreed, for example:

- moving the assessment to a different point in the assessment window where the assessment and reporting arrangements give you flexibility.
- agreeing with STA a timetable variation (for the assessment to be taken on an alternative day) for end of key stage 2 tests in English reading and mathematics.
- reporting alternative information about a child's performance to their parents where it is not possible for the child to take the statutory assessment.

SEND and specialist settings

Health professionals attending a setting may be following slightly different guidance from UKHSA due to their wider work in settings with vulnerable adults.

In an emergency, where possible, specialists, therapists and other health professionals who support children and young people with SEND (for example speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists and specialist teachers), will provide interventions as usual.

Where children and young people with EHC plans are not attending school because they are following public health advice, multi-agency professionals will collaborate to agree how to meet their duties to deliver the provision set out in the EHC plan.

Some pupils and students with SEND may need specific help adjusting to any changes in their routines that emergency measures may involve. Staff will plan to meet these needs based on the individual pupil or child and their circumstances, for example using social stories.

The school will ensure pupils and students with medical conditions are fully supported, using individual healthcare plans where appropriate to help ensure they continue to receive an education in line with their peers. This includes working with families and the relevant health professionals, as well as local authorities and other services as necessary.

The school will consider whether we need any additional processes in place for pupils and students who regularly:

- attend more than one site or different providers.

- move between a training provider and workplace as part of an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship

Insurance

Business interruption Insurance

For childcare providers that have an insurance policy that covers government-ordered closure of a setting and unspecified notifiable disease, you should seek advice from your insurer or broker as to whether the terms and conditions in your policy allow you to make a claim. Advice may also be sought from the Association of British Insurers (ABI).

Schools that are commercially insured should contact their insurer direct and those schools members of the Departments Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) should refer to the contact details within their member packs.

Public liability Insurance

It is a legal requirement that registered out of school and childcare providers¹ must carry the appropriate insurance (for example, public liability insurance) to cover all premises from which they provide childcare, including childminding.

Nurseries should check the terms and conditions of their public liability insurance policies and consult with their insurance providers and brokers to determine their coverage for the emergency. For general advice on insurance matters (but not on specific policies), the ABI can be contacted by telephone on 020 7600 3333 or email info@abi.org.uk.

Different insurers may offer different forms of emergency coverage; therefore, settings are encouraged to shop around to seek the most suitable cover at the best price. The British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA) can offer guidance on how to look across the insurance market for the best deals and may be able to provide names of specialist brokers. BIBA can be contacted at by telephone on 0370 950 1790 or email enquiries@biba.org.uk. If you are unsure which insurance is relevant, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

¹ Providers registered on the Early Years Register and/or the General Childcare Register under the Childcare (Early Years Register) Regulations 2008 or the Childcare (General Childcare Register) Regulations 2008 respectively.

Contact details and useful information

Incident alert team

Email incident.alert@education.gov.uk

DfE incident support helpline: Telephone: 0800 046 8687

To provide advice and support to the sector when dealing with emergency situations and incidents. Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

Useful information

The following documents may be useful when considering our plan:

- Cabinet Office: preparation and planning for emergencies.
- Cabinet Office: pandemic flu.
- DfE: health and safety advice for schools.
- Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings.
- DfE: preventing extremism in the education and children's services sectors.
- DfE: school security: advice on access to, and barring of individuals from, school premises.
- Met Office: severe weather warning system .
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Advice for workplaces ([hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)).
- UKHSA Health protection in education and childcare settings.

Annex A – Vulnerable Children and Young People

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, (including children and young people who have a child in need plan or a child protection plan) and children who are looked-after by the local authority.
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children’s social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance.

This might include:

- children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services or in the process of being referred to children’s services or who have previously received support from children’s social care services (as identified by local authorities).
- adopted children or children on a special guardianship order.
- those at risk of becoming NEET (‘not in employment, education or training’).
- those living in temporary accommodation.
- those who are young carers.
- those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study).
- care leavers.
- children and young people in a family circumstance presenting challenges for them, such as drug and alcohol misuse, parental offending, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- others at the provider and local authority’s discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Annex B – Critical Workers

Critical workers

We expect you to maximise the number of children, pupils and students who are in face-to-face provision during an emergency. If the impact of an emergency means that not everyone can attend face-to-face provision, we expect you to inform parents as part of your emergency communications of the impact, set out the groups you are prioritising for face-to-face provision, and invite parents to tell you if they meet one of the critical worker categories.

Parents whose work is critical to an emergency response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. If exceptional circumstances mean that attendance is temporarily limited, children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to their setting if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

Health and social care

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes:

- childcare
- support and teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals who must remain active during an emergency response to deliver this approach

Key public services

This includes:

- those essential to the running of the justice system.
- religious staff.

- charities and workers delivering key frontline services.
- those responsible for the management of the deceased.
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of:

- an emergency response.
- essential public services, such as the payment of benefits including in government.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food:

- production
- processing
- distribution
- sale and delivery
- as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

Public safety and national security

This includes:

- police and support staff
- Ministry of Defence civilians
- contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to an emergency response)
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)
- National Crime Agency staff
- those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during an emergency response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes:

- staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure)
- the oil, gas, electricity, and water sectors (including sewerage)
- information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during an emergency response
- key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services)
- postal services and delivery
- payments providers
- waste disposal sectors