

COVID-19 Virus Government Advice and Guidance

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. That is why the government has given clear guidance on [self-isolation](#), [household isolation](#) and [social distancing](#).

And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

It is important to underline that schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

Schools are, therefore, being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and **cannot** be safely cared for at home. Vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).

We know that schools also want to support other children facing social difficulties and we will support them to do so.

Parents/carers whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents/carers working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as elderly grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision:

Health and Social care

- **Doctors**
- **Nurses**
- **Midwives**
- **Paramedics**
- **Social Workers**
- **Care Workers**
- **Other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers**
- **Support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector**
- **Any worker part of the health and social care chain**

Education and childcare

- **Nursery and teaching staff**
- **Social Workers**
- **Specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 Response to deliver this approach**

Key Public services

- **Workers essential to running the justice system**
- **Religious staff**
- **Charity Workers delivering key frontline services**
- **Workers responsible for the management of the deceased**
- **Journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting**

Local and national government

- **Administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of COVID-19 response**
- **Administrators to delivering essential public services such as payment of benefits**

Food and other necessary goods

- **Those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery**
- **Those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).**

Public safety and national security

- **Police and support staff**
- **Ministry of Defence civilians**
- **Contractor and armed forces personnel**
- **Fire and rescue service employees**
- **National Crime Agency Staff**
- **Those maintaining border security**
- **Prison and probation staff**

Transport

- **Those who keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during COVID - 19 response including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.**
- **Utilities, communication and financial services**
 - Workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure
 - Workers in the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage),
 - Workers information technology and data infrastructure sector
 - Workers in primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 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)
 - Workers in postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.