

Q&A for parents in preschool settings, childminders, nursery, reception, year 1 and 6

The following questions and answers have been prepared for parents and carers on what to expect and how to prepare their child for increased contact with schools/settings as they anticipate reopening. This will be phased for Primary Schools.

We are aware that many parents and carers will be anxious about sending their children back to school. We want to reassure you that our, and our local schools' first priority, is to keep children and young people safe.

Are schools/settings re-opening after half term?

All schools are already open in South Gloucestershire for the children of key workers and vulnerable group pupils. We have been encouraging vulnerable families to send their children to school as we believe that this is the safest place for them in the widest sense and are grateful to South Gloucestershire schools who do not want to see children's learning compromised at a very difficult time. We have seen a number of settings remain open across the Local Authority and have ensured that there have been sufficient places for demand.

How will schools/settings open differently after half term?

The government has asked Early Years (EY) providers to open for all of their intake from 1 June.

Primary schools have been asked to open more widely to pupils from Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 6, where it is safe to do so from 1 June.

What about other year groups?

The government has now issued guidance to secondary schools with an expectation that they will begin to reopen to Year 10 and Year 12 pupils from the 15th June, with a quarter of a cohort in at any one time. This will be in addition to the key worker and vulnerable pupils that are already attending.

How are schools preparing to open more widely and how will I know if my child will be getting a place and how to come to school?

All South Gloucestershire Early Years settings, primary and secondary schools are risk assessing their sites in relation to the need for social distancing.

They have been asked to prioritise as follows:

- Maintaining the existing offer to vulnerable group pupils and key workers' children
- Keeping staff and pupils safe by maintaining social distancing and much smaller group sizes
- Adding in other groups as and when the risk assessment allows

When they have risk assessed and converted their setting/school site for wider attendance at a safe distance, they will contact you and ask you about your needs and then explain what the changes will mean for you and your child.

Will all children in Year 1 and 6, reception, nursery and preschools get a full time place?

Schools and settings were not built for class sizes this small or with a need for this level of social distancing. Your school/setting leaders are going to accommodate as many pupils as they can safely do so whilst maintaining their existing commitments and the safety of everyone in school.

Will this opening happen in the week of 1 June?

The government has confirmed that they will say whether they believe that it is safe to do so on the 28 May, so everyone will need to be prepared for changes in plans. All schools/settings will continue their offer to key workers and vulnerable groups on this date. The wider offer will then depend on what the schools are able to deliver based on their risk assessments.

I am a key worker - how will things change for me and my child?

Schools have been asked to continue to prioritise the children of key workers, whose parents cannot work from home and vulnerable group pupils.

My school/setting has offered me a place for my child but I am afraid of sending them in

Schools/settings in South Gloucestershire care very much about the wellbeing of their workforce and their pupils/children. They and their Governing Bodies/Committees will not open unless they believe they can make this as safe as possible for all on site and the families they return to each day.

The government has decided that parents should be 'strongly encouraged' to have their children attend schools. However, parents **will not** be fined if they choose for their children not to attend school. We see this ultimately as a parental decision.

How might schools/settings look different?

England will be the first place in the UK to have a gradual return of some pupils in Early Years and primary schools; however there are some places where this is underway elsewhere in Europe.

This article on [Denmark's](#) educational settings, shows **some** of the things that your children can expect if they return to schools/settings in June or July.

Schools and settings in England have a different context and the Danish Education Department are recommending smaller groups than the UK government, however

some of the pictures in this article are helpful in starting to visualise how schools/settings will have changed since your child was last attending.

How can parents/carers support their child and settings/schools in preparing for increased contact?

Start to increase the number of times that you encourage your child to wash their hands and support them in maintaining social distance.

Look at options for walking or cycling to the school/setting and practice the journey together.

Read joining instructions from your setting/school. Most will not want parents and other adults on site and will have set out safe entry and exit points.

Arrive at the time you are asked to and do not arrive early or linger later.

Explain any changes in behaviour policies to your child. Social distancing is really important and although schools/settings and pupils have missed each other, it's important that we keep each other safe.

Schools/settings will tell you what children can/should wear and whether they can bring any kit or food with them. Make your child aware of any changes.

It will help if you can explain that your child will be in different groups than they were in March and may have a different class teacher/TA/setting worker. This is because class sizes will be at least halved. Pupils will be in a “pod” or group with the same adults/s. This will mean that if there were a case of CV-19 that just that class would be sent home for self-isolation. The setting/school environment will also look different, so engaging your child in conversations about their day and the changes will be really important.

Support for families away from schools

The [guidance](#) and access to testing is changed and updated regularly, so it is worth following the link to the latest guidance.

[Government Guidance for Parents](#) - This guidance is updated regularly and subject to change.

Further information

If you have any queries, please contact your school in the first instance.

More information for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can be found [here](#).