

# Steps to Re-Opening Settings

## Support from Childcare.co.uk



Childminders were given permission from the Department for Education (DfE) to re-open their settings to all families from 1<sup>st</sup> June and some childminders were, of course, open all the way through lockdown.

\*\*It is not compulsory to reopen – if you want to stay closed or if you are closed due to health or shielding\*\*, that's your choice. Also, if you are unsure about re-opening, you might find it useful to draw up a list for and against, considering, for example, a balance of benefits and risk, parental requests, health and safety and financial considerations.

\*\*Note – shielding for staff and children ends 1<sup>st</sup> August except in exceptional circumstances.

### Things to bear in mind

\*\*You cannot expect to re-open and return to normal working – you will need to make changes to your setting and ways of working for the Covid-19 world.

\*\*You cannot socially distance with young children – but there are many other changes you can make to keep yourself, your family and the children in your care and their families as safe as 'reasonably practicable' (Health and Safety Executive requirement). You will find more information in the 'Steps to Controlling Coronavirus' Information guide free from Childcare.co.uk here –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/download/steps-to-controlling-corona-virus.pdf>.

In this short guide, we will look at some of the changes you might need to make to support your re-opening and the support Childcare.co.uk can provide.

## Step 1

Read and digest the Department for Education (DfE) guidance and reflect on how it will work for you. The latest version of the guidance, updated 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, is signposted (with the main changes) here –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/news/updated-dfe-coronavirus-guidance>.

Some of the changes you might need to make to your setting and ways of working include –

### **Illness / sickness policy**

This will need to be updated to include Covid-19 symptoms and your response to illness. You might find it useful to share this free Childcare.co.uk 'What to do if you are concerned' poster with parents –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/coronavirus/poster>.

### **Health and safety**

You will need to update your Health and Safety Policy (if you have one in writing) to include information about how you aim to keep children safe during the coronavirus crisis and beyond. This might include adding information about, for example, respiratory hygiene – opening a window, outside learning, tissues and lidded bins in all rooms

You will find recently updated policies and procedures free from Childcare.co.uk here -

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/childminderpolicies>.

\*\*Note – DfE / Public Health England latest advice states that there is no benefit to taking children's temperatures on arrival or through the day.

### **Cleaning routines**

DfE advise that you don't need to deep clean every day, but you do need to keep your setting clean, especially if you are looking after different groups of children. This might mean rearranging your days or, for example, looking after fewer children to allow time to clean. You will find cleaning advice in the free coronavirus toolkit from Childcare.co.uk –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/childminders/coronavirus-toolkit>.

\*\*If you have lots of babies and little ones, they will be more likely to mouth toys and your cleaning routines will need to be more robust; if you care for older children, they need more joint activities and sensory play which you will need to clean between groups of children. DfE recommend outside activities are safest.

## Bubbles

In addition to EYFS ratios, children will need to be cared for in small groups which are colloquially known as bubbles. DfE advice states that these groups or bubbles need their own key person and should not mix.

Bubbles will change from 20<sup>th</sup> July – see the latest DfE guidance for more information -

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/news/updated-dfe-coronavirus-guidance>.

\*\*Chat to parents about bubbles and explain that they are in place to keep everyone safe. Talk about how you would appreciate them keeping their home and family bubbles as small as possible because of the impact on you, your family and your business if their child develops or transmits coronavirus.

## Social distancing

You will need to consider what you will do if parents or staff fail to social distance. The main question I recommend you ask yourself is: 'do I feel safe?' If you do not feel safe, explain this to parents and ask them to respect your concerns. If you are unsure about what steps to take, you can take advice using the free DfE coronavirus helpline –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>.



\*\*The Government are relaxing the 2-metre rule – it will be up to you whether you feel it is safe to allow closer contact.

## Paperwork

There are disapplications in place from the DfE which mean you don't have to write 2 year progress checks or deliver the full curriculum at the moment. This means your time is freed up to deliver a trauma informed curriculum that will support the children's transitions back into the setting.

You will find more information about how to put together a trauma informed curriculum in a recent Childcare.co.uk webinar, for gold members here –

[www.childcare.co.uk/webinarplayer](http://www.childcare.co.uk/webinarplayer).

\*\*Ofsted, DfE, Childcare.co.uk and other agencies have been involved in a campaign for some years now to engage practitioners in a process of cutting out unnecessary paperwork. This is linked to practitioner wellbeing and workload and finding an appropriate work-life balance. The only paperwork that will be inspected by Ofsted is the statutory documentation required by the EYFS and Ofsted's Early Years Inspection handbook such as the Progress Check at 2, attendance registers, forms to record accidents, first aid and medication etc. It is up to you what extra paperwork you produce but extra documents such as tracker graphs and learning journey files (online or paper) are not needed for Ofsted.

## **Taking children on outings**

You cannot take children to toddler groups at the moment and you should be careful when going on short, local outings to ensure social distancing where possible. You should only use a private vehicle when essential and avoid public transport – DfE advice is to walk if you can.

If you do want to take children on outings, Ofsted advise that you speak to parents first and take their views into consideration. You must keep to the current Government rules on outings and only go out with a 'small group' (currently 6 in total) –



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>.

\*\*When local places of interest such as shops and libraries do start to re-open, you will need to talk to parents and decide whether you will take children on visits.

## **School and other setting collections**

Childminders can continue to work with schools, but some schools are not allowing this, so you need to speak to them first; if a child needs to go to more than 1 setting to support parents back to work, this is also allowed. For those providers who want to work with schools, Childcare.co.uk are lobbying with DfE to request clearer wording in the guidance. However, the latest DfE guidance for schools advises them to open their own before and after school clubs. You will find more information about the Childcare.co.uk campaign to protect childminder jobs here –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/news/childminders-banned-from-school>.

## **Wearing PPE**

DfE advise that there is no expectation or need for practitioners or children to wear PPE unless there is a suspected case of coronavirus. You might find it useful to source 1 full set of PPE in case this happens in your setting.

\*\*Some settings have bought extra PPE for children to use during role play, to help them 'normalise' outings when they might see people wearing masks or times when staff put on PPE to support a sick child.

## First aid

If your first aid is out of date, you have until 30<sup>th</sup> September to book and take a course to update your certificate. After this date, you will be failing to comply with the EYFS. You can find out more about the disapplications to the EYFS here –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications>.

The DfE guidance states –

If requalification training is still unavailable, a further extension is available to no later than 30 September 2020. If asked to do so providers should be able to explain why the first aider has not been able to requalify and demonstrate what steps have taken to access the training. Employers or certificate holders must do their best to arrange requalification training at the earliest opportunity. The practical elements of PFA courses should be delivered face to face, so that competency can be properly assessed.

## Children starting school

If parents are bringing their children back to you, you can discuss starting school with them; if parents are not sending their child, you might find it helpful to signpost the 'Starting school in September' free information page from Childcare.co.uk so they can follow up some of the activity ideas to help prepare their child.

The activity and planning ideas are useful for childminders as well as parents –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/starting-school-in-september>.

\*\*You will also find more information about preparing children to start school in this blog –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/information/starting-school>.



\*\*You might find it helpful to speak to the receiving school and discuss what school ready skills they want you to focus on with the children in your childcare setting. For example, teachers will thank you if children are independent, curious and able to concentrate – they are less grateful if the children have been taught to write incorrectly.

## Step 2

Do your risk assessment – a written risk assessment can be updated and shared with parents as appropriate to help guide you through the changes. You will find the Childcare.co.uk sample risk assessment to print and write on with your own information and circumstances here –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/covid19/risk-assessment>.

### Coronavirus Risk Assessment

A free Information Guide  
provided exclusively for Childcare.co.uk  
gold members



\*\*While there is no requirement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to have a written risk assessment, you might feel it is important to note the changes you are making to protect yourself, your family, staff (if relevant) and children and their families in writing.

The EYFS states –

3.64. Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks<sup>53</sup>. Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

\*\*The EYFS also requires you to keep children safe on outings.

\*\*You might find it useful to include relevant phone numbers and contact details in your risk assessment, so you have all the information you need if you have to respond to a concern about a child with Covid-19 symptoms including contact details for your local Public Health England team –

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams>.

## Step 3

Speak to staff (if relevant). Discuss their return to work schedule and your risk assessment, focusing on health, safety and safeguarding and ensuring staff who need to stay at home are last back.

\*\*You will need to engage your staff in training to cover, for example –

- Health and safety changes
- Arrival and departure procedures
- Cleaning arrangements
- Safeguarding updates
- Curriculum requirements and changes
- Guidance on bubbles and social distancing
- Your expectations for social distancing in their private lives etc.

If you are a Childcare.co.uk gold member, this 'Coronavirus Staff Training' webinar is available for staff on the webinar player – [www.childcare.co.uk/webinarplayer](http://www.childcare.co.uk/webinarplayer) -



# Coronavirus Staff Training

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\*\*You will then need to continue to support their return to work with a Supervision Meeting and ask them to complete an updated Suitability Declaration (for documents see the link below).

\*\*You will need to change furlough arrangements if you are taking staff back part-time – this is allowed now with the flexible furlough scheme. You will find more details about the flexible furlough scheme here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/calculate-how-much-you-can-claim-using-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.


\*\*You will find staff return to work documents free in the Childcare.co.uk toolkit here - <https://www.childcare.co.uk/childminders/coronavirus-toolkit>.

## Step 4

Speak to your current parents and reassure them you are taking all possible steps to keep children as safe as reasonably practicable. At the same time, listen to their concerns, which you will then be able to address. During the conversation, ask them what sessions they require and discuss availability, charges, contracts etc.

\*\*You will need to introduce any changes to parents. For example, they might find it useful if you video your arrival and departure procedures (no parents allowed inside the setting), changes you have made to your play areas (removing hard to clean toys and soft furnishings), not allowing children to bring toys into the setting to limit the transfer of germs, how you will manage essential paperwork etc.

**Arrival and departure policy**



Written by – \_\_\_\_\_ Date – \_\_\_\_\_

Note – we cannot give your child medication without a completed Medication Administration Form.

- Anything related to your child's learning, development or progress

\*\*Please explain to your child that they cannot bring toys from home at this time.

\*\*You are welcome to provide a duplicate comforter to be washed and used here; dummies will be kept for sleep times in a lidded pot with your child's name on it.

\*\*If your child is ill, keep them at home – do not ask us to make doorstep decisions.

**Departure procedures**

- Please knock on the door – the doorbell has been removed to protect you from cross contamination.
- Stand back from the door so we can see you from the window.
- Remember to maintain a safe 6ft distance from other parents, waiting in a socially distanced queue when necessary.

*Your child will be brought to the door and handed as necessary with shoes and coat*

\*\*There is no requirement to review and update your Parent-Provider Contracts, but a lot of providers tell us they feel reassured to provide parents with an updated contract which requests a voluntary payment in case of shutdown in the future.

You will find a copy of the Childcare.co.uk Parent Provider Contract and Fees Policy here –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/childminders/updated-contracts>.

\*\*Note this information about forcing a payment when unable to work during a lockdown period –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/covid19/charging-parents>.

You will find more information about the CMA investigation on this Government website –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-cma-to-investigate-cancellation-policy-concerns>.



## Step 5

Depending on what your current parents are planning, you might need to advertise for some new families. You will need to consider changes for Covid-19 every step of the way, including organising socially distanced parent meetings and virtual tours of the setting.

\*\*In our setting, we have prepared a new Welcome Booklet for current and new families, sharing documentation we would have previously discussed and information from inside our setting that parents will no longer see. Gold Childcare.co.uk members can download an example of our Welcome Booklet here –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/download/childminder-welcome-booklet.pdf>.

The registration process at Knutsford Childminding



Welcome to our setting. We have had to change our registration procedures for the new socially distanced world – from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, this is how we register new children:

\*\*Talk to us on Skype or Messenger and discuss your childcare needs.

\*\*View our virtual show-round - see our inside playrooms and outside spaces and look round our house to get a feel for how we work.

\*\*Get to know us - look at the photos on our website with your child –

[www.knutsfordchildminding.co.uk](http://www.knutsfordchildminding.co.uk)

\*\*Welcome – please read through our Welcome Pack and let us know if you have any questions

\*\*Complete registration forms for your child – more information to follow

\*\*Watch our videos and songs on YouTube with your child to help them get to know us -

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH0DW1BG9xG12IYqnFkvO-Q>

\*\*When you are ready – when you have read our documentation and confirmed your child's space, pay your first invoice – we will provide bank details.

Welcome to our setting

Contact us



<p><b>Sarah Graven</b> Designated Safeguarding Lead SENCO</p>  	<p><b>Nigel Graven</b> Chef Play leader</p>  
<p>Training and qualifications</p>	<p>Training and qualifications</p>

\*\*Think about how you will share information with new families including asking them to complete and sign documents such as Parent-Provider and Local Authority Funding Contracts (which need a physical signature). When you are considering exchange of paperwork between home and setting, the advice is to take account of latest DfE guidance on the transfer of coronavirus.

\*\*Childcare.co.uk recently sponsored a free webinar entitled 'Welcoming new families' which can be watched by Childcare.co.uk gold members on the webinar player here –

[www.childcare.co.uk/webinarplayer](http://www.childcare.co.uk/webinarplayer).

## Step 6

Welcome your children back to the setting. They will find it a little different, which is why sharing short videos of the changes with parents might be useful for them to watch.

\*\*You will find it helpful to spend the first few days planning free play, so you can observe and note the children's levels of wellbeing, involvement, engagement etc. You might find it useful to use the Leuven scales of wellbeing and involvement alongside the Characteristics of Effective Learning as a starting point for your observations – further information will be shared in an upcoming Childcare.co.uk webinar which will focus on the Leuven Scales – [www.childcare.co.uk/webinars](http://www.childcare.co.uk/webinars).

\*\*Share your new documentation with parents including, for example, your updated Safeguarding Policy Coronavirus Addendum. It will be important to ensure they feel up-to-date and informed, especially as they will not be able to pop in for a daily face-to-face chat due to doorstep drop offs and collections. Parents might appreciate a time they can ring you in the evening if they have anything they want to discuss further.

\*\*Asking parents for an updated 'All about me now' form will help you to learn about their lived experience at home during lockdown. You will find sample documentation in learning and development section of the free Childcare.co.uk Coronavirus Toolkit –

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/childminders/coronavirus-toolkit>.

\*\*Providers who are back to work are commenting that some children's behaviour and abilities have regressed – while others talk about children who are now potty trained and chat away with more vocabulary than ever before! Your initial observations will allow you to plan your personalised curriculum for each child. Look out for upcoming webinars which will address these issues.

And, of course, don't forget to keep washing everyone's hands!

