

COVID - 19 - ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOLS FOR CRITICAL WORKERS AND VULNERABLE PUPILS IN CROYDON

Parents and carers will be aware of the recent announcement by Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education, that all schools and other education settings (hereafter referred to as schools) are closed on Friday 20th March, until further notice.

This document provides you with some background information, frequently asked questions and answers in relation to your child's schooling during this situation. These will be regularly updated.

If your child/children can stay safely at home, they should. This will limit the chance of the virus spreading. Schools will only remain open for those children who absolutely need to attend, for their safety and the safety of school staff.

Some of you will have received an offer of a place to attend school during this time of wider closure. Please only accept this offer if your child meets the criteria outlined in the link below and you have no alternative.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If you believe you may qualify for consideration of a place and your child cannot be safely cared for at home then you should get in touch with your school. Contact details can be found on your school's website.

Schools will not always be able to guarantee a place, or even an offer of a place. If any offer of a place is made, it will only be based on what staff numbers can accommodate on grounds of health and safety for all. Places may be offered in an alternative school, usually close by.

You can find more information on closure of schools here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers?utm_source=3af9bd53-8b24-49d0-92be-34d607ef773a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

All of the Public Health Guidance still applies so please note, if you are a critical worker or your child is designated as vulnerable please DO NOT send children to school if they have any symptoms of the virus - continue to follow Public Health England advice as normal - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Thank you very much for your support in these challenging times. Together with schools, we are doing what we can to support our local community, given these unprecedented circumstances.

Am I a 'critical worker' to the COVID-19 response?
Please click on the link at the foot of the page, to take you to the DfE Guidance to which jobs are classed as as critical sectors

YES

NO

Are both parents/carers 'critical workers' to the COVID-19 response?

Keep your child at home and don't send them into school

YES

NO

As one parent/carer is not a 'critical worker', we strongly advise you to keep your child at home and don't send them into school.

Are you able to keep your child safe at home?
i.e. That at least one parent/carer is working from home?

Whilst we understand the importance of you working from home, we strongly recommend that your child stays at home to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

NO

YES

THE SCHOOL CAN PROVIDE CARE FOR YOUR CHILD TO HELP YOU
Please contact the school your child attends with:

1. Name of child and year group
2. Name of parent/carer 1 – your job title – name of your employer – brief description of your job
3. Name of parent/carer 2 – your job title – name of your employer – brief description of your job
4. Please state the days on which you require the school to provide care for your child. (please only use on the days when you are working)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision?fbclid=IwAR0bw2mh1vPBfncuKKMfNm0eexgk0q65mvG-esGQBavtsVAe_bclmlBIF9A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document will be updated on a regular basis. Latest Update: 23rd March 2020

Am I a critical worker and can my child have a school place during this period?

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed in the guidance and flowchart above, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for a school place. This does not mean children of all workers in these categories can or will continue to send their children to school. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home or they might work in one of the listed professions but not be considered critical to the COVID-19 response.

I am a critical worker but my partner isn't - should I send my children to school/education settings?

If it is at all possible, it is safer for most children to be at home. Whilst we understand families may want to take up this offer to enable the other partner to work, we would ask parents to consider if this is absolutely necessary and is made on the grounds that parents would not be able to safely look after their children from home without this support.

Do I need to provide evidence that I am a 'critical' worker?

You may be asked to provide evidence that your employer has confirmed that you are a critical worker, but schools may not always need to seek evidence. This will be managed by individual schools.

If I work part time do I need to send the child in each day?

No, but it's important to be in communication with the setting so they are aware who to expect in each day. We do acknowledge that working patterns may change over the coming weeks, and it is best to keep in communication with the setting of changing needs and their capacity to accommodate this.

I am a critical worker but my school/education setting doesn't agree – can you tell me if I qualify and then tell the school?

Schools will ultimately be responsible with respect to the interpretation of a critical worker based on the guidance issued by the Government. Parents should liaise with their employers and can provide evidence to schools that they should be considered a critical worker.

I qualify as a critical worker but my school/education setting doesn't have capacity for all eligible children – can I have an alternative provision?

We would ask schools/education settings to work with the Local Authority to identify an alternative placement for the pupil. Schools/education settings are best placed to take the lead on this because they know the pupils, their individual needs and they would be best

placed to liaise with other provisions to plan those placements. Where a setting is unable to find a suitable placement then they should refer to the Local Authority who would then seek to identify a solution.

My child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and my school / education setting is shut/or there is insufficient staff to provide additional support, and they cannot attend an alternative provision – will the Local Authority provide alternative provision?

Special schools are particularly under pressure and are unlikely to be able to open to maximum capacity for all pupils with EHC plans. You should liaise with your individual school about whether it would be possible to find alternative arrangements.

However, generally speaking we would not recommend placing pupils with EHCPs in alternative settings because of the variety of different needs that they have (health and care needs). If a setting is absolutely clear that they cannot make the provision available safely and parents are absolutely clear that they cannot safely care for their children in any other way, you should liaise with your EHCP Coordinator.

Will my child still have all of the provision set out in his/her Education, Health and Care Plan?

The Local Authority and its partners will do everything possible to meet the current contents of all EHCPs. There will be times over the coming months when the availability of professionals, services and/or locations will be affected and we may not be able to do everything as we would all like. This will include therapies as well as a number of other services. We will do our best to minimise this disruption and please speak to your school or EHCP Coordinator.

My child usually receives SEN transport to school – will this continue?

If your child will still be attending their school, then we will continue to provide assistance. However, there may be a different provider or crew delivering this assistance. If there is a change to this service you will be contacted by the Transport Team.

My child has been submitted for an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA), can I get a place at my school?

No. Unless the parent meets the critical worker criteria then there is no ask on schools to make a place available for those that do not currently have an EHC plan but may be in the assessment process. The SEN Service is making every effort to continue with EHCP assessments so that any child in the assessment process is not disadvantaged by the current COVID-19 crisis. More information on this is available on the Croydon Local Offer page along with guidance for parents.

<https://localoffer.croydon.gov.uk/>

Will schools be delivering a curriculum to pupils that attend school during the period of temporary ‘closures’?

No. Schools will do whatever they can to ensure that activities that are put in place are of educational value but they will be unable to deliver a planned curriculum in the way that they would do normally.

What will my child be doing at the education setting?

This may be different across settings, so please discuss this with your school directly.

Can I go to a school/education setting that is nearer/more convenient?

No, unless it is demonstrable that you are unable to attend your normal school because of capacity issues. You would need to talk to your school in the first instance about alternative arrangements

Will you provide transport, as I don’t want to use public transport?

No, unless you are already entitled to SEN transport. Should this service become unavailable the Transport Team will contact you.

Are schools doing consistent hours and breakfast / after school clubs?

The ambition is that schools open normal hours including breakfast and after school clubs, however, schools will have discretion about what they are able to provide based on their staffing levels. You would need to talk to your school about this

Can I just turn up at a preferred school/education setting?

No. You should only be attending your own school where a place has been agreed or you have been told that there is another setting you can use. You will not have a place at any school unless they confirm to you that you do, and this may change as the capacity of the school changes.

My child requires medication – can an alternative school administer this?

This should be discussed with the home and host school to see if this is possible or not. If it is not, it may be possible for the parent to come in and administer the medication if necessary but only by agreement by the host school.

Can an alternative school refuse if they have space?

Yes they can. Each school will be assessing their capacity on an ongoing basis and this will change daily.

Will schools ‘select’ pupils that they make provision for?

No, available provision will be based upon the government criteria and individual schools capacity

Will schools still be able to exclude pupils from the provision that is made available?

It would be unusual for a school/education setting to exclude children in these very unusual circumstances given that they are not providing education and the normal rules around exclusions will not apply. However, schools/education settings must ensure the safety of staff and pupils in their care and may ask some pupils or parents to no longer attend for a fixed period or permanently.

Does class size legislation continue to apply?

No but there will still be an assessment that individual settings will make to ensure that the provision that they have is safe and viable.

No, but we can link local schools together

Is there a list of schools with space and how often will it be updated?

We are looking to gather information from schools on a daily basis. Any additional capacity information will be shared with schools.

If I prefer the alternative school, can I stay/transfer there permanently?

No. It is important that you remember that placement is temporary and once the outbreak has been contained pupils will return to their normal school.

Will my child need a new school uniform?

No

Should schools be opening their usual hours?

This is at the discretion of the school

My childcare provider is telling me that I need to continue to pay childcare fees when they are not open is this correct?

Providers have been asked to be reasonable and balanced in their dealings with parents in relation to fees. It is acknowledged that childcare providers will be financially impacted as a result of COVID-19 therefore, the government announced on 17 March that they would not clawback early years entitlements funding from local authorities during closures, or where children are withdrawn because of COVID-19. This protects a significant proportion of early years providers' income. In addition, the government has set out a range of support for businesses to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on them.

Will my child have access to free school meals if he/she is not defined as vulnerable or their parents are not considered critical workers?

Please contact your child's school if you have any concerns about feeding your family during this challenging time.

Will Croydon Schools be open over Easter?

We will update you as soon as we have information about this.