



HILLINGDON

LONDON

FAQs updated 15th May 2020

Updates highlighted in green text

Maintaining Educational Provision for Vulnerable and Critical Worker Children

From 1st June at the earliest primary schools should be able to welcome back children in key transition years – Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges will also work towards the possibility of providing some face-to-face contact with young people in Year 10 and Year 12 to help them prepare for exams next year.

*Priority groups, including vulnerable children and children of critical workers who have been eligible to attend throughout school closures, will continue to be able to attend schools, colleges and early years settings as they currently are. **These children are now encouraged to attend even if parents/carers are able to keep them at home.***

Updated guidance:

- [Planning guide for primary schools](#)
- [Initial planning framework for reopening schools](#)
- [Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#) - how to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) - how to implement protective measures
- [What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak](#) - share with parents / carers
- [DfE education settings guidance](#) - legal aspects updated
- [Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June: guidance for parents and carers](#) - share with parents / carers
- [DfE funded online Phonics lessons](#)
- [Critical workers who can access schools or educational settings](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for educational settings](#) - updated guidance
- [Safe working in education childcare and children's social care](#)

Current guidance:

- [DfE schools and other education settings guidance](#) - overall collection of guidance
- [EYFS framework amendment](#) - temporarily disapplied, and modified certain elements
- [Actions for early years and childcare closure guidance](#)
- [Maintaining further education and skills training provision](#)
- [Implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings](#)
- [Newly qualified teachers guidance](#)

- [DfE initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice](#)
- [Apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisation](#)
- [Actions for schools - DfE temporary closure guidance](#)
- [The Association of Schools and Colleges FAQs](#)
- [FSM 16-19 further education guidance](#)
- [Schools to benefit from education partnership with tech giants](#)
- [Our plan to rebuild - recovery-strategy 11.05.2020](#)
- [Actions for HE providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Keeping pupils motivated and engaged](#)

- [Service children in state schools support](#)
- [DfE guidance on vulnerable children and young people - attendance expectations, SEND transport and respite update](#)
- [SEND risk assessment guidance - joint risk assessment](#)
- [Guidance on isolation for residential settings](#)

- [Safeguarding and remote education](#)
- [DfE safeguarding guidance](#)
- [New package to support online learning](#)
- [Remote education during coronavirus](#)
- [DfE supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing guidance](#)
- [Case studies: remote education practice for schools during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Adapting teaching practice for remote education](#)
- [Adapting the curriculum for remote education](#)
- [Supporting pupils' wellbeing](#)

- [Coronavirus testing for all essential workers showing symptoms](#)
- [Pregnant employers during coronavirus advice](#) - updated workplace advice
- [Using clusters and hubs to maintain educational provision](#) - guidance will help provide a framework to reflect on decisions taken and to refine risk management.
- [Managing school premises which are partially open](#) - buildings management to keep children and staff during reduced occupancy.

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): financial support for education, early years and children's social care](#) - funding update
- [Exceptional costs guidance on reimbursement](#)
- [DfE free school meals guidance](#)
- [Coronavirus travel advice for educational settings](#)

- [Ofqual publishes initial decisions on GCSE and A level grading proposals for 2020](#)
- [Reducing burdens on educational and care settings](#) - data collections
- [Ofqual arrangements](#) - updated awarding qualifications and consultation
- [Cancellation of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2020](#) - updated FAQs
- [DfE Attendance recording for educational settings](#)
- [School and college performance measures guidance](#)
- [School attendance offence disapplication notice](#) - applies until to 31 May 2020

- [Supporting children's education](#) - for parents and carers
- [Support for parents and carers to keep children safe online](#)
- [Parents and carers educational guidance](#)
- [New free online learning platform to boost workplace skills](#)

How do we start to plan to reopen?

The wider aim of opening primary schools on the 1st June is subject to further scientific advice due towards the end of May. Therefore the next few weeks are to be used for planning. The ambition of a return of all primary pupils should be planned after further guidance is shared in June.

For secondary schools more guidance on the expectations for the face to face time with Year 10 and 12 is due.

For special schools we have a Special Schools Forum in place. New DfE guidance is also expected shortly.

Please refer to **Hillingdon's COVID-19 Recovery Guidelines for All Schools**. This should help schools to plan their capacity and logistics to respond to the reopening guidance for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 6.

School risk assessments must guide school decisions and must take into account the application of the protective measures and keeping adults and children safe. If your building layout and staffing capacity mean that you can only have less than 15 children in a classroom to operate safely, your risk assessment will drive this decision.

Who is included in the vulnerable category?

During the COVID-19 outbreak, vulnerable children and young people are defined as those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan whose needs cannot be met safely in the home environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who are therefore in need of continued education provision
- This might include children on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, or those who are young carers, and others at the provider and local authority discretion.

Children and Young People with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

The government encourages vulnerable children and young people to attend educational settings unless they have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk.

This includes children and young people who have an EHC plan whose needs cannot be met safely in the home environment.

Expectations on attendance

The DfE is asking local authorities to work with educational providers, families and the child or young person to carry out a risk assessment to judge whether the child or young person's needs cannot be met safely at home. Guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be as safe or safer at an educational setting, it may be more appropriate for them to attend the educational setting.

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Many children and young people who have an EHC plan can remain safely at home. Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be safer at home, it may be more appropriate for them to stay at home.

Updated guidance on vulnerable children and young people and those with EHC plans, as of 19.04.20, can be accessed [here](#).

The DfE has confirmed that parents, carers and LAs will not be fined for pupils' non-attendance at school during this time.

Social care

CP/CIN/CLA vulnerable children encouraged to attend provision.

Social care is continuing to contact all families who have an allocated social worker, risk assessments are taking place to see whether direct contact is required for children who are not subject to child protection plans and in the main face to face contact should only take place if there are concerns of escalating risk. All children subject to CP Plans will still be seen, if they are in school that expectation is that the professionals there will see the child as part of the multi agency safeguarding arrangements, otherwise all other children subject to a CP plan will be visited by their social workers or another social worker should their own not be available as a result of ill health or increased vulnerability. We have updated our recording systems to enable reporting and monitoring on a daily basis. Where families are self isolating, individual risk assessments are being undertaken to consider whether it is safe to wait up to 14 days to see children, where it is not deemed safe, visits will still take place utilising appropriate PPE.

As per usual arrangements should schools have any concerns for the safeguarding of children known to them then they should contact the allocated social worker or where the child is not known to social care MASH.

How should we manage vulnerable children with social care status who chose not to attend school?

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, as long as it is safe and in the child's best interest for them to do so. In circumstances where a parent / carer does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school should explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent, and help to resolve any concerns or difficulties wherever possible.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, the school or social worker should talk through these anxieties with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Providers may also want to consider how to encourage children and young people to attend provision. Social workers will remain in contact with vulnerable children and families, including remotely if needed.

What if I have concerns about a child's welfare or safety

If you have concerns for a child please follow the usual process and contact MASH. We have added additional capacity to the MASH service to be able to continue to provide advice and guidance as well as assess level of risk or harm to a child. Given the need for essential activity only this will mean that children and young people meeting tier 1 and 2 on the continuum of need will

not necessarily receive a social care or early help service at this time. We will continue to prioritise risk and need and carry out social care assessment to those at risk of harm.

Whilst Early Help are not completing home visits they are exploring innovative ways to provide support to families who are struggling including over the phone support. If you feel a family needs this level of help then this can also be discussed with MASH. MASH can also provide guidance on other forms of support that families can be signposted to.

For schools signed up to Encompass; Domestic abuse notifications are still active and will still be sent to schools. Schools are not to call parents to discuss the domestic abuse incidents directly. However, we recommend you continue to monitor the situation but with this information in mind, or consider increasing the current monitoring that is taking place. This is also something that schools are able to contact MASH about to discuss further along with any other concerns about possible domestic abuse within a family.

What support is available to children in my school who already have a social worker

Children who are **Looked After (LAC)** will not all be routinely visited by their social worker. We will carry out a risk assessment and agree the best method of keeping in touch, ensuring that we use technology where appropriate and the network around the child. Looked After Children's reviews and PEPs will continue to be undertaken utilising video and telephone conferencing. LAC children's attendance at school will be considered on a case by case basis and social workers, in discussion with the child's allocated Virtual School Officer, will be engaging with carers to discuss educational arrangements that are in the best interest of the child. Where not being in school is a risk to placement stability we will be recommending that children attend. The Virtual School has produced guidance for professionals to support LAC during this period of COVID-19 and officers are maintaining regular contact with the young people on their caseload. The cohort of LAC are under continual risk assessment and this informs any changes to decisions in respect of access to education.

Children who are subject to **Child in Need plans (CIN)** will only be seen face to face following a risk assessment and similarly to our LAC we will be utilising technology to stay in touch with the majority. This includes more regular contact with children and their families in acknowledgement of the adverse side effects of social isolation may already have on vulnerable families. CIN Meetings will be arranged via tele/video conferencing to enable the professional network to update risk assessments and plans where appropriate. Social workers are discussing school attendance with families.

Children who are subject to **Child Protection Plans (CP)** are our most vulnerable and as such these children will continue to be seen by their allocated social worker, taking account of PHE guidance. Where it is safe to do so visit frequency can be reduced but will remain within DFE guidance and expectations. Case Conferences and Core Groups will take place utilising tele/video conferencing unless there is an exception where a face to face meeting will be required. Social Workers are actively encouraging these families to send their children to school in light of their increased vulnerability and the protective benefits that school provides for these children.

Where we believe children need to be in school however parents are exercising their right not to send them this is being monitored by social workers who will liaise with school to ensure that as a partnership we continue to have contact and provide the right level of support. This will need to be done on a case by case basis

Safeguarding must still be a priority

Schools should create an Annex to their Safeguarding policy which should highlight any changes in procedure due to Covid-19. A checklist for things you need to consider can be found here <http://safeguarding.info/interimchecklist>. All staff should be kept up to date of any changes.

Schools are usually the main eyes and ears for recognising and reporting signs of abuse. This task is much harder when not visibly seeing children. However, schools still play this vital role in recognising when something may not be quite right.

Schools should have some form of communication with all pupils. In particular they should identify children they consider vulnerable and have a monitoring system in place for them. A focus has been on high risk children known to social care. However, it is important to also highlight **children who do not have active social care involvement** as they are less likely to be 'seen' at this time. As schools you know who those children are - **are you checking in with them?** If not please can this be reviewed and a monitoring plan put in place. This may be the only contact a child/family is having with the outside world and the only opportunity for any sign of concern to be picked up.

All staff should be reminded to remain vigilant to any safeguarding issues that arise and report these as they would normally. Children may still make disclosures or there may be signs of concern that arise even via remote learning. For example via video/phone chat are there any concerns about a child's presentation or demeanor or what is happening in the background? [NSPCC have guidance](#) on spotting signs of abuse and some questions that may be useful when welfare calls are made by staff.

Monitoring communication with school and management of school work can also help identify those who might be struggling. Making extra effort to communicate with these families may help to identify if there are any possible support needs or safeguarding concerns. There are some suggestions in this [TES article](#).

All staff should know how to contact the DSL or who to contact if for whatever reason the DSL is not available and should be encouraged to discuss any concerns.

Monitoring arrangements should be agreed by the SLT and must consider the following;

- All arrangements should be clearly recorded.
- All contact should be clearly recorded, including unsuccessful contact.
- Staff should **not** ordinarily be making direct contact with pupils on a one to one basis. Where it is felt that a child requires this level of support safeguards need to be considered for example could a parent be present or another member of staff also on the call.
- **Mobile numbers of staff should not be shared with parents/pupils.** If staff do need to call from personal phones they should withhold their numbers
- Staff should use school emails/logins and not personal accounts.
- Clear boundaries should be set around when staff are contactable/make contact with families/pupils for example not after 7pm.
- If schools are planning to complete home visits they should discuss this with the Local Authority.

GDPR must still be adhered to. Schools must make sure any personal information they hold continues to be stored and shared securely. **Whatsapp is not compliant with GDPR.**

When sending out information to multiple pupils/families make sure you use BCC and are not accidentally sharing everyone's email addresses.

Safeguarding must be considered with any online teaching. SLT needs to be risk assessing and monitoring all online teaching. Schools should be making sure the platforms they are using are safe and promote safe boundaries between pupils and staff for example switching off certain functions. LGFL have produced information on how to make sure platforms such as zoom are safe <https://coronavirus.lgfl.net/safeguarding>.

<https://secure.school/toolkit/school-remote-working-pack-video-teleconferencing> is a really helpful guide (now free) which covers security features on zoom, microsoft teams and skype including how to ensure conversations are backed up to schools systems so they can be reviewed later by SLT if needed.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely> provides further useful guidance on the above.

Hannah Ives, Child Protection Adviser for Schools is available on 07753 431285 or hives@hillingsdon.gov.uk

Rob Wratten, LADO is available on 07919 115892 or rwratten@hillingsdon.gov.uk

How will schools engage Hillingdon local children Safeguarding Process during the partial closure?

While we appreciate that schools are under extreme pressure in maintaining education for vulnerable children, it is imperative that schools are represented at the meetings arranged to assess and plan the safeguarding arrangements for these children. Considering the current difficult circumstances, Hillingdon Local Authority has a telephone conferencing facility in place for schools to take part in these meetings. The expectation is that schools will continue to fully engage in the safeguarding process by dialing into the phone conferences arranged.

How to assess a critical worker's role?

The government considers many roles to fall under the critical worker directive, and on the surface, may not look critical. However, **as an education community we cannot judge the worthiness of each critical worker role and need to be assured that the critical worker is genuinely seeking provision to support the COVID-19 national response.** For example, a plumber may be needed at a care home urgently, and if not available, those vulnerable residents could fall ill and put pressure on the NHS.

Many residents / staff are being asked to volunteer / be redeployed to support the NHS / local authorities / charities to provide emergency support in response to COVID-19; this will be a new batch of critical workers.

Please refer to the government's critical workers criteria [here](#).

Is the critical worker eligibility for one or both parents?

Children with at least one parent/carer who is critical to the COVID-19 response **are encouraged to go to school if required even if they can be kept at home.** The DfE expects the school to provide this provision, as the priority is for the critical worker to be able to attend their critical role. The DfE doesn't support any assessment / judgement on the family support available at home.

How to manage critical worker vulnerable children with underlying medical conditions?

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Schools should undertake a risk assessment, following the medical advice from Public Health England.

I have too many critical worker children who qualify for a space, can I refuse a placement?

No unless it is unsafe for your school according to your risk assessment.

What hours should schools open?

The DfE encourages schools to **open for breakfast club and after school** provision, to help support the children of critical workers critical to the COVID-19 response. Many critical workers will be unable to work without these extended school hours which will impact the national response. **By reopening for priority year groups in June, schools should only provide wraparound provision for these new cohorts if it is safe to do so according to your risk assessment. Priority must be provided to critical workers and vulnerable children in the first instance.**

Can we share provision with another school and close one (cluster / hub)?

The government is expecting schools to try to maintain provision for their own eligible pupils, however low. Pupil needs will fluctuate as families come in and out of isolation. **Many schools have a rota system in place to ensure that staff get a full block of time off to have a break.** The government has committed to reimburse schools to cover this additional work.

Some schools in Hillingdon have already started to work together to share provision. Schools should start conversations with neighbouring schools to discuss safeguarding, transport, parent / carer agreement and other logistics if they are considering moving children to a different setting.

If an agreement to share provision is made, the responsible school will need to undertake a risk assessment and ensure that all information on the child(ren) has been shared, or a member of the responsible school's staff attends the new setting with the child(ren) to provide support.

New clusters and hubs DfE guidance has been issued to support schools with sharing provision - [using clusters and hubs to maintain educational provision](#)

Please also see **Hillingdon's Enabling Primary and Secondary schools to provide continuing provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable children** document on LEAP for more information.

If schools are experiencing a high demand for places or severe staff shortages, they should liaise with us to explore the possibility of coordinating support from other schools in the area. Schools are expected to be flexible and work together where required.

Ultimately it is for school leaders to decide if the school remains open and this should be reviewed on a daily basis by schools in consultation with their parents / carers and the local authority.

Bank holiday opening

The DfE has confirmed that schools should decide, in consultation with the parents / carers of children who are currently attending school, whether it is necessary for them to continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children on bank holidays.

Holiday opening 'no pupils' regular review

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The DfE expects schools to remain open over holidays to support parents / carers to undertake critical roles until further notice. **No specific decision has been made for the May half-term.** Some schools with no children planned in may still decide to remain open in case this demand changes at short notice. Schools that have decided to close due to no children expected in, should keep this under **regular review and ensure that their parents / carers are aware of this provision and know how to contact the school** if the usual telephone and email are closed.

Therefore no school should be fully closed without a plan to re-open or have shared provision arrangements in place with neighbouring schools.

Parent / carer needs may fluctuate depending on isolation dates and if their critical work calls upon them outside of their pre-scheduled rota. We understand how difficult this is for schools, especially with very low numbers, and ask that schools support their families during this unprecedented time.

If schools cannot support their families then please seek support from neighbouring schools to share provision. The LA can support discussions if required.

Please make arrangements with your Link Officers to set the days you will touch base over any holiday period.

Health and safety concerns

School leaders must risk assess their schools on a daily basis to ensure they are safe. A first aider is required on site on a daily basis under normal circumstances. As schools have skeleton staff onsite and few pupils, ahead of any other guidance from DfE/PHE, Headteachers should decide if their school is safe by undertaking their own health and safety risk assessment. Some considerations are:

- Confirming that at all times a manager on site will know where the first aid box is.
- A first aid room/chair/isolation room is available.
- A phone number clearly available of an experienced first aider - e.g. from school but off-site - could be staff with medical knowledge who is in isolation.
- Also now in lockdown - good practice to display phone numbers of closest local schools to contact in case of emergency need for help on site.

If schools have not got sufficient staff to safely run the school then please notify us by email: education@hillingdon.gov.uk

School staff concerned that as critical workers, they are being exposed to the virus

The government needs schools to remain open for vulnerable and critical worker children undertaking critical roles that cannot be delivered at home. Social distancing and safety guidance to support schools to deliver this role is provided in the links above.

Sick children should not be allowed in school and staff should continue to actively report any signs of children's illness.

Coronavirus Testing

Testing has been extended to school staff and households - see [FAQs](#).

The employer referral portal allows employers to refer essential workers who are self-isolating either because they or member(s) of their household have coronavirus symptoms, for testing. It is a

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secure portal for employers to use to upload the full list of names and contact details of self-isolating essential workers.

Please refer to [coronavirus testing for all essential workers showing symptoms](#) guidance to access the links to arrange for school registration for staff testing.

Schools can [register and refer self-isolating staff](#), and [book a test directly for themselves or members of their household](#) who are experiencing symptoms - a high temperature or new continuous cough.

In order to obtain a school login, Head teachers / senior leaders should email portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk with 2 email addresses that will primarily be used to load staff contact details. Once the school's details have been verified, 2 login credentials will be issued for the school employer referral portal.

Schools can find their UKPRN details [here](#).

If referred through this portal, staff will receive a text message with a unique invitation code to book a test for themselves (if symptomatic) or their symptomatic household member(s) at a regional testing site. Please use this [portal user guide](#).

PPE in schools

Please follow the [implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings](#) guidance updated on 12.05.2020.

If a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn.

Digital devices for disadvantaged pupils to access remote education

DfE funded package to give a boost to remote education for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils who are set to receive access to laptops and tablets as well as 4G routers, ensuring access to online resources where mobile or broadband internet is not already available. Select resources will also be made more accessible by temporarily exempting them from data charges. Schools will be allowed to keep the laptops and tablets for use once they reopen.

The LA has placed orders for Maintained secondary schools and Academy schools should have placed orders directly.

Internet access will be provided through a 4G hotspot for care leavers, 11-19 year olds with a social worker and disadvantaged children in Year 10. The DfE will share how we can request when needed.

LA receiving orders - next steps

The LA has submitted our laptop forecast order for social services linked eligible children. The DfE will take a few weeks to collate forecasts nationwide and decide on how many to allocate to each

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LA depending on stock levels. The DfE will issue our order to the LA. Social care will then dispatch devices in priority order and contact all families / schools to discuss next steps when known.

For any queries, Academy Schools should call:

1st - DFEP@computacenter.com

2nd - DfE coronavirus helpline

Email. DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Telephone. 0800 046 8687

Schools to receive free digital education platform

The Department for Education has partnered with Google and Microsoft to support schools and trusts to start using a free-to-use digital education platform.

You're now able to register to receive:

- Funded support from an accredited partner to get set up on either G Suite for Education or Office 365 Education
- Free training on how to use the platform, through online resources, webinars and peer-to-peer support between schools

You're eligible for this support if you:

- Don't currently have a digital education platform; or
- Are already using Office 365 or G Suite, but are not yet set up to assign work and communicate with pupils

Please access guidance [here](#)

How should we support our pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)?

The expectation is that schools continue to provide meals from their school premises or issue food parcels. If this is not possible, then schools should access the national voucher scheme. All schools should have been contacted by Edenred, the provider appointed by the DfE to explain how to access and administer the centrally funded national voucher scheme for the provision of FSM vouchers.

These vouchers are for pupils eligible and currently in receipt of benefits related FSMs (not universal Infant FSMs). This is for term-time and the Easter holidays and is in addition to existing FSM budgets (paid for directly by the DfE). National vouchers cannot be issued for holidays that fall after Easter. If schools are not using the national voucher scheme for children not in school, they can claim back **additional** expenditure incurred.

For all children **in** school during this temporary closure, schools should (if resources allow) provide free meals to those children who would normally receive meals (under the universal Infant FSMs and eligible in receipt of benefits FSMs). The costs for children **in** school need to be covered by the school.

More new families will become eligible for FSM and schools should include these families in their provision. The government has temporarily extended the FSM entitlement to certain families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The guidance sets out the eligible groups and savings threshold. This extension is temporarily in place due to the current unique circumstances. It covers

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both children who are attending school and children who are at home. Please access the new guidance [here](#).

The DfE is aware that Edenred has been unable to deliver vouchers to parents / carers in time and have requested that all issues are reported directly to them. They recognise that they could not meet the demand and have put new systems in place to ensure this operation runs smoothly from 20.04.20 with the facility to order in bulk over 4 weeks.

As issues are still occurring, schools can use their own local voucher scheme if the national scheme is not suitable. Schools will be able to claim back £15 per pupil per week directly from the DfE.

Schools can find their UKPRN details [here](#).

As this is a national scheme the LA cannot support any requests and queries must be directed as follows:

Edenred

freeschoolmeals@edenred.com

0333 400 5932 (this is a national rate, not a premium rate number)

[Parent FAQs for Edenred vouchers](#)

DfE coronavirus helpline

Email. DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Telephone. 0800 046 8687

Attendance - Participation Team

The Secretary of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson, wrote to all LA's on 22.03.20 stating: *"It is our expectation that no parent should be penalised for any Covid19 related absence. Therefore, all institutions are asked to suspend any penalty notice action or prosecutions for Covid-19 related absence with immediate effect. Local authorities should update their Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices to make this clear. New cases should not be taken forward and any cases from 16th March should be withdrawn. This approach should also be applied to prosecutions for non-attendance. Local authorities will be playing a key coordination and local leadership role for all educational settings, working with their Regional Schools Commissioners who are there to advise and support."*

The LA will be updating Hillingdon's Code of Conduct in relation to the issuing of Penalty Notices to reflect the Government's position. Other cases that were due to progress through the Court system for poor attendance under the Education Act 1996, have been withdrawn from Court with the exception of cases that had resulted in convictions and sentencing is yet to be determined by the Magistrates.

The LA will also address proposals for working with our schools and consider an amended offer to the previously distributed SLA, at least for the Summer Term and possibly beyond. In the current climate, the LA's work needs to focus on supporting schools to communicate with families who do not appear to be accessing the education you are able to offer, without a known or acceptable reason. Going forward it will also be critical that we support transition back into full time education for children and young people, particularly families who have experienced challenges enforcing school attendance in the past or who are known to be vulnerable..

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If, as an Academy School, you have not yet purchased a Participation Team SLA for the new financial year, please consider what may suit your needs. You can discuss and agree with your linked Participation Officer how we can support you with welfare checks for children of vulnerable families and those not engaging with your offer of education.

DfE Daily Attendance Returns

Please continue to complete your returns on a daily basis for pupils in attendance. This return is not required if you have **no** pupils in and are therefore reporting as closed (DfE change 04.05.2020). When you reopen, you must complete these daily returns again. This return should be completed during any holiday period.

Schools that need technical support with the DfE's return should refer to this [video to support form completion](#).

Educational Visits / Trip cancellation

For the latest advice from the LA's Educational Visits Advisor, please refer to the [cancelling trips and refunds LEAP page](#).

Insurance will be managed differently depending on the situation (type of trip, providers and how much has been paid - deposit / full). Schools should be in liaison with their providers and insurance companies to discuss their options. Parents / carers should be kept up to date for reassurance.

The LA's insurance team will support all schools that have purchased insurance through this service. Please contact insuranceteam@hillingdon.gov.uk for more information.

Financial year-end for schools

The Schools Finance Team is available to fully support schools with financial matters. If you have any concerns, please contact your link finance officer by the usual telephone number or email, or contact Graham Young to discuss.

Payment of suppliers at risk

The DfE guidance has been updated to include more detail on the procurement notice around paying suppliers at financial risk due to COVID19. The guidance states that schools should continue to make payments to food suppliers that are considered at risk in relation to the cost of free school meals and universal infant free school meals. This does not apply to the costs of meals usually purchased by parents for children who are not eligible for free school meals. Such payment to suppliers should be made on the basis of the previous 3 months' invoices, and only where suppliers agree to act on an open book basis and make cost data available to the contracting school.

This will maintain stability until further notice when new guidance is provided. Providers may furlough staff to receive 80% of their salary and ask schools to top up the remaining 20% to ensure provider stability. This is a reasonable request under the DfE's guidance to ensure that schools can return to normal with the same providers when schools resume.

Furloughing school staff for breakfast and after school provision

London Borough of Hillingdon

The DfE has stated that they don't generally expect schools to furlough staff. However the guidance indicates that where schools have exhausted all other options (i.e. redeployment of staff, budget savings) they could consider this. Therefore as a last resort schools are able to furlough the proportion of the paybill that matches the % of total income that is private income. So for example if 1% of total income is from parents for breakfast club, then schools are able to furlough 1% of the total paybill.

The DfE expects schools to continue to offer wrap around provision if they did prior to COVID-19 to support **critical workers**. If schools are finding it hard to keep this provision open / no demand but may change, they should contact the DfE to discuss options. Wrap around expenditure is not covered by the exceptional costs guidance which is for the following; increased premises cost, FSM costs, additional cleaning. However, if a school faces extraordinary costs to deliver appropriate support to their critical workers through this period that are not covered by this list and cannot be met by existing budgets, they can contact the DfE to discuss.

Educational Psychology Service (EPS) Support to Hillingdon Schools

During these challenging times, the EPS will provide psychological support to all Hillingdon schools. A link Educational Psychologist (EP) has been allocated to each school. They intend to support the emotional wellbeing of school staff as much as possible during this difficult time.

The EPS is also operating a telephone consultation helpline for parents / carers, should they need advice or guidance on their child or family's well being.

EPs are still required to fulfil their statutory responsibilities around EHC needs assessments where appropriate. This will be undertaken remotely.

The EPS will continue to develop and provide schools and parents with helpful resources and guidance on request, and will share materials as and when these are developed.

Schools can contact their link EP or email educationalpsychologyservice@hillingdon.gov.uk.

You will find the full details of these services through LEAP.

School Admissions

Firstly thank you to all of the schools that have worked with the School Placement and Admissions team to support Critical Workers' children access a placement at their school, as an interim arrangement. We expect that these requests may continue in the coming weeks.

Primary Allocation: The School Placement and Admissions team made 3887 offers for Hillingdon residents on 16 April and all schools have been sent their respective offers and waiting lists. The team will continue to make offers until August and you should have already received further information regarding the process. The first round of late offers for Reception in September will be made on 14 May. Schools will be sent information regarding acceptances and declines w/c 11 May.

Junior Allocation: The team have also made 1000 offers for Hillingdon junior schools on National Offer Day (16 April). Infant schools have been notified of the placements for their Year 2 pupils and the receiving junior schools have received the list of pupils starting with them in September. The first round of late offers for Junior in September will be made on 14 May. Schools will be sent information regarding acceptances and declines w/c 11 May.

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Secondary Allocation: Offers continue to be made in accordance with our published timetable for the Year 6-7 transfer. We are grateful for the continued support from schools to provide information surrounding waiting lists and offers. The fourth round of late offers for Secondary in September will be made on 15 May. Schools will be sent information regarding acceptances and declines w/c 11 May.

In-Year Admissions: The team must continue to place children who are not on a school roll due to recently moving into the borough. All other applicants are being informed that the team will not be processing their applications at this time. We have offered reassurance that this interim change in procedure will not have a detrimental impact on their child's in-year application once schools re-open.

School Admission Appeals: Information regarding the temporary regulatory measures to disapply elements of the School Admission Appeals Code has been sent via the School Leaders' Briefing. Please note admission appeals must continue but there is some flexibility about how admission authorities can arrange them.

Communications with applicants: Where possible the School Placement and Admissions team have directed parents/carers to our team rather than schools for information on waiting lists etc. We appreciate that schools are working under unprecedented circumstances and will continue to offer parents support surrounding their child's application where possible to reduce avoidable contact for schools.

The team is contactable via email: admissions@hillingdon.gov.uk or by telephone: 01895 558670.

Data collection and teacher assessments

Schools should decide on internal tracking and teacher assessment processes to manage their pupil data arrangements.

Please see the cancelling or pausing data collections guidance to review the new requirements. Some data collection for schools will still take place. The LA's data team will update schools on local data collation arrangements.

Video Conference facility

Schools can decide on which conferencing technology provider to use. Many schools are using Zoom. Zoom has lifted their 40 minute duration limit for primary and secondary schools. Schools should sign in to their accounts to check if this has been automatically enabled. If not, click 'Request Offer' to join this scheme. .

Link Officers

All schools have been allocated a LA Link Officer to discuss issues and provide support on a regular basis.

Questions?

Please share any questions / concerns with your Link Officer and they will support engagement with the relevant teams.

Please continue to share your questions by emailing education@hillingdon.gov.uk and we will keep our FAQ list updated.

More guidance?

Finally, please keep up to date with the Local Authority's guidance by regularly visiting our coronavirus guidance page on **Hillingdon LEAP**.