



# **COVID-19**

## **Returning to your Early Years setting**

### **ADVICE FOR PARENTS**

27 August 2020

**Wiltshire Council**

# Introduction

We have compiled this short booklet to help you and your child get ready to go back to your early years setting. From 1st September nurseries, pre-schools and childminders will be open for all children.

The booklet has the latest government guidance at time of going to print but please be aware the guidance is constantly being updated. Your setting will advise with specific details for you but we hope you find this useful as a general guide.



## WHY CAN ALL CHILDREN RETURN TO THEIR SETTINGS?

- It is good for children to socialise with other children
- Settings are the best place for them to learn
- It is good for children's mental wellbeing



### HOW ARE YOU MAKING SURE THE SETTING IS SAFE?

- If a child or family member is sick they cannot attend the setting
- Everyone will wash their hands regularly
- Settings will be cleaned regularly
- Settings will check for risks before they open
- There will be less children in a room together

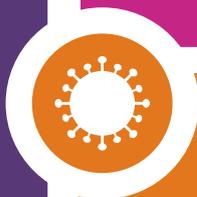
### WHAT ABOUT THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

- Siblings can go to a different setting or school, as when they come home they will still be in a family group
- This will still limit the amount of contacts that your children are exposed to



## DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO RETURN TO THEIR SETTING?

- No, it is completely up to you if you wish to send them back



### WHAT IF THERE IS A CASE OF CORONAVIRUS IN THE SETTING

- The person with symptoms must isolate for 10 days
- The people they live with must self isolate for 14 days
- If your child develops symptoms whilst at the setting, staff must wear PPE this may include face masks. Please ensure that they are collected promptly as this can be distressing for young children
- The setting will not close to other children unless advised to do so by health professionals

## WILL MY CHILD BE TESTED?

Yes, if your child shows symptoms of coronavirus you can order a test. This has now been extended to under 5s. If the test is negative then your child can return to the setting



### WHAT ELSE MIGHT CHANGE?

- You may need to use a different entrance and there may be designated waiting areas.
- Your child may be working with a different member of the team
- Not all of their favourite toys may be available at the moment
- Your setting may ask you to bring a packed lunch if you don't already
- Your setting may ask that your child does not bring in toys from home unless they really need them to support their well being



## Top tips for parents

Talk through **why** they have not been at their setting, explain that things are getting better and it is ok for them to go back to their setting. Give your child a chance to ask any questions they want to and if you do not know the answer tell them it was a good question and you will find out the answer.

- **Talk about the positives** of going back to their setting. Ask your child what they are looking forward to doing when they go back to their setting?; who are they looking forward to playing with?; what things do they enjoy doing in their setting?
- **Talk about what you have done** during lockdown – what have you all learned, what new things have you done? What might you say if a member of staff asks you what things you have been doing?
- Explain **when** this is going to happen, it's a good idea to talk in "sleeps", e.g. there are five more sleeps until you go back to your setting, consider using a calendar and get them to cross off or colour in the days as they pass. However don't raise children's expectations until the situation is **crystal clear** both from government and early years settings as to when and how they will return. A day at a time is a useful motto for the whole family!
- Create **structure, routine and predictability** for your child. In the run up to going back, talk through what you will be doing the night before to get ready for "the first day back" and then spend time talking about what will happen when they wake up on "the first day back". Try to put a routine in place for that morning and keep to it for a while until your child gets back into the swing of things. Get your child to tell you about what they would like the routine to look like.
- **Encourage open discussion**: acknowledge that it will be natural to have a mixture of emotions (e.g. excitement at seeing friends, anxiety or worry about what might have changed). These discussions can be less intense when you are doing something together such as cooking/drawing/Lego/playdough/travelling in the car rather than sitting face to face. If your child is feeling **anxious or worried** explain to them that this is ok and lots of other children will be feeling this too. Give your child some time to talk about their worries and be comforted with a cuddle. Remember you don't have to fix this for them, just be there and let them know you understand. Consider using a **worry box** so they can act on their worry, especially before bedtime



- Think about ways for them to connect with their friends before they start back e.g. help them to have a short video call or send a video/voice message to them.
- Be prepared that for some children with SEND where feasible, transitions may be more gradual with more of a mix of home-learning balanced with attendance to settings. Be aware that staffing is going to be limited and your child might not be working with the people they are used to and this can be difficult for some children.
- Children are currently not able to access their space at a district specialist centre if they attend a mainstream setting. This is to help prevent the spread of the virus to our most vulnerable children and families. There will be some extra support in mainstream settings to help your child if needed.
- We know that many children like to bring in special objects, at the moment can you please try to avoid this where possible. It may be possible to bring in items such as a comforter where it is in the interest of your child's well being, but this will be up to your child's setting and their policy.
- Remember to take children's individual medical circumstances into account and get advice from medical professionals where needed



# Frequently asked questions

## **Are all settings opening in the Autumn Term?**

The Government expects all settings to be open from 1 September to all children. We are very grateful to all of our Wiltshire settings that have been able to stay open over this very difficult time.

## **How will settings open differently in the Autumn Term?**

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

When they have risk assessed and converted their setting 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. They will let you know when they are ready for your child to start setting again.

## **Can I send my child to two different settings? A childminder and preschool for instance?**

Ideally a child will attend only one setting to reduce the risk of transmission and the number of people that they come into contact with. This will depend on the risk assessment of the setting and the insurance cover that they are able to acquire. Please speak with both settings and they should also liaise with each other.

## **My setting has offered me a place but I am afraid of sending them back to their setting?**

Settings will only open when they believe it is safe to do so.

If you are worried or concerned, please talk to your child's setting and ask them to talk to you about the measures they have put in place to keep your child safe. They are working very hard to make their settings as safe as possible for your children.

## **How might your setting look different?**

Some things may have been changed to keep everybody safe but many things will still be familiar. Lots of settings are happy to send photos of changes if you request this.

## How can parents support their child to return to their setting?

- Start to increase the number of times that you encourage your child to wash their hands and practise maintaining social distance.
- Look at how they could walk or cycle to settings.
- Read you setting's joining instructions - to minimise risk most settings 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 attend and don't be tempted to arrive early and do leave promptly as this will help to keep every one safe.
- Explain any changes in behaviour policies to your child. Social distancing is really important and although settings and children have missed each other, it's important that we keep each other safe.
- 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.
- Explain that some children will have moved up to school and new children will be starting.
- If there is a suspected case of COVID-19 in your child's group or 'bubble' the child will be sent home. If that child then tests positive for COVID-19 the bubble of pupils will be sent home for self isolation.
- Explain to children that they cannot bring in toys from home for 'showing' but you may be able to send a photo to the setting that they can share and talk about.
- We would recommend that children's clothes are washed daily after a day in the setting, so explain that they may need to wear different clothes each day.

