

Explore Learning Ltd COVID-19 Guidance – September 2021

Written in line with government guidance: '[Out-of-school settings: COVID-19 guidance for parents and carers](#)'

This guidance explains the actions Explore Learning will take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in their centres. This includes public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

Who can attend our centres?

Explore Learning can offer provision to all children, without restriction on the reasons for which they may attend. All staff are invited to return to work in centre where this is an option. Staff, children and their families must only attend a centre if they are symptom free, and only when they are not required to isolate in line with Government guidance.

Those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

The shielding programme has now come to an end and adults previously considered CEV should, as a minimum, continue to follow the same COVID-19 guidance as everyone else. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance, but people previously considered CEV may wish to consider taking extra precautions. In some circumstances, staff may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and they should continue to follow that advice. They can also refer to:

[Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19.](#)

CEV staff and those who are pregnant should raise any concerns regarding returning to the workplace with their line manager. HR will conduct a risk assessment in line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999 to ensure the working environment is safe for them.

Explore Learning closely follows the Government's advice to those who are CEV and will respond to any changes in order to keep staff, members and their families safe.

Social distancing

Guidance no longer advises that providers limit parent/carer access to settings. Staff compering families will manage the number of people waiting in reception and direct them to where they can safely wait.

Families should use their discretion on sharing lifts with other families, but Explore Learning recommends that maximum occupancy is one family at a time. Hand sanitiser is provided for the operation of lifts and we encourage the use of stairs wherever possible.

Children will not be required to distance with staff or other attending children. Brief, transitory contact, such as passing to visit the toilet, is considered low risk.

Sessions will continue to be pre booked, and where possible, children will work within the same small group with the same Tutor at each session, however, it is no longer necessary to keep children in consistent groups 'bubbles'.

In the event that local restrictions are introduced, Explore Learning will address outbreak management guidance and where necessary will reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups.

Group sizes

Each individual centre's capacity is recorded in their Policies and Procedures folder stored on Reception.

Government guidance outlines that organised activities for children may take place in groups of any number. Explore Learning operates at a ratio of 6 children to 1 Tutor.

Face coverings

Face coverings will no longer be advised for children, parents, staff and visitors either in centre or in reception, but Explore Learning supports anyone who wishes to continue to wear face coverings within our centres. You can find more information on the [use of face coverings including when to wear one, exemptions and how to make your own.](#)

If an Explore Learning centre experiences an outbreak, public health may advise that face coverings should be temporarily worn (by children, staff and visitors, unless exempt).

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Children, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do. They should not come into the centre if they have symptoms or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example they are required to quarantine or have a positive test).

If anyone attending the centre develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, they will be sent home immediately and should follow public health advice. For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household. If a child is awaiting collection, they should be kept in a ventilated location, away from other children and staff if possible and safe to do so. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Any areas they have been or used must be thoroughly cleaned after use.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

In the event that a member of staff or attending child tests positive for COVID-19, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts - Explore Learning will not be expected to undertake contact tracing unless contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help. Contacts from Explore Learning will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact.

Explore Learning management are required to report any positive case within staff and members via the Bubble. This allows us to meet our requirements of reporting all cases to Ofsted as well as monitor case numbers and monitor if thresholds are reached to report to PHE.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be informed they are a close contact and advised to take a PCR test. Staff who do not need to self-isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years and 6 months who usually attend an out-of-school setting, and have been identified as a close contact, can continue to attend Explore Learning as normal. They do not need to wear a face covering in the centre.

Settings will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak in a setting or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Stepping measures up and down

Explore Learning will issue revised outbreak management guidance to centres if local restrictions are reintroduced, or we are aware of a spike in infections within a local area. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education and childcare can have on children and young people, any measures in out-of-school settings should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of settings or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

Safeguarding

Staff recognise that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children and they may be at increased risk of harm or abuse. Staff will ensure relevant training is up to date and the team are supported by a Designated Safeguarding Officer at all times to respond appropriately to child welfare concerns.

Staff also recognise that some children may have found the long period at home hard to manage and / or developed anxieties related to the virus, and will provide opportunities for children and their families to talk about their experiences over the last few months and direct to support and advice where appropriate.

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups

There is emerging evidence that black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals may be more severely affected than the general population by coronavirus (COVID-19). Explore staff will be especially sensitive to the needs and worries of BAME children and young people, parents and carers, and staff, and will consider if any additional measures or reasonable adjustments may need to be put in place to mitigate risk.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities>

Control Measures

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

Hand hygiene

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. All children and staff must wash their hands/use hand sanitiser upon arrival at the centre and after sneezing or coughing. Staff must always wash/sanitise their hands before and after eating, including on return from any rest breaks. Staff will wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly regularly throughout the day.

Respiratory hygiene

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important. Centres display posters remind all staff and children to build awareness. Disposable tissues, hand sanitiser and a lined bin will be available in every zone. All waste will be disposed of in a safe and hygienic manner. Staff will empty bins at the end of every day.

2. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, additional PPE is only required if an individual child, young person or student becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.

The guidance on the [use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID19.

3. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes (inc. use of water fountain)

Cleaning of zones (including desks/keyboards/screens/headphones/mice), reception and toilets will happen between use.

The water fountain remains out of use until further notice. Staff are able to use the fountain to refill water bottles providing it is wiped after use.

Communal areas like the reception desk and office, touch points such as light switches, stair handrails, lift buttons, door handles and handwashing facilities will be cleaned and sanitised regularly throughout the day.

Staff are provided with cleaning guidelines according to [cleaning guidance for non-healthcare settings](#).

Centres are visited weekly by external cleaning company GCC.

4. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Centres will have the ventilation system (bringing in outdoor air) on continuously when occupied (turns on and off with our last-man-out switch). Toilet ventilation will stay on continuously when occupied.

The air con system will be set on an 'Auto' setting to ensure limited touch point of the control panel and temperature is kept consistent in the centre. The Air con system will be turned off at night to aid the system to reset, but to be turned back on when a member of staff first opens up the centre each day.

For centres in shopping centres, most ventilation & air conditioning systems do not need adjustment, however advice should be sought from Shopping Centre Management to check that the above systems are in place.

5. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19

Asymptomatic Testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within settings.

Staff and secondary age children should continue to test regularly using lateral flow tests if they are attending Explore Learning centres. The recommended time frame for testing is twice per week.

Staff and secondary age children can collect home test kits either from their local pharmacy or by ordering online. There is no need for primary age children (those in year 6 and below) to test.

Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and children with a positive lateral flow test result should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance. They will also need to get a PCR test to check if they have COVID-19. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the lateral flow test and the child or staff member can return to centre providing they do not have symptoms.