Dear Early Years and Childcare Providers

Please see below this week’s Government updates for you, your staff and families. The Department for Education (DfE) COVID-19 Childminder FAQ document has also been updated, so we have attached a copy to this email for your easy reference.

Also included in this email is a message from the DfE about the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and the importance of the booster vaccine. There is also a message from the Early Years Entitlements Team on the DfE Data Collection.

**Updates for the Sector**

[Actions for Early Years and Childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#history) 9 & 14 December 2021

14.12.21 Updated to reflect that daily rapid testing is now recommended for contacts of COVID-19.

*‘From 14 December 2021, adults who are fully vaccinated and all children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 are strongly advised to take a lateral flow test every day for 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result. Daily testing of close contacts applies to all contacts who are:*

* *fully vaccinated adults – people who have had 2 doses of an approved vaccine*
* *all children and young people aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccination status*

*•    people who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons*

* *people taking part, or have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine*

*Children under 5 years are exempt from self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily testing of close contacts’.*

09.12.21 Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on 8 December 2021, we have added guidance on working from home, the NHS COVID pass and parent and child groups. We have updated guidance on vaccination, vulnerable children and when to contact the NHS self-isolation hub, face coverings in communal areas, new and expectant mothers and individuals previously considered clinically vulnerable.

[Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for pregnant employees](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=cba7a635-8615-497d-9d56-42b75160357c&utm_content=daily) 14 December 2021
Updated to reflect the Government announcement to move to Plan B.

[Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=dfbc664f-4281-4af8-bfbb-93d4f1cdd3bf&utm_content=daily) 14 December 2021
Updated to reflect that daily rapid testing is now recommended for contacts of COVID-19.

[Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=c8cde3c0-4af5-4328-81ab-2aa78e978a57&utm_content=daily) 9 December 2021

Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on 8 December 2021, we have updated guidance on asymptomatic testing, tracing close contacts and isolation, face coverings, workforce and the clinically extremely vulnerable.

[Face coverings poster](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-poster?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=a6475893-efb2-46be-88bd-a2577b9aa1d4&utm_content=daily) 10 December 2021

From 10 December, face coverings will be required by law in most indoor public places. We’ve updated the poster to remove reference to the 30 November date.

[Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) in education and childcare settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=754195ef-5049-4231-9625-8b742424eaac&utm_content=daily) 14 December 2021
Updated to reflect that daily rapid testing is now recommended for contacts of COVID-19.

**Updates for Families**

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=79b41766-80f9-4fee-87c2-696dd4bb807e&utm_content=daily) 10 &14 December 2021
14.12.21 Updated information on rapid testing, tracing close contacts and isolation.

10.12.21 Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on 8 December 2021, we have updated guidance on school attendance, use of face coverings, contact tracing and isolation, wraparound provision and use of the NHS COVID Pass

[Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=e592345b-7f7b-4e0f-92a5-d1bdddd6862b&utm_content=daily): 9 &14 December 2021
14.12.21 Updated to reflect that daily rapid testing is now recommended for contacts of COVID-19.

09.12.21 Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on 8 December 2021, we have updated guidance on asymptomatic testing, tracing and self-isolation, face coverings, children with health concerns and mandatory certification.

Mandatory Certification: out of school settings are not required to use the NHS COVID Pass, unless they are holding a specific event (such as a reception) that meets the attendance thresholds. Where applicable, out of school settings should follow guidance on mandatory certification for events. Under 18s are exempt from showing their COVID Status but should be counted towards attendance thresholds. Education and childcare settings should not use the NHS COVID Pass as a condition of entry for education or related activities such as exams, teaching, extra-curricular activities, or any other day-to-day activities that are part of education or training.

[COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=ca8241de-990c-4e3c-982f-17a3c32740f2&utm_content=daily) 14 December 2021
Updated with advice for contacts who are not legally required to self-isolate to take seven LFD tests. Removed legal requirements relating to contacts of someone infected with the Omicron variant. Added household transmission infographic.

[Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=20cf40ee-9b4f-4562-b68c-cb46d74392e3&utm_content=daily) 14 December 2021
Updated with advice for contacts who are not legally required to self-isolate to take seven LFD tests. Removed legal requirements relating to contacts of someone infected with the Omicron variant.

**DfE Message re Omicron Variant of COVID-19**

**“There is a new variant of COVID-19 - Omicron - which is highly infectious and spreading fast. Every adult in the country now needs to get a COVID-19 booster vaccine, because two doses of the vaccine are not enough to give the level of protection against infection we all need. Boosters give you the best possible protection against the virus and should significantly reduce your risk of serious illness and hospitalisation.**

**It is more important than ever to get vaccinated. Get your COVID-19 booster vaccine today to strengthen your protection. Get boosted now. Visit** [**nhs.uk/covidvaccination**](nhs.uk/covidvaccination)**.”**

If useful, communications and promotional assets about the COVID-19 vaccine and booster drive will be available via the [Coronavirus Resource Centre](https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/). Keep checking the ‘Vaccine’ section for the latest resources to help you promote key messages. This [employer toolkit](https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/covid-19-vaccine/resources/employer-toolkit/) might also be useful eg for larger providers.

**DfE Data Collection Message**

The DfE has been considering the impact of ending the EY attendance data collection after December due to the time and resource pressures on LAs and providers, attendance levels stabilising, and the quality of data provided.

We appreciate the amount of work it has taken for local authorities and providers to keep completing the attendance data collection to date and we’d like to thank you all for your support since collection began in April 2020.

On Tuesday we published the data collected on Thursday 9 December on our [gov.uk page](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak), along with a statement confirming that we are now ending this Early Years data collection and publication.

However, in the event that the Covid pandemic results in substantial changes to guidance for the education sector, for example, if schools close but EY settings remain open, or if EY settings close, we may have to resume the data collection. In Tuesday’s publication we will invite you and other users of the data to share your views on this plan.

The Early Years & Childcare Service would also like to thank providers for the provision of information. Should data collection have to resume we will notify you so that you recommence providing us with the necessary information.