

Easter School Provision – Questions and Answers

Thank you for the excellent work your school has been undertaking to ensure the children of key workers and vulnerable children can still access provision this week.

The response has been incredible, across Kent practically every school is remaining open to provide this vital service or has made arrangements with other local schools to do so. Numbers of children accessing the provision has been generally lower than expected as parents have heeded the advice to keep their children at home.

Schools have been asked by the DfE to keep provision in place over the Easter holiday. Ideally that would be Monday – Friday on both weeks including the Bank Holidays. Many schools have indicated their intention to do so and we are grateful to those schools for this.

We hope the following advice, which is set out in question and answer format, will be helpful to you in managing your Easter provision. Also contained within this are links to other pieces of guidance and resources which may be useful.

Please send any further questions to your AEOs or SIAs and we will seek to provide additional guidance.

Questions and Answers

Can the school be closed if there are no children attending?

Complete closure of a school can **only** take place if leaders are certain no pupils will be left stranded and if there are robust communication channels in place with parents.

A school needs to be in regular communication with all its eligible families and know who will attend and when. All parents need to know who to contact at the school if their needs change suddenly, including those who may become eligible, such as those volunteering to return to the NHS.

If robust communication channels are not in place, the school should have a presence on site until it is satisfied nobody has turned up needing provision or expecting the school to be open.

It is vital that schools update their status daily on the School Closure website, and that, if they have not already done so, they ensure their Area Education Officer has up to date emergency contact details.

Will the provision be free for the children of key workers and vulnerable children?

Yes.

Should the provision just be for key workers given that vulnerable children would normally be at home over Easter?

We do not expect numbers of vulnerable children to be large. However, it is important that provision is available for these children at this time if needed. The normal support mechanisms families rely on in holiday periods which ensure that they are adequately able to care for and manage their child may not be available to them. Additionally, families are under greater pressure as financial and health concerns increase, which for many children and young people may further reduce the protective factors at home. There may also be exceptional examples such as a children's home struggling due to low staff numbers. Childcare provision during the day might make all the difference in keeping children and families together during these difficult times, or the children's home open. We would ask you to be flexible in responding to such requests from families and Social Workers.

The DfE documents 'Guidance for schools about temporarily closing' and 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on vulnerable children and young people' (Published 22 March 2020)' are clear on this issue:

'Where possible, we would encourage settings to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children throughout the Easter holidays.

*Schools, and all childcare providers, are therefore being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are **critical** to the COVID-19 response and **cannot be safely cared for at home**'.*

What leadership would I need to provide over the two weeks?

There should be a designated school lead on the site at all times. This is likely to be someone on the Leadership Scale but could be an experienced member of staff you trust to undertake this role. It is down to your professional judgement to agree the leadership arrangements you put in place given the number of children and young people that will access the provision. The lead should ideally be trained in the DSL role (designated safeguarding lead) however if this is not possible, they must know how to access advice from and have access to a DSL in case of an issue arising.

When resourcing the provision, schools will want to take into consideration the number of staff who are available and volunteer, the qualifications, skills and experience of those staff and critically, the number and young people that will require access to the provision to ensure it is staffed appropriately.

Do I pay staff who have volunteered to work over Easter?

We are very aware that the contracts of teachers are not designed to address the current circumstances of the Easter holiday and the government's 'ask'. However, teachers are salaried staff and therefore we believe it is reasonable to agree with staff members that they work during Easter, which is normally a holiday period for them. During the Easter opening and subsequent few weeks, staff should be organised so that colleagues know when they are working (either in school or at home) and when they are on holiday. Staff on holiday should not be expected to keep in touch – they need some time to switch off and physically and mentally recuperate.

Many support staff are employed on term time only contracts. We would advocate that support staff are paid for the additional hours worked during Easter in line with their terms and conditions.

How will additional costs be funded?

We will be providing schools with a proforma to capture additional costs related to Covid-19. All costs related to Easter provision should be included on this i.e. staffing and other activities. The DFE have confirmed that there is no requirement to provide FSMs during the Easter provision. The school may decide to offer this but these costs cannot be reclaimed in line with other costs as described above. Once Government has informed us how schools claim back additional costs, we will inform all schools.

What arrangements would I need to have in place in relation to safeguarding and first aid?

Safeguarding and Health and Safety remain the priority. However, these are exceptional times and the Coronavirus Act 2020 provides the Government with the power to relax statutory requirements. Schools should ensure they have in place arrangements which are proportionate to the risks presented. For example, they should have access to a DSL if it is not possible to have a DSL on site.

For schools who have vulnerable pupils attending, if there are any immediate child protection concerns please contact the Front Door directly on 03000 411111. In addition, we would also like schools who have children with an allocated social worker to send an email daily to them to confirm whether they are in attendance.

If further advice is needed on other safeguarding issues, please telephone the Education Safeguarding Service. Contact information, including phone numbers can be found via <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts>

The safeguarding toolkit can be found via

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/106210/COVID-19-Safeguarding-Toolkit-for-Education-Settings.pdf

In relation to First Aid, with the small numbers of pupils and staff on site, social distancing, the nature of the activities undertaken may mean a first aider is not essential in the current circumstances, but clear procedures will need to be in place regarding how any incidents will be dealt with.

What advice would you give schools about social distancing?

Please follow the guidance issued by the DfE about social distancing in Education via [this link](#):

As you plan your provision, you should consider, amongst other things:

- ensuring children, parents, carers and staff know not to enter the school if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- ways of keeping class sizes as small as possible and rotating staff
- promoting social distancing in all interactions and situations
- scheduling of room usage, activities, break times and movement to minimise close contact or gatherings
- regular cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces

The best public health advice remains handwashing with soap and hot water and frequent disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces with clean disposable cloth

What hours should I try and keep the provision open?

There are likely to be relatively small numbers of parents using this facility. You will know your parents best and we would ask you to liaise with them to find out what hours would enable them to carry out their employment as key workers. This will have to be balanced with the staff you have available to ensure safe provision. The Government has stated: "We expect schools to operate as close as possible to their normal hours. Where possible, we would encourage breakfast club and after school provision to help support the children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response." Schools should note the use of the phrase 'where possible'. We know from data collected that a significant number of breakfast and after-school clubs have been suspended. We appreciate the tremendous pressure school staff are under, but also the importance of such clubs to critical workers in particular. Where possible, including through the use of suitable volunteers, we would ask schools deliver these services, but we respect the fact this may not be possible at this time.

Does our insurance cover us to put in place this provision?

Yes. All schools have liability insurance in place, which covers their own staff and pupils and visitors to site. Where KCC schools are working in collaboration, both/all schools will have insurance. If KCC pupils/staff are being sent into Academies, it might be prudent to check that their insurance is up to date. The usual insurance arrangements will continue to apply during the Easter period. Dynamic risk assessment should be taking place to ensure that the provision and activities for those children accessing school is safe.

Over the Easter holidays our food supplier is able to continue to provide meals for children eligible for free school meals who are not in school. Is that allowed?

Yes. It is for schools to decide locally how their arrangements for free school meals will operate.

Whilst the vouchers are for term time only, if there is a local arrangement to supply food that the school and the supplier intends to continue over this period then that can be agreed and managed locally. This would need to be manageable within schools' existing resources, as there will **not** be additional funding available for this purpose.

How should I fill in the KCC questionnaire when some of my students are in provision at another school?

As more schools begin to work collaboratively in closed hubs to accommodate critical worker and vulnerable children, we have received queries regarding the daily KCC questionnaire that we ask you to complete concerning pupil attendance.

For clarity, every school should continue to submit a return, stating the numbers of pupils on your school's roll, who are accessing an education provision on any given day. This should include either pupils attending their own school or those attending a partner school. Therefore, if you are the "host" of a hub, your submission should only include the number of pupils on roll at your school who are attending.

This way, the risk of any double counting is removed. However, should you have any further queries please contact your AEO.

What are our responsibilities if we use third party providers such as sports coaches?

This would be the same as any other time that you hire out your site. You would need to have an agreement that is signed by the provider showing they have the required level of indemnity cover in place and have safeguarding procedures in place. The difference is that the school would need to pay for the provision and claim it back from the Government at a later date as described above. You would still need someone to open and close the site and ensure that cleaning took place every day.

Schools would also need to have a plan in place in case the providers became ill and so couldn't run it or if they ended up going into isolation because of a family member. You would need to ensure that providers understand that the provision would need to look different to normal holiday clubs due to the virus e.g. dropping off and collecting children, thinking carefully about the activities to limit contact etc.

What arrangements should be in place to support catering for the children and young people on site?

The DfE have issued guidance for free school meals which can be accessed via this link which includes information about Easter provision. This states that free school meals entitlement does not extend to school holiday periods. This means it is acceptable to ask that parents provide their child with a packed lunch. Schools may choose to provide free school meals over Easter but this is at the school's own cost.

Will there be transport?

Normally this would not be provided over a holiday period, therefore it is reasonable to expect that most parents will organise this. If there are exceptional circumstances, we will consider cases. For families with a Social Worker they should speak to their Social Worker. If the child or young person has an ECHP and

ordinarily receives free home to school transport and the family cannot make their own transport arrangements over Easter, please contact the Transport Eligibility Team at homeschooltransport@kent.gov.uk

Where can I find activities and resources for the Easter sessions?

There are a wide range of resources on offer, a list of which has been collated by KAH and TEP which you might find useful for planning.

KAH <https://kah.org.uk/covid19/resources>

TEP <https://www.theeducationpeople.org/>

What other guidance do I need to know about or follow?

All the key guidance is available on Kelsi, including letters from Matt Dunkley and Frequently Asked Questions. We anticipate that the DfE will be publishing guidance on Easter provision imminently. This will be shared with you through Kelsi which can be accessed via [this link](#).

Should you have any further questions, please contact the relevant officer below.

Contact details for SIAs

Primary:

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