

Dear Early Years and Childcare Providers

You should have already been sent the email below from the Department for Education, however we are including it in this communication in case you have not for any reason.

Please also see below this week's Government updates for you, your staff and families, as well as an update on face-to-face visits by The Education People and an article on Wellbeing.

Department for Education Email

Change in how to order test kits for Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Nurseries

The process for how PVIs obtain testing kits is changing from 29 April. We are introducing a new online system for re-ordering test kits for testing at home. This means that you will soon be able to re-order test kits and better manage stock levels and deliveries to your nursery.

You will receive a welcome email in the next few days containing your Unique Organisation Number (UON). You can also find your UON at the following [link](#). Your UON will enable you to place ongoing re-orders for test kits via the online ordering system, which can be accessed at the following [link](#).

You can find guidance on how to place an order on the [document sharing platform](#).

As a first step you should use your UON to access the online ordering system, familiarise yourself with the system, and check that your delivery address and contact details are correct.

Planned stock replenishment week commencing 3 May

You will automatically receive a delivery of test kits on Thursday 6 May, Friday 7 May or Monday 10 May. The delivery that you receive will be the **final automatic delivery**. After this you will need to place an order to receive further test kits.

This delivery should provide you with sufficient testing kits to last until the end of May. This means you do not need to place an order for testing kits immediately and will have time to familiarise yourself with the new ordering process, so that you can place an order when needed.

Delivery timescales

When you are ready to place your first order, you will need to consider our delivery timelines. Any order which is placed by Wednesday 5pm will be delivered the following week. Any orders placed after this point will be processed and delivered in the subsequent week. For your first order, you may want to place the order at least three working days before the weekly Wednesday 5pm delivery cut off, to ensure that any initial setup issues can be resolved in good time. The table below summarises the delivery timelines:

Week 1: Order Placed	Week 2: Order received	Week 3: Order received
Orders placed before Wednesday 5pm	Delivery received	
Orders placed after Wednesday 5pm		Delivery received

Each delivery you receive will be based on the staff numbers you submit and will provide you with sufficient test kits to test twice weekly for three and a half weeks.

Please consider your current stock level and your testing demands before placing any order, to ensure that the order you place meets your testing needs.

Updates for the Sector

[Check which employees you can put on furlough to use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) 22 April 2021

Change made: Updated guidance for other types of employees you can claim for and if your employee is clinically vulnerable.

[Check if your employer can use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) 22 April 2021

Change made: Other types of eligible employees have been added to the 'Check if you're eligible' section. Updated guidance for when you're self-isolating or on sick leave.

[How to report self-isolation support payments](#) 27 April 2021

First Published: Find out how to report support payments relating to self-isolation due to coronavirus (COVID-19) on your Self-Assessment tax return.

[Asymptomatic testing: early years staff in different settings](#) 28 April 2021

Change made: Rapid asymptomatic testing in early years settings guidance updated to reflect that asymptomatic testing is now available to everyone in England. We have also clarified where staff, parents or carers may be eligible for Test and Trace support payments.

Updates for Families

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#) 22 April 21

Change made: Edited to clarify current guidance and to be more reader-friendly.

[JCVI issues new advice on COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women](#) 16 April 2021

The JCVI has advised that pregnant women should be offered the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group.

Change made: First published.

Face-to-Face Visits

At the current time it is not The Education People's intention to resume universal face-to-face visits as a matter of course, therefore the Early Years & Childcare Service expects to generally continue with virtual visits until at least 21 June 2021.

However where settings feel there is a compelling reason for a face-to-face visit from an Adviser or Childcare Sufficiency Officer, the setting manager/childminder should email the team concerned outlining their reasons for necessity of such a visit and the request will be considered on a fully risk-assessed basis.

Our Mental Health Awareness week visit offer may be delivered outdoors after 21 June if the Government's road-map continues as planned.

Wellbeing

Kent County Council's Corporate Director Matt Dunkley sends a blog to his Directorate of Children, Young People and Education each week. In last week's blog he reminded everyone of the challenge of moving out of lockdown into the easing of restrictions. We thought you may find some of the content useful to share with your staff and families.

Venturing out will be different for all of us and for some, the thought of going to places where there will be lots of other people, walking in crowds, being in a busy shop environment, and not mention the worry about ourselves, our family and the behaviours of others could be tough going. But... as the saying goes 'We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm.' It's not the same experience for everyone.

Here are some tips to ease you through this transition phase:

- **Acknowledge your feelings**, we all have them. Talk to people around you, your colleagues, family and friends – you will soon find out that you are not alone in having these thoughts and feelings.
- **Be kind and don't be hard on yourself.** Looking after yourself is the first step in being able to help others.
- **Enjoy slowly regrowing your personal contacts** and start going for those *Al Fresco* catch-ups. Remember, small steps!
- **Focus on the good stuff** – celebrate those milestones we have all missed. Don't forget to celebrate your own resilience!
- **Be present** – stop overthinking about what's going to happen. Learn to switch off from the news and social media which can be really overwhelming.

The last year has changed the way we live and work, but we've come through it. The transition into the 'next normal' will no doubt throw out a few curve balls, but you know you can cope. You can either dodge them or catch them, but do try not to let them hit you in the face! T