

**Prioritisation for on-site provision for vulnerable children and those of critical workers**

The Prime Minister’s announcement on 4th January of the third National Lockdown and second partial closure of schools has meant that most of our provision has been switched to Remote Education. We are proud of the investment and preparation that we have done for this situation and all of our pupils, whether accessing learning at home or on their school site, will now be able to access high quality teaching and education through MS Teams.

Once again the government have made an offer of provision in school for vulnerable pupils and the children of Critical Workers. Unfortunately we are facing significant pressures in delivering the amount of demand, which is far higher than in the first Lockdown. The numbers of people eligible are greater as the list has grown and of course more businesses are now open as premises are deemed ‘COVID safe’.

We fear that in attempting to meet the massive demand for Critical Worker care in some schools we might risk undermining the quality of our Remote Education provision by drawing staff out of that work. We are also constrained by the safety limits on room capacity and bubble size and the requirements to ensure that our bubbles do not excessively mix pupils or staff.

The offer is made by government in non-statutory advice to schools. We are therefore applying discretion in interpreting that advice and propose to prioritise access to provision as follows:

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| **Priority A** – equal first priority | **Priority B** – prioritised in order. Headings taken from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision) | | **Priority C** – prioritised in order. Headings taken from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision) |
| **Vulnerable children and young people** | **Children of single parent families where the parent is a Critical Worker and children from families where both parents are Critical Workers** | | **Children from families where one parent is a Critical Worker** |
| Pupils with a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child | 1 | Children of workers from Health and social care | Children of workers from Health and social care |
| Pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and (at the school and LA’s discretion) pupils who are in receipt of Top Up Funding to support their learning | 2 | Children of workers from Education and childcare | Children of workers from Education and childcare |
| Pupils who are on threshold of children’s services or social case intervention or who are at risk of becoming NEET. | 3 | All other key worker categories (subject to verification by the school that the employment satisfies the government’s definitions of critical work). | All other key worker categories |
| Adopted children, children on a special guardianship order and care leavers |  |  |  |
| Others at the provider and local authority’s discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health |  |  |  |
| Those who are young carers |  |  |  |
| Disadvantaged pupils identified by the school as not being able to access Remote Education through lack of IT equipment. |  |  |  |

Some of our schools may only offer access to onsite provision to children who are present on site for the whole week. This will avoid carrying empty spaces in our ‘bubbles’ while places are in such high demand.

For children in priority group A schools may also not be able to replicate the exactly the same level of support or personnel as children and families are used to. If a 1:1 support is not available for work due to sickness or isolation then a place may not be able to be offered during this period.

We appreciate that some families will be disappointed but you will see that we have aimed to address the needs of those children who most need the structure of school and those parents whose work is under the most pressure in meeting the challenges of the pandemic. We hope that everyone will appreciate the pressure that educational providers are under at this time and appreciate that we are doing our utmost to serve or communities in these very difficult circumstances.