

Bolton COVID-19 Update for Early Years Q&A's



Q: Will there be any guidance released regarding children's illnesses, especially temperatures, as we move through Autumn to Winter? Early Years settings feel there needs to be some differentiation for young children's symptoms.

A: Please refer to the NHS website for the latest guidance and specifically the section on temperatures and children.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/>

Q: I'm not sure what the consensus is on having work placement students back in as the guidance mentions limiting the number of adults but are they classed as adults if they are still at school?

A: It is up to each setting to do their own risk assessment and set their own limits on the number of adults based on their knowledge of the guidance and current circumstances. There is no specific guidance for students. In the case of students, it is advisable to contact the school or college and liaise with their risk assessment and arrangements for student placements.

Q: I wondered if a question could be asked about swimming lessons. Is it relatively safe for us to resume swimming lessons next term? I know this will depend on the risk assessments of the individual Leisure Centres but what extra measures should we be expecting?

A: Swimming lessons are open. The advice from Public Health is to liaise with your local swimming centre and share risk assessments, then each provider should make their own decision, sharing information with parents such as updated risk assessments.

Q: Please can it be raised with schools the impact of staggered starts and pick up for wraparound club collecting children- can schools work with wraparound providers so they are not having to wait outside schools for their staggered drop or collection?

A: Bolton Start Well recognises that this may be an issue at some schools and will raise it in the schools meetings. In the meantime, wraparound providers and Childminders should liaise with schools individually.

Q: Where do we stand with regards to playing with sand, water and playdough, are they allowed?

A: There is no specific guidance relating to particular resources in EYFS such as sand, water, playdough, use of aprons, comforters and teddies. In the guidance, schools and EY providers are advised to follow the (3.3) 'System of Control'; protective measures: All EY providers and schools are advised to carry out a risk assessment and keep this under constant review. Having assessed their risk, EY providers and schools must work through the 'system of controls', adopting measures to the fullest extent possible in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their setting or school and individual circumstances.

Bolton COVID-19 Update for Early Years Q&A's



For example, it will depend on how your setting or school has decided on group sizes, access to resources and sharing of equipment and review the relevant separate guidance on the Infection Prevention and Control which has subtle differences for settings and schools:

EY Providers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#infection-prevention-and-control>

Schools:

In addition to EY guidance above schools also need be refer to the specific school guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#soc>

All elements of the 'system of controls' are essential. All settings and schools must cover them all, but the way different settings and schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances and make informed judgements about how to balance delivering high quality care and education with the measures needed to manage risk.

In order to facilitate cleaning, remove unnecessary items from learning environments where there is space to store them elsewhere. Public health advice is to remove all soft toys, and any toys that are hard to clean, such as those with intricate parts. Where practicable, remove soft furnishings, for example pillows, bean bags and rugs.

If settings and schools follow the guidance on the 'system of controls' they will effectively reduce risks and create an inherently safer environment. It may be that if providers and schools are following the system of controls and increase the basic elements of frequency of hand washing and enhanced cleaning etc, and the resources used are contained within the 'bubble', it may be that a school or setting considers it is acceptable to use some difficult to clean playdough as measures are in place so that either individual children or groups have their own playdough, or water play is considered to be acceptable or sand is changed at the end of each session/day. It is up to individual schools and settings to decide having considered all of the risks and the school or setting's individual organisational factors.

The Q&O Team are happy to have a chat to discuss individual circumstances.