

1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. Education, training and skills (<https://www.gov.uk/education>)
3. Pupil wellbeing, behaviour and attendance (<https://www.gov.uk/education/pupil-wellbeing-behaviour-and-attendance>)
4. Health, safety and wellbeing in schools (<https://www.gov.uk/education/health-safety-and-wellbeing-in-schools>)
5. What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (<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>)

Part of

## **Education and childcare during coronavirus (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/education-and-childcare>)**

1. Department  
for Education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>)

Guidance

# **What parents and carers need to know about nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges until August 2020**

Updated 2 July 2020

## **Contents**

Main changes to previous guidance

Opening nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to more pupils

Steps nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges are taking to make sure they are safe for pupils

Special schools

Nurseries and childminders

Attendance

Summer provision

Admissions

Transport

Uniform

School meals

What pupils will be taught

Exams

Resources and support



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This guidance applies to the 2020 summer term. It is for parents and carers of children and young people at:

- registered nurseries and childminders, pre-schools, playgroups and maintained nursery schools
- primary and secondary schools including independent schools, maintained schools, academy trusts, free schools and special schools
- colleges<sup>1</sup>

## **Main changes to previous guidance**

On 30 June, we:

- added a new section on summer provision
- added a new section on school uniform
- updated content on school meals including the Covid Summer Food Fund
- added information on a package of support worth £1billion to support pupils to catch up

## **Opening nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to more pupils**

From 1 June, we asked:

- nurseries and childminders to welcome back children of all ages
- primary schools in England to welcome back children in key transition years – nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6

Schools continue to offer places to children who are vulnerable and to children of critical workers.

From 15 June, secondary schools, sixth form and colleges have been asked to offer some face-to-face support to:

- pupils in year 10 and year 12
- 16 to 19 learners in the first year of a 2 year study programme

Colleges and schools continue to offer places to children who are vulnerable and to children of critical workers in every year group.

## **Flexibility for primary schools to welcome back additional children this term**

We know that in some schools, there will be the capacity to welcome more children back, in group sizes of no more than 15, before the summer holidays. This may be because take-up amongst eligible children is lower than expected, there is additional space still available within the school or available staff to teach and supervise. There is no expectation on primary schools to welcome back additional children where they do not have the capacity to do so.

Your school will contact you if it is able to welcome back additional children. It will be up to individual schools to decide which children to invite back.

If you have a child in nursery, reception, year 1 or year 6 and have not yet taken up on the offer of a place for your child, your school may be in touch to ask if you intend to send your child back this term. If you do not, the school may choose to offer this place to another pupil.

## **Vulnerable children and young people**

Vulnerable children and young people in any year group should attend their school, where it is appropriate and there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. This is so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending.

Vulnerable children and young people are those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an EHC plan and it is determined, following a risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by their nursery, childminder, school or college, local authority (including children's social care services) or other multi-agency partners (such as health care professionals, youth services and the police), and for whom attending early years, school or college would be protective and/or helpful at this time - this might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers, those who would benefit from attendance because of a mental health need and others at local-level discretion

The term 'any year groups' in this context refers to children under 5 eligible for early years entitlements and children and young people aged 5 to 18 (or aged 5 to 25 for children and young people with an EHC plan).

### **Critical workers**

Children in any year group with at least one parent or carer who is listed as a critical worker (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision>) can attend school.

You may be asked for evidence that you are a critical worker, such as a work ID badge or payslip.

### **Steps nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges are taking to make sure they are safe for pupils**

We have worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) to develop guidance on implementing protective measures (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>) which nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges should put in place. This guidance sets out a hierarchy of controls which create a safer system where the risk of transmission of infection is significantly reduced.

These controls are:

- avoiding contact with anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices
- regular cleaning
- minimising contact and mixing

We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account.

Nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges should reduce the risk of transmission by keeping children and staff in small consistent groups and keeping groups away from each other.

Ensuring sufficient distance between pupils is likely to mean secondary school classes are no more than half their usual size. This may vary due to individual secondary school circumstances (for example, a larger group could be taught in a larger space provided social distancing can be maintained and mixing is minimised).

Colleges should plan to keep students in groups that are as small as possible and that mix as little as possible with other groups

If you are worried about your children returning to school, speak to the school about your concerns and the support available.

### **Actions nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will take if there is a suspected case of coronavirus (COVID-19)**

If a child, young person or staff member has symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19), they should not attend their nursery, childminder, school or college. If they develop symptoms while attending their nursery, childminder, school or college, they will be sent home and told they and their households must follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>).

Anyone with symptoms should self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.

Everyone has access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and they should follow the guidance on how to arrange to have a test (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>), or contact [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk) 119 via telephone if they do not have internet access.

If your child tests positive you should inform their nursery, childminder, school or college immediately. You should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>) and your child must self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.

If your child tests negative, other members of the household can stop self-isolating. If your child feels well and no longer has symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better.

Schools should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

### **Actions nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will take if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)**

The [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk) Test and Trace (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>) service will contact anyone that tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and ask them to share information about people with whom they have had close, recent contact and places they have visited.

When [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk) Test and Trace identifies that a child, young person or member of staff who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) has spent some time in a nursery, childminder, school or college while they could have been infectious, they will take details of the nursery, childminder, school or college and those with whom the person had contact. Further guidance is available on testing and tracing for coronavirus (COVID-19) (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>).

Local Public Health England health protection teams will contact the nursery, childminder, school or college attended by someone that tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). They will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm the identity of those that were in contact with the person during the period that they were infectious and should be asked to self-isolate.

In most cases, this will be the child or member of staff's immediate class or group who will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person with the positive test.

In some cases, a larger number of other children or young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where the nurseries, childminders, schools or colleges are observing the protective measures guidance

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>) on infection prevention and control, which will reduce the risk of transmission, closure of the whole nursery, childminder, school or college will not generally be necessary.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>). They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period - this is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and must isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period), their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days, following the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>)

## Special schools

From 1 June, we have asked special schools and hospital schools to work towards a phased return of more children and young people, without a focus on specific year groups and informed by risk assessments.

From 15 June, we have also asked specialist post-16 institutions to work towards a phased return of young people, without a focus on specific year groups or proportion of learners and informed by risk assessments.

Read the guidance for special schools, specialist colleges and local authorities to find out how they are supporting children and young people with SEND (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance>) during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

## Nurseries and childminders

We have asked nurseries and childminders to open for children of all ages.

## Childcare fees and charges

We expect nurseries to comply with the law and take a reasonable and proportionate approach to parents' fees, considering these unprecedented circumstances, and to communicate any arrangements clearly with them.

If you feel you have been affected by unfair cancellation charges during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, you can report it to the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) using their online form (<https://www.coronavirus-business-complaint.service.gov.uk/>).

## **30 hours free childcare and/or tax-free childcare**

If you are temporarily not meeting the minimum income requirement for 30 hours free childcare (<https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare>) and/or tax-free childcare (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>) as a direct consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and would normally meet the threshold for these schemes, you will be treated as eligible.

You should continue to apply or reconfirm if you have a childcare account already. You will be contacted if you need to supply further evidence of eligibility.

Subject to parliamentary approval of a temporary amendment to the 30 hours free childcare and tax-free childcare regulations, we intend to allow critical workers who exceed the maximum income threshold (£100,000 per year), due to increased income as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, to remain eligible for 30 hours for the current 2020 to 2021 tax year (up to a limit of £150,000).

We have previously asked local authorities to use their discretion to relax the validity dates on 30 hours codes where critical workers and parents of vulnerable children were eligible and expecting to take up a 30 hours childcare place between 1 April 2020 and 31 August 2020, but had missed the deadline of 31 March 2020. This enabled children to take up their places in the summer term.

Previously, only the children of critical workers and children who are vulnerable were able to access childcare. Now that nurseries and childminders are able to open to all children, we are asking local authorities to use their discretion in accepting the codes of all children who missed the 31 March deadline. This acceptance is conditional on them meeting the eligibility criteria and there being capacity nurseries and childminders to take them on. Nurseries, childminders and local authorities will need to confirm that the child taking up the place turned 3 before 1 April 2020 to ensure they are eligible for a 30 hours place in the summer term.

You should continue to apply for your 30 hours entitlement even if you are not currently using it.

Read the guidance on tax-free childcare and 30 hours free childcare during coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-get-tax-free-childcare-and-30-hours-free-childcare-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) for more information.

## **Attendance**

We strongly encourage children and young people who are in the eligible year groups to attend, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions).

You should notify your child's school or college as normal if your child is unable to attend so that staff are aware and can discuss with you.

Parents will not be penalised for non-attendance at this time.

If you are a parent of a vulnerable child and do not want them to attend school, speak to your social worker or school.

If you are concerned about the risk of your child contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) when attending, speak to your nursery, childminder, school or college about the protective measures they are putting in place to reduce the risks of transmission for all children and staff.

## **Opening hours**

We expect nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges to be open for their normal hours and if possible, continue with breakfast club and after school provision.

## **Breakfast / after school clubs**

School-based wraparound care providers, such as breakfast and after school clubs, can operate for children in eligible year groups or priority groups if they are:

- operating on the same premises as the school or early years provision those children are attending
- only caring for children of that school or early years provision and no others

Providers should follow the same protective measures being taken by nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges during the day, such as keeping children in the same small consistent groups that they are in during the day.

If wraparound providers are unable to implement the same protective measures they should only offer outdoor provision. In doing so, providers should ensure they can keep children social distanced and in a group of no more than 6, including staff members, in line with guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>).

## **Summer provision**

Providers of community activities, summer clubs, tuition and other out-of-school activities will be able to open over the summer, with safety measures in place.

Adjustments to the current restrictions on these providers will be made as part of step 3 of the government's recovery strategy (from 4 July). Providers who open should follow the guidance on protective measures for providers of:

- community activities
- holiday or after-school clubs
- tuition
- other out-of-school settings

Providers that open before 4 July should only offer outdoor provision. In doing so, providers should ensure they can keep children social distanced and in a group of no more than 6, including staff members, in line with guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>).

## **Admissions**

We have amended the regulations so that admission authorities can hold appeals by telephone, video conference or in writing, where necessary, instead of holding face to face hearings with parents. More information on the appeals process (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/admission-appeals-for-school-places>) is available.

## **Transport**

Local authorities continue to be under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for eligible children that are able to attend school.

Colleges and schools also have the capacity to support transport costs where necessary for 16 to 19 year olds.

You are encouraged to walk or cycle where possible and avoid public transport, particularly at peak times. When planning your journey to school, particularly if using public transport, you should follow the safer travel guidance for passengers (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>).

You should do all you can to help make sure you and others can travel safely. This can be done through:

- not leaving home if anyone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- avoiding travelling on public transport, particularly at peak times
- maintaining a 2 metre distance, where possible, from others who are not in your household
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by using the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- avoiding touching your face
- washing your hands thoroughly before and after travelling
- wearing a face covering if you need to use public transport

School transport is provided by local authorities, academy trusts or schools for the specific purpose of transporting children to and from their home and school.

Children are not required to wear face coverings on school transport, but they can wear one if they wish. School transport is provided specifically for the purpose of ensuring that children can attend school and it is limited to children travelling to school, and their travel assistants where necessary. Children do not travel on school transport at the same time as members of the public. The transport is arranged by local authorities for a planned number of children which means demand for services can be managed in a way which is not possible on public transport. This will allow children to maintain a 2 metre distance, where possible, from other children not in their household, wherever possible. School transport often carries the same children on a regular basis, which may reduce the risk of transmission.

When deciding whether children should wear a face covering on school transport, it is also important to remember:

- children and staff won't be expected to wear face coverings in school
- it is important that those using face coverings are able to do so properly – guidance on how to wear and make a cloth face covering (<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>) is available
- children under 3 years old should not wear face coverings
- children under 11 are not expected to wear face coverings on public transport

## **Uniform**

There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a school. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often or differently than usual.

## **School meals**

Schools should provide meal options for all children attending school. Meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils and pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria.

If your child usually receives free school meals and is not attending school, then the school should provide you with an alternative.

As school kitchens reopen, we expect schools to make food parcels available for collection or delivery for any children that are eligible for free school meals who are staying at home. Where schools are not able to provide meals or food parcels for children who are at home, they can continue to offer vouchers to families of eligible pupils.

We know due to coronavirus (COVID-19) families will face increased pressure on household budgets, and we recognise families will face particular challenges over the coming months. That is why we are providing additional funding for a Covid Summer Food Fund (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-summer-food-fund>) which will enable children who are eligible for free school meals to claim vouchers for the 6 week summer holiday period.

You can still apply for free school meals (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>). Contact your local authority who will verify your eligibility.

## **Meals in further education colleges**

We expect colleges to continue to support students who are eligible for and usually receive, free meals in colleges. This includes students who are newly eligible, whether they are continuing to attend the college or are studying remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19) related issues.

## **What pupils will be taught**

Schools continue to be best placed to make decisions about how to support and educate all their pupils during this period, based on the local context and staff capacity.

Where year groups are returning to school, we would expect school leaders and teachers to:

- consider their pupils' mental health and wellbeing and identify any pupil who may need additional support so they are ready to learn
- assess where pupils are in their learning and agree what adjustments may be needed to the school curriculum over the coming weeks
- identify and plan how best to support the education of high needs groups, including disadvantaged pupils, and special educational needs and disability (SEND) and vulnerable pupils
- support pupils in year 6, who will need both their primary and secondary schools to work together to support their upcoming transition to year 7
- consider how to best use additional contact time to support those in years 10 and 12 and the first year of a 16 to 19 course, who are starting their final year of study for GCSEs, A levels and other qualifications next academic year

Schools and colleges should continue to support pupils attending school as well as those remaining at home, making use of the available remote learning support.

No school will be penalised if they are unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to their pupils during this period.

## **Exams**

Primary assessments, including SATs, and exams including GCSEs, AS levels and A levels, have been cancelled this year.

Students taking GCSEs, AS and A levels will receive calculated grades this summer. Read more about how GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcses-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020>).

For students taking other qualifications instead of or alongside GCSEs and A levels, such as some BTECs, will also receive a calculated result wherever possible.

There will be some qualifications where this is not possible, such as those that need to demonstrate a more practical set of skills. These assessments will be adapted wherever possible so that students can receive a result this summer.

Where it is not possible to adapt the assessments, these will be delayed. Ofqual – the qualifications regulator – is working with the awarding bodies who provide the assessments to agree the approaches.

We recognise that students who are studying GCSE, A level or equivalent courses, but are not due to take exams until 2021, will have experienced disruption to their education this year. We are working with Ofqual and the exam boards to develop our approach to next year's exams in light of this.

## Resources and support

We have published a list of online educational resources (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>) to help children to learn at home. You can also access guidance on supporting your children's education during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-your-childrens-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>).

Further support includes:

- a list of online educational resources (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>) which have been identified by some of the country's leading educational experts to help pupils to learn at home
- enhanced education provision from the BBC (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach>) to include daily lessons
- resources from Oak National Academy (<https://www.thenational.academy/>), a sector-led initiative to support teachers educating their pupils remotely during the summer term

Parents with children under 5 years old can find ideas and activities at Hungry Little Minds (<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>). Read further guidance on how to help children 2 to 4 to learn at home during coronavirus (COVID-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>).

Every pupil in the country has experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). That is why the government has announced a package worth £1 billion to support pupils to catch up. Next academic year, all state-funded primary and secondary schools in England will receive additional funding which they can use to support pupils to catch up.

They can choose to spend this on effective interventions such as:

- extra teaching time
- small group tuition
- holiday clubs

In addition, the government will be launching a national tutoring programme in autumn 2020, to provide extra support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who will be amongst those hardest hit by the disruption to education.

## Keeping your child safe online

With children spending more time online to do schoolwork and other activities, there could be an additional risk in relation to online safety.

It is important that you talk to your children about online safety, show an interest in what they are doing online, including knowing the sites they will be accessing and who your child is interacting with online. In talking to your children, you can discuss age-appropriate 'ground rules' such as how much time they spend online doing different things, what games and apps are appropriate to use and what your children like and dislike about being online.

You should also consider setting up and reviewing age-appropriate parental controls. Setting parental controls can be a quick and effective tool to help protect children online.

Here are some useful links to help you keep your children safe online:

- government guidance on keeping children safe from online harms (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online>) such as child sexual exploitation, cyberbullying and harmful content
- government guidance on staying safe online (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online>) including parental controls, fact-checking information, communicating with family and friends while social distancing is in place and taking regular breaks from the screen
- Thinkuknow (<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>) is the education programme from the National Crime Agency (NCA) providing age-appropriate resources for children and support for parents
- Parent Info (<https://parentinfo.org/>) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- Childnet (<https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/parent-and-carer-toolkit>) provides a tool kit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- Internet Matters (<https://www.internetmatters.org/>) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- LGfL (<https://www.lgfl.net/online-safety/default.aspx>) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including 6 top tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- Net Aware (<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>) provides support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, providing a guide to social networks, apps and games
- Let's Talk About It (<https://www.ltai.info/staying-safe-online/>) provides support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- UK Safer Internet Centre (<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>) provides tips, advice, guides and resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

Age-appropriate practical support for children on reporting concerns is available from:

- Childline (<https://www.childline.org.uk/>) – for general support
- UK Safer Internet Centre (<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>) - to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP (<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

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1. For the purposes of this guidance 'colleges' means publicly funded sixth form and further education colleges, independent training providers and special post-16 institutions. ←