

CRITICAL WORKERS AND SCHOOL CLOSURES - FAQs

The government has announced the closure of schools, colleges and nurseries until further notice. Schools will provide care for the children of workers that the government has listed as critical to the response to Coronavirus.

Please read in conjunction with:

- Guidance on [qualifying categories of workers has been published for schools](#).
- [Information for parents and carers](#).
- [Guidance for schools on temporary closures](#).

BCC has sought clarification from Ministers on the status of workers who provide time-critical services not directly related to the response to Coronavirus and will update these FAQs as further information is obtained.

Question	Answer
1. Do my staff qualify for critical worker status?	<p>Everyone is responsible for stopping the spread of the virus. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be. Wherever possible people should work from home.</p> <p>Children with a parent or carer who is listed on the government's critical worker list should be considered for a school place, so long as their job cannot be done from home.</p> <p>Children of workers who form a central part of the effort to tackle Coronavirus - such as NHS workers, police, farmers, food retailers and delivery drivers - will continue to attend school, college or childcare provider.</p>
2. My business provides essential time-critical services not related to Coronavirus. Are my staff eligible?	BCC has sought further guidance for businesses on eligibility for critical-worker status.
2a. Do regulated, license holding private security staff meet the definition?	<p>The definition covers, amongst other areas, security provision in hospitals; schools; social care; courts; government estate; supermarkets and the food supply chain; the transport network; national infrastructure and utilities. If you are providing essential security to a service which itself remains critical and functioning, which attracts critical worker status, then you are likely to be covered. If in doubt, check with whoever contracts for your services.</p> <p>More information here: https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx</p>

<p>3.How will disputes over eligibility be resolved?</p>	<p>Schools have been advised to speak to their local authority. The government wants schools and parents/ carers to reach an agreement on identifying who requires a school place and is providing clarity to school leaders on identify critical workers. It will monitor the experience of schools and their capacity to respond. It will publish updates to guidance should it prove necessary.</p>
<p>4.Does a letter from the employer guarantee a school place? If not, what evidence is required?</p>	<p>Schools can ask for evidence that the parent is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip, or a letter from the employer confirming what their job is and how it is critical to the Coronavirus response.</p>
<p>5.What can I do if schools in my area – and in neighbouring areas - do not have enough capacity? Will places be rationed?</p>	<p>Local authorities are responsible for monitoring demand and capacity. If some schools are experiencing high demand for places or severe staff shortages, local authorities will coordinate support from other schools in the area. Schools are expected to be flexible and work together where required.</p>
<p>6.Do both parents have to be critical workers?</p>	<p>No. Children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can send their children to school if required.</p>
<p>7. Do export documentation staff qualify as essential workers under the transportation category?</p>	<p>Many documents can be processed electronically and therefore remotely. BCC believes a case can be made for staff required to ‘wet-stamp’ documentation. However, we are seeking further clarification.</p>
<p>8. In categories where ‘those working in supply chains’ is referenced, do export/import staff qualify?</p>	<p>We are seeking further clarification.</p>
<p>9. How long will schools be closed for?</p>	<p>Guidance states that schools, colleges and childcare providers will be closed to the majority of pupils until further notice. BCC has sought further clarification.</p>
<p>10. What are the school opening hours?</p>	<p>Schools are expected to operate normal hours, including breakfast clubs and after school provision.</p>