

Position Statement on COVID-19 from the Clinical Committee, British Society of Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes (BSPED) on May 22nd 2020

COVID-19 is a new disease that has caused unprecedented disruption to all of our lives in so many ways. As we begin to emerge from the lock-down that we have all been experiencing, children and families, alongside those who care for them, are turning their attention towards how we can safely return children back into school to recommence their learning.

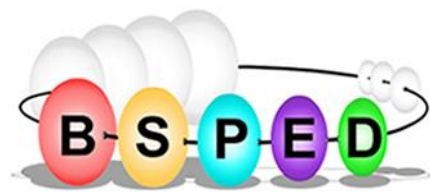
In this statement we have reiterated the advice that has already been published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) about returning to school. We have taken that advice and considered it in relation to what this means for children and young people living with diabetes.

The RCPCH advice about returning to school in England:

1. Clinically extremely vulnerable children are to remain shielded and not to return to school, even if their year group has.
2. Clinically vulnerable children who are only under the care of primary care are overwhelmingly likely to benefit from returning to school when their year group does.
3. Clinically vulnerable children, who are under secondary or specialist care for an underlying health condition are, on the balance of probabilities, more likely to benefit from returning to school when their year group does so. These families may need a conversation with their treating teams to balance the potential risks and any familial anxiety.
4. All other children should attend school when their year group returns.

Children and Young People with Diabetes can return to school with their school year group unless

1. They are in the vulnerable/extremely vulnerable groups namely
 - a) They have had a solid organ transplant – kidney, liver, pancreas, heart, or lung
 - b) Are having treatments for cancer
 - c) Have long-term chronic lung disease including cystic fibrosis and severe asthma
 - d) Have rare diseases that increase their risk of infection
2. They are symptomatic of COVID-19 or are/recently been in contact with symptomatic individuals
3. Children with diabetes who have vulnerable/extremely vulnerable shielded family members.



The current Government instructions to schools are as follows:

- Carry out a risk assessment to minimise those risks for children, young people and staff
- Make sure that children and young people do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus
- Promote regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use of sanitiser and ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach to coughing and sneezing
- Clean more frequently to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, table-tops, play equipment and toys
- Minimise contact through smaller classes or group sizes and altering the environment as much as possible, such as changing the layout of classrooms
- Reduce mixing between groups through timetable changes, such as staggered break times or by introducing staggered drop-off and collection times

For Children and Young People with Diabetes this means that:

1. Parents obtain from the school their plan to implement these instructions
2. Parents understand what social distancing will actually entail in the classroom, playground and for lunchtimes and playtimes
3. Parents have a clear plan as to how their child's Health Care Plan will be implemented within this framework, particularly with respect to, but not exclusive to, one-to-one care for:
 - Blood testing and/or sensor checking
 - Insulin injections and bolus delivery on pumps
 - Detection and management of hypoglycaemic episodes
 - Supervision of snacks and lunch at school
 - Management of any exercise if permitted
 - Arrangements for any staff sicknesses to cover the normal care provided to fulfil the Health Care Plan

A new statement about the opening of schools has been released from the RCPCH today and there is likely to be further guidance from the Government published in due course.

[Please see the RCPCH statement on schools reopening published on their website](#)