

Appendix E: Frequently asked questions

1: Advice and guidance for parents

There have been cases of swine flu in my child's school (or setting) but it has remained open. Should I send my child in?

While schools and settings remain open parents *should* continue to send their children — unless they have any symptoms of flu. The decision to close or to remain open will be made following advice by local health professionals with expert knowledge who will always have the interests and welfare of the pupils in mind. Parents will be advised if the school is to close and what to do then. We strongly urge parents not to withdraw their children unless given this advice. It would be for the local authorities to decide on any action against parents keeping healthy children away from school.

My child has a history of other medical problems and I believe he or she is at greater risk should they catch swine flu. Is it safe for my child to go to school while there have been cases of swine flu at the school, and are there other precautions that I should take?

Your child should continue to attend school unless they have any flu-like symptoms. If they display any symptoms you should keep them at home and, given their other medical conditions, you should contact your GP for advice and treatment as soon as possible.

Is it better for children to catch swine flu now in order to build up their resilience to potentially more harmful strains in the future?

We are still learning about this strain of swine flu and who is most at risk of complications. The Health Protection Agency therefore strongly advise people to avoid intentionally infecting themselves, or their children, with the virus for their own safety and the safety of any vulnerable people they may unintentionally infect.

Even with mild flu, complications can occur, leading to more serious illness. With this in mind, it would be wrong not to take all necessary precautions against swine flu and limit its spread.

What could working parents do if their child's school or childcare setting was closed for an extended period? Would they have to stay off work?

We appreciate that closures would present a challenge for working parents, but believe they would agree with a decision taken to reduce a significant threat to their children's wellbeing.

Parents would have to make other arrangements for looking after their children. Some might be able to work from home, work flexible hours, or use informal childcare arrangements with a relative or friend.

Could employers with a significant proportion of parent workers establish their own childcare provision?

Any advice to close group childcare settings would apply to such a newly established nursery as much as to any other establishment, so it would not be helpful for employers to do this. Also, any such new facility would have to be registered with Ofsted, which could not be completed at very short notice; they would have to check that relevant welfare requirements are met before confirming registration.

Parent workers staying off work to look after children will have a severe impact on the economy and on essential services.

We have drawn this issue to the attention of employers so that they can plan for this eventuality. It will have an impact on all sectors, but with good planning we believe that impact to be manageable.

2: Staying safe while open

What if pupils refuse to attend schools - will they be punished for truancy?

While schools are open parents should send their children to school unless they have any symptoms. They will be advised if the school is to close and what to do then. These decisions will be made in the light from advice by health professionals with expert knowledge who will always have the interests of pupils in mind. We urge parents not to withdraw their children unless given this advice. It would be for local authorities to decide on any action against parents keeping healthy children off school.

Should schools continue to go on school trips?

There is no reason why schools should not continue to go on school trips both in this country and abroad. If the trip is abroad we recommend that the school look at the latest available information on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office website](#).

What should we do if a child becomes ill on a school trip?

If a child on a school trip were to develop symptoms of the virus we recommend that teachers in charge of the pupils follow the emergency procedures as set out at chapter 10 of the [Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits guidance](#).

While schools and group early-years and childcare settings remain open in a pandemic (because it's a less severe pandemic, or because the pandemic has not yet reached their area), how can they keep children safe?

In summer 2007 we published [guidance on infection control](#) for different settings, which is available on TeacherNet. In broad terms, much of the guidance reflects normal good practice to reduce the spread of any infection: washing hands, using tissues, etc.

Whom should I call if I become aware of a confirmed or suspected case of swine flu in a child in my school (or early-years or childcare setting)?

It would be helpful if you could contact your local authority so that they are aware of the situation, which may have an impact upon pupil absence levels in the school. While you do not have to contact your local health protection unit (HPU) to notify them formally of the case, you may wish to contact them for advice, especially if you have concerns about children or staff who might be considered to be in a 'higher risk' group. The HPU may also be able to assist you with appropriate messages to parents.

Childminders: The mother of one of the children who uses my child minding service has been confirmed as having swine flu. Her child has shown no symptoms yet, but I am concerned because other children for whom I provide care suffer from asthma and might risk complications if they caught swine flu. Should I turn away the child whose mother is ill (the mother would like him to continue coming to me)?

The child whose mother is ill is not symptomatic so should not be a risk to the other children. However, given the medical conditions of the other children, you may wish to take a further precaution and ask for the child whose mother is ill to remain off for a short time — perhaps until two days after the mother's last symptoms.

What specifically does my group early-years and childcare setting have to do now in advance of any impact of the pandemic locally?

As the Government's Infection Control Guidance makes clear, all settings should now have in place written plans that:

state who would take any decision to close the setting, either because of Government advice that settings in an area should close, or because of reasons specific to the setting (e.g. too many staff off ill);

- ensure they have up-to-date contact details for staff and parents;
- enable settings to keep sick children separate from other children (and minimise their contact with staff) until you can get them home or collected by parents; and
- ensure they are able to remain open, if appropriate, and with systems in place to minimise the spread of infection if they do.

DCSF's infection control guidance suggests that protective equipment should be used by those dealing with a sick child. In our school (or group early-years and childcare setting) we cannot obtain facemasks. What should we do — should we close as a precautionary measure?

Schools and settings should not be closing at this stage unless specifically advised to do so by public health advisers. The most effective step at this

stage would be to promote good hygiene practices to children and staff: washing hands and using tissues safely.

Health Protection Agency advice to the general public is that the only people who currently should stay away from school or work are: those confirmed as having swine flu, those being investigated as probable or possible cases; and pupils of a school where cases have been confirmed and who are themselves symptomatic.

We would advise parents to keep at home any child with possible flu symptoms, and would advise schools and settings to turn away any symptomatic child. In those circumstances, if a child falls ill while in the school or setting and a member of staff is looking after the child until its parents can collect them, that member of staff should encourage good respiratory hygiene on the part of the child, and take particular care with their own hygiene. The member of staff should try to keep one metre away from the child whenever possible; if the child is young, staff will want to be reassuring towards the child while keeping a distance from him or her. Staff should wash their hands thoroughly if they have been near the child.

If residential special schools stay open, will they have enough staff to operate safely?

It is for the schools themselves to plan their staffing, and we have provided guidance to assist them with that planning. Local authorities have a responsibility for vulnerable children in their area and they must plan to ensure that essential services can operate.

Should pupils be asked for a 'fit to return' notice before being readmitted to school or group early-years and childcare settings after they have been ill with swine flu?

No. Swine flu is not a notifiable illness, and pupils returning to schools and settings should be treated the same as they would be for any other illness. Unnecessary requests for 'fit to return' notices will take up GPs appointments, in turn delaying the treatment of others.

Staff members who may be considered at higher risk:

I am in what I understand to be a 'higher risk' group (e.g. history of respiratory illness, pregnancy) with respect to swine flu.

Several children in my school have the illness; the school remains open and, though those children are now off school, there must be a chance that others have contracted it and will soon show symptoms. Should I stay off school or take special precautions?

If you have concerns, you should contact your GP, who will know the details of your case, to discuss those concerns. You should certainly contact your GP for advice and/or treatment if you have any flu-like symptoms yourself.

Generally, there is no need to stay away from school unless you experience symptoms. You should remain vigilant for any flu-like symptoms in the children and should check with your senior leadership team that parents have been advised to keep children at home should they become unwell. It is important that any symptomatic children in school are identified, isolated, and sent home.

Good personal hygiene (staff and pupils) is an essential part of reducing the number of cases throughout the community. Your school should have adequate hand-washing facilities and arrangements for the safe disposal of used tissues.

A member of staff in my school has contacted me as they believe they are in a 'higher risk' group for swine flu (e.g. history of respiratory illness, pregnancy). Several children in the school have swine flu; the school remains open and, though those children are off school, there must be a chance that others have contracted it and will soon show symptoms. As an employer, we have responsibility for the wellbeing of staff. What should I do to reduce the risk to that staff member?

The most important things in reducing the level of risk to staff and pupils are to keep those with flu-like symptoms out of school, and to follow good hygiene practice.

Everyone (staff, children and parents) should be advised not to come to the school if they have any flu-like symptoms. Anyone displaying symptoms during the school day should be instructed to go home (staff) or isolated until their parents can collect them (children).

General good hygiene can help to reduce the transmission of all viruses, including the swine flu virus. See the **infection control guidance** for more information. You should encourage all staff and pupils to follow good hygiene practice.

While there is generally no need for staff to stay away from school unless they experience flu-like symptoms, if your member of staff is concerned because of other medical conditions they may have, you may wish to advise them to consult their GP for further advice.

Supply and peripatetic staff, inspectors and other visitors

The school I have been working in today has closed for operational reasons after pupils and/or staff were confirmed to have swine flu. Do I have to stay off work for that week (to avoid spreading the virus to another school) or can I work in another school tomorrow?

If you have no flu-like symptoms yourself, there is no reason for you not to work in another school during the closure of the school at which you have been teaching. If you have any flu-like symptoms you should stay off work, and contact your family doctor or NHS Direct.

If an Ofsted inspector inspects a school where there are several cases of swine flu, and is then scheduled to go to a school in another part of the country where there have until now been no cases of swine flu, is it safe for him or her to go, or might they spread the virus?

They should continue to work as long as they have no symptoms. There are no travel restrictions between different parts of the country.

My school has a few cases of swine flu, and we are also missing members of staff for other reasons. We wish to engage supply teachers to cover for those who are missing, but the agency that we use is unwilling to supply us with teachers because we are affected by swine flu. Are they right to do so?

As other members of staff are going into the school to work despite the cases of swine flu, there is no reason why supply teachers could not work there. It is however for the agencies to decide where they send the teachers on their books, and those supply teachers may ask not to be placed in schools with cases of swine flu; that would be a matter between them and their agency.

3: Closures

The World Health Organization has declared alert level 6 for the current influenza pandemic, what does this mean?

The move to alert level 6 means that there is now evidence of increased and sustained human to human transmission of the swine flu virus across a number of global regions. Although we are beginning to see signs of sustained transmission of the virus within the community in certain parts of the UK, schools and settings should remain open until they are advised otherwise: either by their public health advisers for reasons specific to the school; or if the Government determines that the risk to children is such that all schools and settings should close when the pandemic reaches their area.

Should schools and group early years and childcare settings be closing now?

The World Health Organization's move to pandemic alert level 6 should not affect schools and group early years and childcare settings (including Sure Start Children's Centres) from operating normally. If a child is suspected of having a virus that might be swine flu — even if the child is currently out of school or setting — you should, at the earliest opportunity, contact and take advice from your local public health advisers. Unless they advise you to close as a precautionary measure, we would not expect you to do so.

Why has there been a change in HPA advice? A short time ago everyone was being advised to close for a single case, now most schools are being advised to remain open.

In the first few weeks that swine flu was in the UK, schools were advised to close as a containment measure — to prevent the disease spreading. At that time, we also had little evidence of how virulent the virus is.

Now HPA will not normally recommend that schools close because, now that the virus is circulating in the community, closing schools will not help to slow the spread of the virus, as people could still be exposed to it outside school.

As the virus is circulating in the community, people are likely to be repeatedly exposed to the virus in their everyday lives, so closing schools as a precaution would now be ineffective.

Should a different approach be adopted for special schools whose pupils have a range of serious medical conditions? Are those children at great risk if they catch flu and, if so, should these schools close when others might remain open?

In general, the same approach should be adopted for special schools as for other schools. However the particular circumstances of each special school should be assessed in discussion with the local Health Protection Unit, and closure may be recommended if there are exceptional risks.

Factors to be considered include: whether the pupils are residential, and how much time they spend in the wider community; whether pupils have other medical conditions that would make them more susceptible to flu; and whether there has been a defined point of introduction for the virus into the school community (e.g. one pupil attending one class).

Parents of children attending such a school should be advised to be vigilant for any flu-like symptoms, and to contact their child's GP immediately for advice and treatment if they have any concerns.

Might schools or settings close without being advised to do so by the Health Protection Agency? Is this acceptable?

A school or setting may decide that it should close because it is short of staff (because of staff being ill or looking after sick children, for example), and therefore cannot operate safely. This is a decision that would be taken by the school on the basis of its assessment of the situation.

What will happen at the start of the autumn term? Will schools reopen as usual?

The Government will be monitoring the development of the disease over the summer (and the southern hemisphere winter) to assess the level of risk at the time schools are due to reopen. We will contact all schools (and, via local authorities, early years and childcare settings) shortly before the end of the holiday period, and will also put an update on this website. As things stand, we would expect most schools to reopen as usual, but the situation may change.

What teaching and learning should pupils receive when schools are closed?

Where schools are closed for an extended period in a flu pandemic students should be provided with a reasonable degree of teaching and learning — if schools operate a virtual learning environment they should use it to set, distribute, receive and mark homework. Guidance on supporting learning if schools close for extended periods in a flu epidemic is available on the **emergencies planning** area of this site.

Who would make the decision to close a school?

The power to close a school lies with the local authority for community and voluntary controlled schools and with the governing body for foundation and voluntary aided schools and academies. They may delegate the decision to the head teacher. If considering closing a school in a situation like this, we would also expect the school to take advice from the local Health Protection Agency.

Who decides if an independent school should close?

It is for the proprietor or governing body of an independent school to take any decision on closure, taking into account advice from local Health Protection Agency teams. If the Government were to advise all schools in an area to close, it would be up to independent schools to decide whether to follow that advice. In practice we would expect independent schools to heed the Government's advice, and the Independent Schools Council has advised its members to follow health advice.

Who would make the decision to close a group early years or childcare setting?

The power to close a group early years or childcare setting lies with the employer, though this could be delegated to the setting's leader or manager. If considering closing a setting in a situation like this, we would also expect them to take advice from the local Health Protection Agency. The decisions should not be made independently as it will cause unnecessary disruption to learning and childcare issues.

Who would decide if schools and settings across a whole local authority should close?

In a severe pandemic, the Government may advise all schools and settings in a local authority (in fact all schools in a Local Resilience Forum area, which may encompass a few authorities) to close when the pandemic reaches their area. The power to close would still lie with the local authority or the governing body, depending on the category of school, but we would expect them to follow advice on such a critical issue. Without such advice, we would not expect a local authority to close all the schools for which it is responsible, though individual schools may need to close because of local circumstances.

Who would make a decision about every school and group early years and childcare setting in England closing? When and how would this be taken?

The Government — through the Civil Contingencies Committee — would decide whether a pandemic posed a serious enough threat to children for

advice to be given that all schools and group early years and childcare settings should close when the pandemic reached their area. They would base the decision on the best available advice from medical advisers about expected infection and fatality rates. The timing of such a decision is largely dependent on information being gathered from medical advisers.

In the event of a decision that all schools and settings should close when the pandemic reaches their area, what notice of closure can schools and group early years and childcare settings expect to receive, and from whom? Who will tell parents? And will closure be immediate?

If schools and settings were advised to close when the pandemic reached their area, the local authority would advise the head teacher or setting leader or manager when this happened and the advice thus became applicable. In that situation, we would expect any closure to take effect from the end of the day when that message was received from the local authority, unless staff shortages made it impossible for the school to operate safely for the day — unlikely in the early stages of a pandemic. We would not expect parents to be asked to come and collect their children earlier than usual.

Where possible, it would be helpful for the school or setting to contact parents during the day to advise them of the coming closure, so that parents could start to make plans. They should otherwise give them the information when they collect children at the end of the day and/or give children letters to take home.

What legal powers do local authorities have to close schools?

As the employer of staff and under powers relating to the control of school premises, local authorities can direct the closure of community, community special, voluntary controlled and maintained nursery schools in the case of an emergency. They cannot oblige other categories of school to close — that is for the governing body, or proprietor if an Independent school — but they would doubtless let those governing bodies know if they were closing all community and voluntary controlled schools. Local authorities should take careful advice from the local HPA

before choosing to close all their schools.

What will the DCSF do if a local authority closes schools for no good reason?

The DCSF would press them on the reasons for closure: if they seemed inadequate and we could not persuade them to change, DCSF could use intervention powers. This would be in the case of an unreasonable, wholly unjustified closure — we would not be making decisions on borderline cases and over-ruling those more aware of local circumstances.

What should schools do where a child confirmed as having swine flu, which led to the closure of his/her school, is being bullied?

We have made clear in our guidance, 'Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools' that all forms of bullying, including bullying motivated by prejudice, are unacceptable and that disciplinary sanctions should be imposed when bullying occurs. It is not acceptable for young people to be bullied as a result of them having swine flu or any other illness. If a young person is bullied for that reason, they or their parent can report this to any member of staff at the school. Schools are obliged to have a range of measures in place to prevent and tackle bullying. We would expect them to act swiftly and decisively to resolve the matter when bullying is reported to them as a result of a young person having swine flu.

What should schools do where a child with swine flu is the subject of cyber-bullying?

All forms of bullying are unacceptable (see the Q and A above). DCSF has also published guidance to schools on cyber-bullying.

What should schools do where pupils from a school closed because of swine flu are being bullied by pupils from a neighbouring school?

It is not acceptable for young people to be bullied as a result of them having swine flu or any other illness. Schools are obliged to have a range of measures in place to prevent and tackle bullying. We would expect

them to act swiftly and decisively to resolve the matter when bullying is reported to them as a result of a young person having swine flu. In particular, schools have the power under Section 89 (5) of Education and Inspections Act 2006 to take measures to regulate the conduct of pupils off site. Our guidance Safe from Bullying on Journeys makes clear that where children from one setting have been bullying children from a different setting, staff from the two settings should liaise to agree a joined up response. If the bullying taking place is of a serious or violent nature the schools involved may wish to work with local police or the local authority community safety team as part of their response.

Follow the link for further information [about tackling school bullying](#)

Will a young person be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) payments if their learning provider has had to close?

In such a circumstance, we would expect the learning provider to use its discretion in taking the appropriate action. This may include setting work to be completed at home or making arrangements for learning to take place at another provider or location. In such circumstances, providing that normal EMA conditions are met, EMA payments would continue.

What about summer schools and other summer group activities for children?

There is generally no reason why healthy children should not mix in such activities. Children with any flu-like symptoms should stay away, and if any child has attended with symptoms, the school or group manager should contact their local Health Protection Unit for advice

4: Re-opening schools that have closed on HPA advice

How will schools and group early-years and childcare settings closing on Health Protection Agency (HPA) advice know when it is safe to reopen?

When advising that a school or setting should close to prevent the spread of swine flu, HPA will advise how long that closure should be for. The

norm will be 7 days, based on the current view of the incubation period of this virus. During the closure HPA will monitor and investigate any cases among pupils of the school concerned. Shortly before the school is due to reopen they will advise if it should reopen or extend its closure.

What should staff of schools and group early-years and childcare settings do when a school reopens? Are there special precautions to take?

We would advise all schools and settings to take particular care with hygiene procedures (hand-washing and use of tissues) — not just for this virus, but to help reduce the spread of a range of viruses. In schools that have reopened after closing on HPA advice, we would ask staff to keep the health of pupils under surveillance and report any concerns to the HPA.

What if a pupil is confirmed to have swine flu after a school or group early-years and childcare setting reopens?

The HPA will assess the circumstances as it would with the first case in a school or setting, and advise them whether to close again or remain open.

5: Examinations

This advice was issued for the examination period up to 31 August 2009. Further advice may be issued during the autumn term.

This advice covers general qualifications, including GCSEs, GCEs (A levels) and the Principal Learning, Project and Functional Skills components of the Diploma. For other qualifications, such as NVOs or the International Baccalaureate, please contact your awarding body if you have queries or concerns.

This advice should be read in conjunction with the following Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publications:

[Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations 2008-09](#)

Instructions for Conducting Examinations 1 Sept 2008 – 31 Aug 2009

If the school or college is to be closed until shortly before examinations start, how do I make arrangements for any outstanding examination papers to be securely delivered?

It is important that you liaise with the awarding body. They will be able to make arrangements to ensure papers can be securely delivered in such circumstances.

If a pupil has a doctor's note confirming that they are too unwell to take an examination, what do I do to ensure she/he is not disadvantaged?

You should follow the process for applying for what is known as 'special considerations' using form JCQ/SC 10, available via the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website. See link above on 'Special Considerations'. 'Special considerations' allows an awarding body to award a grade where an exam cannot be taken, provided that there is sufficient evidence to make a reasonable judgement. This is the fairest possible approach for all candidates. The requirements for special consideration are published by Ofqual in the Code of Practice for GCSEs and GCEs.

Where schools and/or colleges have been advised to close, would candidates still be able to sit exams?

There are three possibilities. One is that the school or college opens to take the exam. The decision to do this will need to be taken locally in discussion with the local Health Protection Agency team. If the exam cannot be taken, the school or college will need to apply for 'special considerations' for the candidates affected. See answer above on applying for 'special considerations'.

A possible third option in some circumstances may be for candidates to take the examination at an alternative location (see 'Can arrangements be made for candidates to take examinations in a school or college nearby?' below).

For schools and colleges that have closed but will be holding examinations in their centres

It is important that you liaise with your local Health Protection Unit in opening a school or college for candidates to take their examinations if the school or college has been closed because of a confirmed or probable case of swine flu.

What if a candidate feels unwell, with influenza-like symptoms, on the morning of the examination?

Candidates and their parents should be advised in advance that if a candidate has influenza-like symptoms before the examination they should *not* attend an examination. They should contact the National Flu Line (0800 1 513 100) or their own GP by phone.

What if a candidate feels unwell, with influenza-like symptoms, during the examination?

The chances of this being swine flu is very low but the individual should still be removed from the examination room and you should follow the DCSF guidance on flu pandemics. If further medical assessment is required, this should be handled using existing guidelines. It would also be prudent for you to follow DCSF hygiene guidance for the area in the examination room where the candidate was taking their examination. You should also notify your Local Health Protection Unit.

What should I be aware of in handling the examination process for 'well' candidates?

It would be sensible to minimise the time that candidates are grouped together before and after examinations. If possible outside spaces would be more appropriate areas for candidates to congregate.

Are there any specific procedures I should follow for examinations if the school was closed due to a confirmed case of swine flu and has been advised by the HPA to reopen?

Unless the school has been advised to close or to take any other special

measures by their public health advisers, no special precautions are needed.

What sort of evidence is required in applying for 'special considerations'?

A grade is awarded under 'special considerations' based on the assessment a candidate has completed. To ensure the grade reflects what a candidate has demonstrated he/she can do there is a minimum level of assessment required. For example, in the case of an AS award 50% of the assessment will need to have been completed.

More details are available in Chapter 13 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations 2008-09* (see link above).

What if a candidate hasn't completed the minimum amount of assessment required for 'special considerations'?

This will not normally be an issue where candidates have completed assessments throughout the course and are taking the final examination only at this point in order that a grade can be awarded. Please contact the awarding body if this is not the case and they will discuss the options available to ensure the candidate is treated fairly whilst protecting the integrity of results.

Can a grade be awarded on the basis of mock examinations?

Section 13.3 of *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations 2008-09* stipulates that, in exceptional circumstances, other, appropriate evidence of attainment may be accepted by the awarding body only if the minimum requirements have not been met.

Can arrangements be made for candidates to take examinations in a school or college nearby?

We think it is unlikely that this would be a useful option in most cases, and could create significant difficulties if large numbers of candidates were involved. However, please contact your awarding body to discuss the

issues if you think this may be an option. You would also need to confirm that the neighbouring school or college is agreeable and has the capacity. The other centre should seek assurance from the Health Protection Agency that such an arrangement would not pose a health risk.

Will it be possible for examinations to be taken at a later date?

There are no plans to reschedule examinations in the summer. Normal arrangements for resitting exams will be available where this is the most appropriate option. Awarding bodies will be able to provide detailed advice.

What happens if I need to postpone internal assessment?

In general this shouldn't impact candidates due to be awarded grades this summer since marks for internally assessed components in this examination series were due for submission to awarding bodies in May. However, you should notify the awarding body if candidates in other years are adversely affected.

What if a candidate doesn't turn up for an examination because they are concerned about infection?

Candidates are only eligible for 'special considerations' if they have a medical certificate or have been advised by their school or college not to attend an exam. Schools and colleges should make sure that candidates are clear about the requirements.

Who is responsible for deciding whether a school or college can be opened so that an examination can go ahead?

The decision on whether an examination can go ahead is made locally by the school or college in discussion with the local Health Protection Agency teams.

Is it possible that all examinations will be cancelled?

It is very unlikely we will get to that position. But of course we are keeping the situation under review; if the position changes for the worse, we will review all options, ensuring that all candidates are treated fairly.

Will universities accept grades awarded following 'special consideration' requests?

When a 'special consideration' request is made, a grade is only awarded when sufficient evidence is available. The published grade does not have any indication of 'special considerations' having been applied. These grades have the same status as those awarded normally and will be accepted. These are not 'estimated grades'.

Will universities allow late entries if examination results are delayed?

'Special considerations' are processed to the same timetable as examination awarding so there should be no impact on awarding day. But we are keeping all the processes involved in awarding a grade under review with UCAS and the awarding bodies to ensure contingencies are in place should there be difficulties later in the summer.

If schools and/or colleges are closed for several weeks, this would have a severe adverse effect on children's education. Would they be able to apply for 'special considerations'?

Detailed guidance is available and the position is being kept under review, but in general the answer is no. In practice students undertaking examinations this year will already have covered the syllabus and this period will have been used for revision.

If the school or college is closed after an examination takes place, how do I make arrangements for scripts to be collected?

You must contact the Parcel Force helpdesk who will advise on collection.

What do I do if there are not enough invigilators to cover the examination?

Invigilators are suitably qualified and experienced adults who *must not* be current students at the centre. Therefore, it may be possible to recruit additional suitable people from within the local community.

Although the head of centre may decide who is suitably qualified and experienced, any relative of a candidate in the examination room *must not* be the sole invigilator. Invigilators need to be appropriately trained in their duties.

Any teacher who has prepared the candidates for the subject of the examination during the academic year of the examination *must not* be the sole invigilator at any time during a written examination in that subject.

Examination contingencies for vocational qualifications

The following Q&A covers all vocational qualifications, including BTECs and NVQs. If you have any further concerns or questions please contact your awarding body.

If we have been advised to close, how will candidates taking vocational qualifications be affected?

In the majority of cases candidates taking vocational qualifications will not be impacted significantly because they will not have final exams as part of their course and any internal assessment can be rescheduled for a later date. If this is not the case please contact the awarding body.

Candidates that have been advised not to attend school or college will not be missing examinations but will lose out on learning; will they get compensation for this?

Detailed guidance is available and the position is being kept under review, but in general the answer is no. Where schools or colleges are closed for an extended period in a flu pandemic pupils should be provided with a reasonable degree of teaching and learning — if schools or colleges operate a virtual learning environment they should use it to set, distribute, receive and mark work. [Guidance on supporting learning](#) if schools or colleges are closed for extended periods in a flu epidemic is available on TeacherNet.

If a candidate is unable to take a final fixed examination for a vocational qualification what should I do?

For a large number of vocational qualifications the assessment is provided

'on demand' so can be sat at a later date. If this is not possible then the school or college will need to apply for 'special considerations' for the candidates affected. See the answer above on applying for 'special considerations'. You should follow the process for applying for what is known as 'special considerations' using form JCQ/SC 10, available via the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website. See the link above on 'Special Considerations'.