



BRITISH CONGENITAL CARDIAC ASSOCIATION

Dear Suzie,

Thank you very much for your email. This is a very difficult time for patients and families to make decisions about the return to school. In replying, I will refer to two recent sets of guidelines which have been produced by the Government and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-talking-children-families-about-returning-school-guiding-principles>
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The government guidance states : **Should I keep my child at home if they have an underlying health condition or live with someone in a clinically vulnerable group?**

Children and young people who are considered [extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding](#) should continue to shield and should not be expected to attend.

Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Children and young people who live in a household with someone who is [extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding](#) should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and the child or young person is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Children and young people who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) as defined in the [social distancing guidance](#) and including those who are pregnant, can attend.

BCCA/CRG Interpretation:

Children who have been placed into the "extremely vulnerable" category by their clinical team should therefore not re-attend school at present.

For vulnerable children, for whom there is already a BCCA statement , there will need to be a risk assessment based on the clinical situation as well as the school's plans to be able to maintain social distancing and other measures to reduce the potential spread of Coronavirus.

The RCPCH guidance states that :

"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."

Thus, an individualised discussion will be required for vulnerable children. This will need to include both the child's clinical status and the capability / plans for the school to be able to maintain appropriate precautions. We recognise that a significant number of patients will fall within the vulnerable group.

Please note that, in the government guidance, the term "vulnerable" is used in the context of clinical vulnerability but also in terms of vulnerability due to home circumstances.

I have discussed this with the CRG as well as with members of BCCA council and we believe the approach outlined would be the most sensible.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

John

John M Simpson MD FRCP
President, BCCA

On behalf of BCCA and the CRG