

## ECC Reopening Protocols

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

Version 3.0 – April 25, 2026

#### About this document

This document answers questions raised during the KHDA ECC Reopening Protocols training session (April 2026).

#### 01 Approval & Reopening

##### What must be completed before any child returns to the centre?

#### Q. What are the steps an ECC must complete before reopening?

The protocol sets out four steps that must be completed in order:

1. Complete and submit the 'Education Institution Physical Reopening Readiness' application form (if not already done)
2. Attend the KHDA reopening protocols training — attendance must be registered
3. Sign the KHDA Acknowledgement and Consent Form (with intended reopening date)
4. Receive KHDA approval to reopen

Staggered reopening is permitted based on each centre's readiness.

#### Q. Do we need to wait for the KHDA visit before reopening, or can we open once we sign the declaration?

**Once the application has been submitted and the KHDA Acknowledgement and Consent Form has been signed, the ECC may proceed to reopen their centre.**

The signed KHDA Acknowledgement and Consent Form is the centre's proof of readiness. The safe zone inspection will take place after reopening — ECCs do not need to wait for the inspection before opening their doors.

Note: Inspections will happen and KHDA and relevant authorities may conduct monitoring visits at any time following reopening.

## 02 Transport & Buses

### Current position on ECC transportation

#### Q. Can we use buses / start transportation services for children?

Yes, based on the latest update issued by the Ministry of Education, **buses may resume operations from Monday, April 20.**

ECCs should refer to the updated reopening protocols for guidance on managing transport operations, including procedures to follow during alerts, to ensure the safety of all children and staff.

## 03 Safe Zones & Use of Space

### What qualifies as a safe zone and how to manage your classrooms

#### Q. What are the requirements for a safe zone?

The protocol specifies that a safe zone must have:

- Solid walls and concrete roof — no exposure to external areas
- Ventilation without exposure to a dangerous source
- Emergency exits and assembly points identified and clearly marked
- Located away from windows and glass
- Reachable within 1 minute from any location in the centre
- Easy access without crossing outdoor or exposed areas
- Clearly marked on evacuation maps — every staff member must know the safe zones in their room

Multiple safe zones must be identified per building. If no safe zone exists in a room, that room must not be used.

### Q. Should classrooms only be opened on the ground floor?

The ECC protocol does not restrict operations to the ground floor. There is no floor limitation mentioned.

Any room may be used provided it has a designated safe zone that meets the protocol criteria and staff know the evacuation routes from that room.

### Q. If we receive a warning alert, should we evacuate all classrooms to safe zones?

It depends on the type of alert. The protocol distinguishes between two responses:

- Shelter — stop all activities immediately, move children to the nearest safe zone, and have them sit in a low, calm position away from windows and glass. Stay with your group.

If outdoor activities are in progress when an alert is issued, stop immediately and move all children indoors to the nearest safe zone without delay.

- Evacuate — check that the route to the assembly point is clear, then move children quickly and in an orderly line. No running.

The decision to shelter or evacuate is based on the official alert received. Never act on unofficial information. Your place is with the children at all times — do not leave them to investigate.

## 04 Staffing & Roles

### Manager responsibilities and staffing requirements

### Q. Are ECC Managers expected to be on the premises during full operating hours?

Yes. The ECC Manager — or a designated lead in their absence — must be on the centre premises at all times during operating hours.

The ECC Manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff are trained and participate in drills, that roles are assigned for all emergency procedures, protocol procedures are communicated to parents, and children have rehearsed the relevant routines.

When the ECC Manager is not on-site, a designated lead must be present who can fulfil these responsibilities and act as the point of contact for staff, families, and any visiting authorities. KHDA and relevant authorities may conduct monitoring visits at any time.

**Q. Are all age groups — including children from 0 to 6 — allowed to return?**

The ECC protocol applies to all children in Early Childhood Centres. There is no age restriction or exclusion mentioned in the protocol.

Standard staffing ratios apply for all age groups and must be maintained at all times.

**Q. Do regular class sizes apply, or is there a limit on student numbers?**

The protocol does not set a specific cap on student numbers.

The critical requirement is that the safe zone in each room can accommodate the full group. If it cannot, the room must not be used until an appropriate safe zone arrangement is in place.

**Q. Are infant trolleys required, and what should they contain?**

**Yes. The protocol states that infant trolleys must be pre-stocked and ready for immediate use at all times.**

Emergency Go- Bags must also be stocked and accessible, containing: a first aid kit, the attendance register, emergency contacts, and medical information. Both the trolleys and Go-Bags must be checked regularly — not only before reopening.

**05**

**Parent Communication**

**How to communicate with families during normal operations and incidents**

**Q. How should we communicate with parents during an incident?**

The ECC Manager is the sole authorised voice. All updates go through the approved communication channel only.

During an incident: do not respond to individual parent calls — your focus must be entirely on the children. Do not issue the all-clear until it is officially confirmed. Do not share unconfirmed information or personal opinions in any form.

Staff must not photograph, film, or share any content related to an incident on social media or personal messaging apps — during or after the event.

If a parent cannot be reached at collection: exhaust every emergency contact and document every attempt. No child should be released until an authorised person is confirmed.

## 06 Mode of learning

**Q. Once we reopen in person, can we continue offering Centre Led Home Based Learning (CLHL) as well?**

**Yes, but only for a transitional period of 5 days from the date of reopening.**

During those 5 days, ECCs may run both on-site learning and CLHL simultaneously to allow families to transition back. After 5 days, CLHL provision is no longer permitted alongside on-site centre operations.

If some parents face genuine challenges returning their child in person after the 5-day period, the centre must notify KHDA of those specific cases. KHDA will advise on how to manage them on a case-by-case basis.

## 07 Outdoor Activities & ECC Events

**What is now permitted outdoors and the conditions that always apply**

**Q. Are outdoor activities and morning assemblies now permitted?**

Yes. ECCs may now use outdoor areas for morning assemblies, break times, and organised outdoor activities. This replaces the previous suspension of all outdoor activities.

If any official alert is issued, all outdoor activities must stop immediately. Children must move indoors to the nearest safe zone. These guidelines are fully suspended for the duration of any alert.

### Q. What conditions must be met before any outdoor activity takes place?

- Direct and continuous staff supervision at all times
- Capacity limits for outdoor areas must be defined before use
- Clear evacuation routes from all outdoor areas to safe zones must be mapped and approved in advance
- Regular drills on evacuation from outdoor areas must be conducted
- Any external provider delivering extracurricular activities must complete in-person evacuation training at your centre before starting

### Q. Are gatherings at gates, courtyards, and external areas now permitted?

Organised gatherings in outdoor areas are now permitted under direct staff supervision. This replaces the previous blanket prohibition on all outdoor gatherings.

However, uncontrolled crowding at gates or on the sidewalk remains not permitted. All gatherings must be:

- Under direct and continuous staff supervision at all times
- Within defined capacity limits for the outdoor area
- In a designated outdoor space — not at entrance gates or on public sidewalks

If any official alert is issued, all gatherings must disperse immediately and children must move to the nearest indoor safe zone without delay.

### Q. Can ECC events and extracurricular activities take place outdoors?

Yes — ECC events may proceed with organised, orderly handover of children to parents. Extracurricular activities may take place in outdoor spaces in an organised manner. Extracurricular providers must be trained on your ECC's evacuation procedures before commencing.

### Q. What happens to outdoor activities if an official alert is issued?

All outdoor activities stop immediately. The main approved protocols apply — children move indoors to designated safe zones. These outdoor guidelines are fully suspended for the duration of any alert. No exceptions.