



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

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Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
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I would like to update you on the Department for Education's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak between 14 April and 20 April 2021.

Due to the national period of mourning following His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh's death only essential public announcements were made up until 17 April. There are therefore only a small number of announcements to update on this week.

Consultation launched to create new flexible apprenticeships

Sectors including the creative, agriculture and construction industries will soon be able to offer more flexible apprenticeship opportunities.

A consultation has launched to seek views on how new flexi-job apprenticeship schemes could be run. Apprenticeships are at least 12 months long, so some sectors with flexible employment patterns and short-term roles, such as agriculture, construction and creative sectors including TV, film and theatre production, have found it challenging to create enough opportunities.

"Uni Safe" Campaign wins GCS Campaign of the Month

The Department for Education has been recognised as the winner of March's Government Communication Service Campaign of the Month competition for their "Uni Safe" campaign.

The campaign aimed at raising awareness of the travel window between 3 and 9 December to reduce the risk of Coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission among university students returning home for the Christmas break.

Update on the rollout of devices

The government is providing over 1.3 million laptops and tablets to help schools, colleges and other FE institutions throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The scale of deliveries was increased following the announcement on 5 January 2021 about a national lockdown and restricting attendance in schools and colleges but has since decreased following the return to schools on 8 March.

On 13 April we published the latest figure of **1,295,752** devices having been delivered since the start of the scheme.

We are reducing the frequency of the publication of the device statistics from weekly to monthly now that pupils have returned to school. The monthly publication means we are still reporting on progress in delivering services to schools, colleges and other FE institutions. The latest full data on laptops and tablets is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data>

Attendance

The Department's analysis from week 16 data indicates that 94% of pupils were in school on Thursday 15 April, excluding those on Easter break. The majority of schools were on Easter break week commencing 12 April. As such a brief summary of attendance is provided here based only on schools who had returned from Easter break. Data for attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for week 16 can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

There is no analysis for week 15 due to the Easter break.

Other key updates

In addition to the above, please see below some recent key updates from the Department.

The Department has published information for schools and candidates on how their personal data is collected and used for the International teacher acclimatisation service. The notice can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-teacher-acclimatisation-service-privacy-notice>

The Department has sent our enforcement letters to independent schools who have persistently failed to meet the independent school standards. The correspondence can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enforcement-letters-to-independent-schools>

The Department has published an update to its policy on the offer available to early career teachers and how this will be developed for national roll-out. The full policy can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework-reforms-overview>

The Department, Ofqual and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has published updated guidance on how Ofqual is regulating the technical qualification component of T Levels. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/technical-qualifications-within-t-levels>

The Department has published updated guidance on the college collaboration fund, a peer-support programme to help FE colleges share good practice and develop quality improvement priorities. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/college-collaboration-fund-ccf>

The Department has published information on the successful applications for free schools and university technical colleges (UTCs) in the pre-opening stage. The information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-successful-applications>

The Department has updated its guidance for schools and local authorities on school meals arrangements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency have published guidance for local authorities to gain assurance that institutions are administering the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund correctly. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-audit-guide-for-local-authorities-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

The Education Skills and Funding Agency has updated its guidance for post-16 providers on the next steps towards delivery of T Levels. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/t-levels-next-steps-for-providers>

Ofsted has updated the independent school's inspection handbook on inspecting non-association independent schools in England. The handbook can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-schools-inspection-handbook-eif>

Ofsted has updated its guidance on inspections for independent schools that are not members of associations. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/being-inspected-as-a-non-association-independent-school>

Ofsted has updated its Education Inspection Framework which sets out Ofsted's inspection principles and the main judgements that inspectors make. The updated guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>

Ofsted had updated its guidance for Ofsted inspectors on talking to pupils during school inspections. The updated guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspectors-talking-to-pupils-on-inspection>

Ofsted has updated its guidance for inspectors on inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics during school inspections. The updated guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools>

I hope you find this information useful.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Williamson', with a large circular flourish below the name.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education