



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP

Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Chair of the Education Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

18 June 2021

I would like to update you on the Department for Education's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak between 8 and 15 June 2021.

Delay to step 4 of the roadmap

On Monday 14 June, the Prime Minister announced that we have not met all four tests for proceeding with Step 4 and it is therefore sensible to wait a little longer before continuing to ease restrictions. This will allow time for more people to get vaccinated in light of the new variant. The government will monitor the position every day and if, after two weeks, the risk has diminished then Step 4 might proceed sooner.

Despite this delay, guidance for out of school settings will change from 21 June to allow residential visits for up to 30 children. This replaces the current limit of 6 people or 2 households.

£3.4 million to expand The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in schools

More pupils from the most deprived areas of England will be able to start The Duke of Edinburgh's Award thanks to a funding boost of £3.4 million from Government. This scheme helps young people by providing more access to volunteering and extra-curricular learning.

More high-quality degree alternatives to boost adult skills and job prospects

The Department has announced a new package of measures that will help colleges and universities invest in equipment to support technical studies, and boost training opportunities with businesses in sectors such as digital and construction.

It will also create new, shorter courses for working adults in STEM subjects like engineering and manufacturing, giving those wishing to upskill or retrain greater flexibility in how and when they study.

More support for schools and colleges to tackle sexual abuse

School and college leaders will be encouraged to dedicate inset day time to help train staff on how to deal with sexual abuse and harassment among pupils and how to deliver the Government's new compulsory Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum (RSHE).

The measures come as Ofsted publishes the findings from its thematic review into sexual abuse in education following testimonies posted on the Everyone's Invited website which highlighted cases of sexual abuse and harassment of children and young people, including in education settings.

Update on the rollout of devices

The Government has provided 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 15 June we published the latest figure of 1,330,962 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 24 data indicates that 92.4% of pupils were in school on Thursday 10 June with 99.9% of state funded schools open. Data for attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for week 24 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>

The Department's analysis from week 23 indicated that 94% of primary pupils were in school on Thursday 27 May with over 99.9% of state funded schools open. Pupil attendance in secondary schools fell by 8 percentage points between 5 and 27 May, primarily due to different provision for exam year groups (Y11-13) during the summer term as expected. Data for attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for week 23 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/2021-week-23>

Other key updates

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

The Department has updated its guidance on protective measures for providers of community activities, holiday or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings offering provision to children during the COVID-19 outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

The Department has updated its guidance for parents and carers of children attending community activities, holiday or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

The Department has updated its information on the details of the successful applications for free schools and UTCs. The information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-successful-applications>

The Department has updated its guidance on the summer schools programme for secondary schools. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-schools-programme>

The Department and the Standards and Testing Agency has updated its guidance for headteachers on writing school reports on pupil performance. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-reports-on-pupil-performance-guide-for-headteachers>

The Standards and Testing Agency has updated its guidance on writing statutory end of year reports for parents at key stage 1 and 2. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reporting-to-parents-at-the-end-of-key-stages-1-and-2>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has published guidance on applying to the higher technical education provider growth fund. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-technical-education-provider-growth-fund>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its framework for traineeships, which sets out who they are for, what they provide and their funding. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-young-people-to-develop-the-skills-for-apprenticeships-and-sustainable-employment-framework-for-delivery>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its guidance on traineeship information for employers. It includes what employers can expect from providing a work placement for a traineeship and how to set one up. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/traineeship-information-for-employers>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its information for organisations who are applying to register to offer independent end-point assessment for apprenticeship standards. The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conditions-for-being-on-the-register-of-end-point-assessment-organisations>

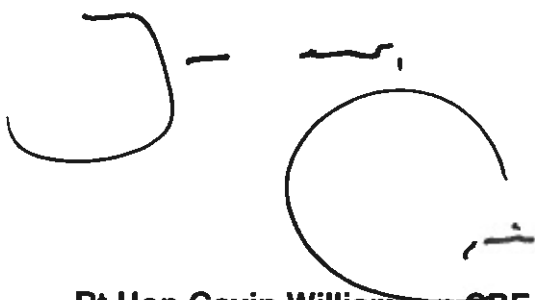
The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its 16 to 19 funding guidance on Maths and English. The full guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Department for Work and Pensions has updated its guidance on the 'Plan for Jobs' skills and employment programmes. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-for-jobs-skills-and-employment-programmes-information-for-employers>

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission has updated its information for families about inspections of local area services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-information-for-families>

Ofqual has published a qualitative research study to understand the experiences of schools and colleges using assistive technology for assessment. The research can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-assistive-technologies-for-assessment>

I hope you find this information useful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line and a large 'W'.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education

