



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

 July 2021



I would like to update you on the Department for Education's response to coronavirus (COVID-19) and other educational updates between 30 June and 6 July 2021.

Step 4 announcement

On Monday evening the Prime Minister announced that he was confident the majority of remaining Covid restrictions in England could be lifted at Step 4 of the Roadmap, no earlier than 19 July. On Tuesday I set out what the impact will be on education settings. The main impact is as follows:

- The removal of the need to keep children and young people in consistent groups ('bubbles') in schools, colleges and out-of-school settings and the need to reduce mixing in early years settings;
- Education and childcare settings will not routinely be required to undertake contact tracing for children and young people. Instead, students who test positive will be subject to the normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts. This will be limited to very close contacts;
- Unless they test positive, children and those who are double vaccinated will not be required to isolate from 16 August if they are identified as a close contact. Self-isolation continues for those who have tested positive for COVID-19;
- Twice weekly home testing will continue to be offered over the summer break in settings that remain open (e.g., nurseries, summer schools and

colleges). On return in the autumn, asymptomatic testing is expected to resume for staff and for students of secondary age and above. Schools and colleges should prepare to offer students two LFD tests at an on-site Asymptomatic Test Site (ATS), 3-5 days apart. Following the first two on-site tests, students should then prepare to resume twice weekly at home;

- Face coverings will no longer be recommended in education and childcare settings or on dedicated school or college transport; and,
- Singing, wind and brass instrument playing can be undertaken.

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 27 data indicates that 83.4% of pupils were in school on Thursday 1 July with 99.6% of state funded schools open. Data for attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for week 27 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 26 data indicates that 87.4% of pupils were in school on Thursday 24 June with 99.8% of state funded schools open. Data for attendance in education and early years settings during the COVID-19 outbreak for week 26 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-26>

Other key updates

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

The Department has published a paper summarising the evidence in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly around children, young people and education settings, from Step 4 of the government's roadmap. The research paper can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-summary-covid-19-children-young-people-and-education-settings>

The Department has updated its guidance for higher education providers during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>

The Department has updated its guidance on assessment processes for selective school admissions during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-assessment-processes-for-selective-school-admissions>

The Department has updated its guidance for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

The Department has updated its guidance on actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision>

The Department has updated its guidance for special schools and other specialist settings during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

The Department has updated its guidance on the use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care>

The Department has updated its guidance on actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

The Department has updated its guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2/>

The Department has updated its guidance for business professionals working in schools and describes how they can find, join or create a local network. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/join-or-create-a-network-for-school-business-professionals>

The Department has updated its guidance on school food standards. It provides resources to help schools plan and provide healthy food in schools. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>

The Department has updated its guidance on how independent schools must collect and submit data for the school-level annual school census. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-level-annual-school-census>

The Department has updated its guidance on skills advisory panels. It describes how to access to local skills reports and develop an evidence base of the local labour and skills landscape. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels>

The Department has updated its guidance on the reformed national professional qualifications frameworks, available from Autumn 2021. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-frameworks-from-september-2021>

The Department has updated its guidance on alternative provision free school revenue funding. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-free-school-revenue-funding>

The Department has updated its guidance on special free school revenue funding.

The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-free-school-revenue-funding>

The Department has updated its guidance for independent schools on making a material change. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/independent-schools-making-a-material-change>

www.gov.uk/guidance/independent-schools-making-a-material-change

The Department has updated its guidance on how schools and academies can apply for a religious character designation and open as a faith or church school.

The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/religious-character-designation-guide-to-applying>

The Department has updated its guidance on becoming a National Leader of Governance and how to apply. The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-leaders-of-governance-a-guide-for-potential-applicants>

The Department has updated its guidance on the summer schools programme including funding, requirements for running a summer school and best practice evidence. The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-schools-programme>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has published guidance on good practice to support the management of college accounts. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-management-accounts-good-practice-guide>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its guidance on how T Levels are funded. The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-t-levels-are-funded>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its guidance on 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 guidance on the opportunities, progression and benefits of doing a higher or degree apprenticeship.

The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its list of traineeship providers. The list can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traineeship-providers>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its guidance for academies on general annual grant allocation statements for 2021-2022. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-general-annual-grant-allocation-guides-2021-to-2022>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its guidance with the latest information on reforms to higher technical education. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/higher-technical-education-reforms>

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has updated its guidance explaining how qualification achievement rates are calculated. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-achievement-rates-qar-2020-to-2021>

Ofqual has updated its guidance providing contact details for awarding organisation appeals offering vocational and technical qualifications in England. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-organisation-appeals-and-complaints-links>

Ofsted has updated its guidance on how it inspects boarding schools and residential special schools. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-boarding-schools-and-residential-special-schools>

The Standards and Testing Agency has updated its guidance for quality monitors on how to conduct reception baseline assessment visits. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-baseline-assessment-quality-monitoring-visit-guidance>

The Student Loans Company has updated its guidance on the terms and conditions for students taking out a student loan in academic year 2020 to 2021.

The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-loans-a-guide-to-terms-and-conditions-for-2020-to-2021>


The Student Loans Company has updated its guidance on how interest is calculated on a plan 2 student loan. The guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-interest-is-calculated-plan-2>

The Student Loans Company has updated its guidance on how interest is calculated and applied if you have a Postgraduate Loan from England or Wales.

The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-interest-is-calculated-postgraduate-loan>

I hope you find this information useful.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Williamson', with a large 'C' or 'S' shape below it.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP

Secretary of State for Education