

Headteachers' Update

For Schools and Academies

DfE Updates

[Guidance for full opening: special schools and other specialist settings](#)

Page summary - What all special schools and other specialist settings will need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from the start of the autumn term to support the return of children and young people with special education needs and disability (SEND).

Change made - Updated sections on assessment and accountability, and contingency planning for remote education.

[Flexible working in schools](#)

Page summary - Updated non-statutory guidance for employers and staff who want to make arrangements for flexible working.

Change made - Updated the definition of flexible working and the process for requesting flexible working, including a clearer distinction between statutory and non-statutory requests. Also updated information on the considerations for addressing potential challenges to implementing and requesting flexible working.

Exam support service claims process

The DfE's [exam support service](#) claims process is now open. Full details of the costs that are covered by the service are set out in this [guidance](#), which also provides information on eligibility and how to make a claim.

Schools and colleges can use the service to make a claim to cover costs, including:

- any net loss for exam fees charged by awarding organisations
- venues for alternative sites (externally booked)
- any net loss for invigilation (externally sourced)

The deadline for submitting a claim is 6 April 2021.

[Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Page summary - What all schools will need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from the start of the autumn term.

Change made - Action list: updated self isolation information to 10 days from the day after contact with the individual tested positive (from 14 days).

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges](#)

Page summary - Information for schools and colleges about how they will start to test pupils and students from January.

Change made - First published.

Time updated - 11:54am, 15 December 2020.

[Providing remote education information to parents: template](#)

Page summary - An optional template to support schools when publishing information about their remote education provision on their websites during the spring term.

Change made - First published.

[Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Page summary - What all schools will need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from the start of the autumn term.

Change made - Updated the 'Remote education expectations' section with the requirement for schools to publish their remote education offer on their website from January 2021, and added a link to a template that schools can use to meet this expectation.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) workforce fund for schools](#)

Page summary - Funding to support schools facing significant staff absences and financial pressures with the costs of staff cover for the period from 1 November to 31 December 2020.

Change made - First published.

[Period products in schools and colleges](#)

Page summary - Guidance for schools and post-16 education organisations in England on providing free period products for all learners.

Change made - Added information about the extension of the scheme until December 2021.

Survey of number of students impact by COVID related isolating

When schools/academies return in January we will be sending out a questionnaire asking for details of the number of students who have had 1,2, 3 or more periods of self-isolation in 2020 due to suspected COVID-19 exposure. This information will be passed to the DfE to inform decisions in relation to GCSE/A level examinations in 2021.

Staggered Start to the Spring Term

The DfE have announced this afternoon:

“Students in exam year groups, vulnerable children and children of critical workers will all attend school or college in person from the start of term, as will all students in primary, special and alternative provision schools and colleges.

Vocational exams scheduled for the week of 4 January will go ahead as planned.

Secondary schools and colleges will operate a staggered return, offering all non-exam year groups full-time remote education, as close as possible to that which students would get in class, during the first week of term, with face-to-face education for all starting on 11 January.”

Full document is [here](#). We will clarify what that means for middle schools with the DfE.

School Funding : Exceptional Costs associated with the coronavirus

Additional Information has been published by the ESFA in relation to exceptional costs incurred in relation to premises, free school meals and cleaning. above. It is available at the link [HERE](#) .

Schools must note:

- this is the final opportunity to claim in relation to these costs;
- the deadline is 22 December 2020;
- the claim form is available here - <https://form.education.gov.uk/service/coronavirus-schools-fund-claim>, though schools are reminded they must use their DfE sign in account.

Schools are reminded that they are not eligible to make a claim against this fund if they expect to add to their existing historic surpluses in the financial year covered by the fund (September 2019 to August 2020 for academies and April 2020 to March 2021 for maintained schools). Income generated by the School (eg. lettings, sale of school meals etc.) is not covered by the fund.

Schools may recall that they were able to apply for funding for other, extraordinary costs. The ESFA did not reimburse any of these additional claims from the first application round. The option to submit other costs has been removed for this round so schools are able to apply for assistance only with additional premises, free school meal and cleaning costs for the period between March and the end of the Summer term.

Further information has also been published in relation to the Coronavirus(covid-19) workforce fund, available [HERE](#) . This related to the period from 1 November 2020 to 31 December 2020 but it should be noted that claims cannot be made until the Spring Term 2021, when further information will be made available.