

Headteachers' Update

The 5 O'Clock Update For Schools

DfE Update

[Providing school meals during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Page summary: Guidance for schools and local authorities on school meals arrangements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Change made: Guidance updated to include information on providing school meals from 8 March 2021.

RE Network Meetings

Northumberland SACRE are looking to hold some online network meetings for teachers/leaders, to support the teaching and learning of RE. Meetings will be hosted by Caz Weir, the RE Co-ordinator for Northumberland.

- Mon 15th March – first/primary (4pm)
- Wed 24th March – middle (4pm)
- Thurs 25th March – secondary/high (4pm)

If you would like to attend please contact Caz via - caroline.weir@drmnewcanglican.org. If there are any specific agenda items/discussion points that you would like covered please let Caz know.

HSE Education Bulletin – Spring term reopening of schools and feedback from HSE spot checks

The HSE have issued their periodic [bulletin for the education sector](#). This edition covers the reopening of schools on 8 March and includes feedback from the spot visits made to schools nationwide during the latter part of 2020.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team have previously [provided feedback](#) arising from spot check visits via the e-courier and Head's briefing so you are likely to be familiar with much of this, however, there is some additional information and feedback which Headteachers may find helpful when reviewing their Covid risk assessment and controls.

Product Alert - Nitrile Gloves

Following on from a product alert which was issued by the DfE last month to all Secondary schools, these schools were asked to check stocks of gloves and quarantine any effected batches. The DfE have further confirmed that these quarantined gloves should now be disposed of alongside your other testing waste, via your general waste stream.

Covid19 Workforce Fund update

The coronavirus (COVID-19) workforce fund for schools and colleges online form is now live: <https://form.education.gov.uk/service/workforce-fund-claim>

The deadline to submit your claim is 23:59 on 31 March 2021. Guidance is available to assist in completing the form at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-workforce-fund-for-schools-and-colleges>

Schools are encouraged to explore this option to mitigate additional staffing costs arising from staff absences due to covid. The conditions for accessing the fund are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-workforce-fund-for-schools/coronavirus-covid-19-workforce-fund-to-support-schools-with-costs-of-staff-absences-from-1-november-2020-to-31-december-2020>

Please note that claims can only be made at an individual school level, no multi academy trust or local authority claims will be considered, schools are therefore responsible for the submission of any claim.

**Department for Education Consultation :
Changes to the sparsity factor within the 2022/23
funding formula**

Schools may be aware the Northumberland has lobbied the DfE for changes to the Sparsity Formula, including seeking changes to the methodology in measuring pupil journeys from "as the crow flies" to road distances. In 2020/21 and 2021/22 6 schools were supported for Sparsity via an exceptional factor, and in 2021/22 the amount of funding within the allocation from the DfE increased from £1.3 million to 1.8 million.

The DfE are now formally consulting on to provide greater support to small, remote schools through changes to the national funding formula's (NFF) sparsity factor in 2022-23

Details of the consultation can be found at :
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-nff-changes-to-sparsity-factor-2022-23/>

We encourage our schools, especially the smaller rural schools to explore this consultation and consider responding. Further information is available from Bruce Parvin Education and Skills Business Manager via bruce.parvin@northumberland.gov.uk

The consultation closes Friday 9 April 2021.

**Rapid covid-19 testing for households, childcare
and support bubbles of staff and pupils**

Please share this leaflet with your parents and carers - [School Test Parents Leaflet](#).

You may also find this Q & A shared with us by central government useful should you get asked any questions - [Rapid Testing Parents - Approved Q & A](#).

If you require any communications in relation to parents/carers testing at home, please contact michelle.rose@northumberland.gov.uk.