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Department for Education

This is your daily email to keep you updated on the government's response to COVID-19 (coronavirus).

Information to cascade to parents and carers

From Friday 20 March schools, childcare and other educational settings are closed for everyone except:

- children of critical workers
- vulnerable children

We have published guidance for parents and carers:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers

Critical workers

If parents' work is critical to the coronavirus response, their children will be prioritised for early years and education provision.

The Government has published a list of critical workers:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision

Please cascade the above information to parents and carers where possible.

Attendance reporting for educational settings to start from Monday 23 March

From Monday 23 March, educational settings should complete a short form to notify the Department for Education about their status regarding coronavirus (COVID-19).

The form will ask you to confirm whether your setting is open and, if so, provide information about numbers of pupils and staff attending. It will take you less than 2 minutes to complete. You should submit it by noon of each weekday.

Your data will help us build a national picture of educational provision so that we can focus support more effectively. It will also help the Government monitor the impact of the virus.

You will need a 'DfE sign-in' account to access the form. We are writing separately to DfE Sign-in approvers in all education settings to help you with this.

We will send more information about recording attendance and completing the form tomorrow.

Further details on exams and grades announced

New details regarding the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on summer exams has been released.

The exam regulator, Ofqual, and exam boards will work with teachers to provide grades to students whose exams have been cancelled this summer, following our actions to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Ofqual and exam boards will be discussing with teachers' representatives before finalising an approach, to ensure that it is as fair as possible.

Find details on the impact on summer exams here:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced

More information will be provided as soon as possible.

Funding to support schools

To ensure schools can continue to pay their staff and meet other financial commitments, schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure.

We will put in place a new process that allows us to reimburse schools for exceptional costs that they face as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Details of the scheme will be published in the coming days.

Handwashing advice

The most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves is to wash their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Public Health England recommends that in addition to handwashing before eating, and after coughing and sneezing, everyone should also wash hands after using toilets and travelling on public transport.

The latest guidance and video on hand washing can be found here:

- https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

Department for Education coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact

this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687
Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday), 10am to 4pm (Saturday to Sunday)

Please note, we are currently experiencing high volumes of calls. We appreciate your patience at this time and apologise for any wait that you may experience. To ensure that we answer your calls as quickly as possible, we have now extended our opening hours to cover weekends and are increasing the number of call handlers available to answer your calls.

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.

Where to find the latest information

Updates on COVID-19:

- https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Guidance for educational settings:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19

Guidance for social or community care and residential settings:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19

Travel advice for those travelling and living overseas:

- https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus

Educational resources:

- https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101-coronavirus-/resources
- https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools

Latest Department for Education information:

- https://twitter.com/educationgovuk
- https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk/

Please keep your GIAS school contacts up to date

If you work in a school, please take this opportunity to review your contact information in Get Information About Schools (GIAS).

To update your record, please go to the GIAS home page, "Sign in" using your "DfE Sign-in" credentials and select GIAS from your available services here:

- https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/