



→ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) | National lockdown: stay at home

→ [Brexit](#) | Check what you need to do

[Home](#) > [Education, training and skills](#) > [Further and higher education, skills and vocational training](#) > [ESFA Update: 17 February 2021](#)



Correspondence

ESFA Update academies: 17 February 2021

Published 17 February 2021

Contents

1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)
2. Reminder: academies accounts return deadline
3. Reminder: academies admissions and independent appeal panel arrangements
4. Information: update to high needs operational guidance for 2021 to 2022
5. Information: teachers' pay grant/ teachers' pension employer contribution grant
6. Information: celebrating transformational teaching with the Teaching Awards
7. Information: Get Help Buying for Schools consultation
8. Information: renewing your staff absence protection – you could save time and money

[Print this page](#)

1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education has published guidance about [COVID-19 in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students on GOV.UK](#).

Please check [GOV.UK](#) regularly for updates.

2. Reminder: academies accounts return deadline

A reminder to all trusts that the deadline to submit your accounts return is Tuesday 23 February 2021.

If you have not already completed the external auditor details section, please do as soon as possible as this will give them access to the form. The return can only be submitted by your trust's external auditor.

If you are having any difficulties completing or submitting the form, please refer to the [academies accounts return guidance](#) or join one of our [MS Teams calls or web chat sessions](#).

3. Reminder: academies admissions and independent appeal panel arrangements

This note is to remind you that academies need to have determined their admissions arrangements for entry in September 2022 by 28 February 2021. Academies must publish their admissions arrangements on their website and send a copy to their local authority by 15 March 2021.

Academies must also publish their timetables for organising and hearing admission appeals on their websites by 28 February 2021.

Please follow the statutory requirements in both the [School Admissions Code](#) and the [School Admission Appeals Code](#) when determining admissions arrangements and organising admission appeals.

Admission authorities, admission appeal clerks and panel members should note that the [temporary regulations](#) (The School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2021) have now been extended until 30 September 2021. [Updated guidance](#) has been published to reflect the change in date, there are no changes to policy or process.

Please note that the temporary regulations and guidance only apply where it is not reasonably practicable to comply with the School Admission Appeals Code for a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Therefore, any extension will not mean the flexibility will be available for all admission authorities to use all the time. It will mean the temporary arrangements are available to use when they are needed – when they are not, the duty to comply with the The Schools Admission (Appeal Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and the School Admission Appeals Code remains.

4. Information: update to high needs operational guidance for 2021 to 2022

We've updated the [high needs operational guidance for 2021 to 2022](#).

The changes include:

- further clarification on top-up funding
- an update to annex 2 to provide more information on the responsibility for children and young people who move between local authorities
- a new annex 3 to provide additional information on health and social care costs

5. Information: teachers' pay grant/ teachers' pension employer contribution grant

From 2021 to 2022 the majority of the funding for the teachers' pay grant and the teachers' pension employer contribution grant will be paid through the schools and high needs national funding formulae (NFF), instead of as separate grants.

Mainstream academies will continue to receive the grants for April to August 2021, as they will not receive their 2021 to 2022 NFF allocations until September 2021. This will avoid academies facing a five-month funding gap. Maintained nursery schools, school nurseries, sixth forms, 16 to 19 schools, non-maintained special schools and some special and alternative provision free schools are not funded through the NFF. In 2021 to 2022 we will continue to provide these institutions with the grants paid separately to core allocations.

In 2021 to 2022 allocations for both grants will be based on the per pupil rates set out in the supporting [teachers' pay grant](#) and [teachers' pension grant](#) methodology documents. As per the usual timetable, allocations for April to August 2021 will be published in April 2021, and allocations for the second half of the financial year will be published in the autumn.

6. Information: celebrating transformational teaching with the Teaching Awards

The 2021 Teaching Awards are a chance to celebrate excellence in schools and colleges to recognise the difference that individuals make to young people, from a headteacher to a teaching assistant.

It's easy to enter and the awards are open to all state and independent schools and FE colleges in England. Visit the [Teaching Awards website](#) to find out more about the categories, what makes a good application and read what past winners have said.

On 12 February, Alex Jones launched a brand new 'Lockdown Hero' Teaching Award for 2021 on BBC's The One Show. This award celebrates the schools or individuals who have stepped up despite the extraordinary challenges presented by national restrictions.

6.1 Showing appreciation

And don't forget – anyone can send a thank you e-card to special headteacher, teacher or teaching assistant by visiting the [Thank a Teacher website](#).

7. Information: Get Help Buying for Schools consultation

The Department for Education has launched a [public consultation](#) on a proposed new Get Help Buying for Schools service to help schools save money on their non-staff spend.

The new service will build on the achievements of the Schools Buying Hub pilots in the North West and South West. It will offer bespoke e-procurement tools, guidance and one-to-one procurement support for complex procurements of goods and services.

We welcome the views of stakeholders across the school sector. The consultation closes on 11 March 2021.

8. Information: renewing your staff absence protection – you could save time and money

Before you renew your staff absence cover, come along to one of DfE Schools Commercial Team and Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) workshops.

CPC's [Staff Absence Insurance and Associated Services](#) is a DfE-approved service and offers access to five distinct policy options from Schools Advisory Service (SAS). It's flexible policy options, tailored to individual requirements, include your choice of benefit periods, excess period.

Webinar dates (click on the link the register):

- [2 March 2021 – 10:30am to 11am](#)
- [4 March 2021 – 11am to 11:30am](#)
- [11 March 2021 – 2pm to 2:30pm](#)

By attending, you will gain:

- an understanding of a solution to all staff absence insurance needs.
- an understanding of policies that include whole school wellbeing for both staff and pupils.

Is this page useful?

Coronavirus (COVID-19)	Brexit
Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support	Check what you need to do
Services and information	Departments and policy
Benefits	Education and learning
Births, deaths, marriages and care	Employing people
Business and self-employed	Environment and countryside
Childcare and parenting	Housing and local services
Citizenship and living in the UK	Money and tax
Crime, justice and the law	Passports, travel and living abroad
Disabled people	Visas and immigration
Driving and transport	Working, jobs and pensions
	How government works
	Departments
	Worldwide
	Services
	Guidance and regulation
	News and communications
	Research and statistics
	Policy papers and consultations
	Transparency and freedom of information releases

