

# Correspondence

## ESFA Update local authorities: 17 February 2021

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## 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. Information: use of schools as polling stations in the forthcoming election period

The Government has confirmed that local elections will go ahead on Thursday 6 May as planned. Given significant disruptions already to education this year, Returning Officers have been asked to avoid using schools as polling stations, where it is practically possible to do so. In exceptional circumstances, where schools are used as polling stations, we have asked that Returning Officers work with schools to minimise any disruption.

Where possible, pupils eligible to attend on Thursday 6 May should continue to do so. However, if necessary, for the safe operation of polling stations and to limit risks to staff and pupils, schools may ask some pupils not to attend and instead provide remote education on Thursday 6 May. On-site provision should still be available to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers on election day. Schools should not close to pupils on Friday 7 May.

In a letter to Returning Officers and schools, we have set out the detail of additional funding made available to local authorities to help returning officers avoid disruption to schools and cover the costs of cleaning, including any cleaning taking place after polls close, so that schools can be open to pupils the following day. The following measures are deemed broadly proportionate before schools resume use of their whole estate: ventilating any rooms used for polling, via full window and door opening to fresh outside air for at least 1 hour; and after ventilation, sanitising all hand touchpoints (e.g. door handles, rails, seats used by polling officers, desks).

The [letter from the Department for Education and the Cabinet Office to all schools and returning officers](#) setting out expectations for the forthcoming elections has now been published and is available to read on GOV.UK.

## 3. 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

## 4. 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.

## 5. 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.

### 5.1 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](#).

## 6. 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.

## 7. 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

## 8. Information: renewing your insurance – you could save upwards of £10,000

Before you renew your insurance, come along to one of the [risk protection arrangement \(RPA\)](#) virtual sessions and find out how you could potentially make savings upwards of £10,000 per annum for your school.

The RPA is an alternative to commercial insurance and the UK government covers the losses instead of commercial insurance.

At £18 per pupil, per year, £18 per pupil referral unit for special and alternative provision academies, special schools, special schools and pupil referral units (£19 from 1 April 2021), it offers excellent value for money and all schools classified as public sector schools can join.

By attending, you will:

- get an understanding of what is included in the RPA cover
- get details of the free advice and support available
- hear about the services available to RPA members to help reduce risk

To find out more or register to join one of the regular virtual information sessions contact [Schools.Commercial@education.gov.uk](mailto:Schools.Commercial@education.gov.uk).

## 9. Information: further education (FE) teachers' pension scheme employer contribution grant

We recently confirmed that the FE teachers' pension scheme employer contribution grant would continue for the 2021 to 2022 academic year. We have now published [more information on how the grant for that year will be calculated](#).

Institutions that receive 16 to 19 ESFA funding will receive confirmation of the payment amounts alongside their 16 to 19 ESFA funding allocation for academic year 2021 to 2022. We will communicate funding amounts for other eligible institutions by email.

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Yes

No

There is something wrong with this page

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