Part of
Education, universities and childcare providers

Guidance
Further education coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance

Updated 28 March 2021

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Latest updates

The main changes include:

- clean out of lockdown: a summary of the roadmap for easing restrictions and the return to full further education (FE)
- changes to delivery: changes to face-to-face and blended expectations for the summer term
- system of controls:
  - social distancing review point
  - updated testing arrangements
- site and visitors:
  - enhanced hygiene additional guidance, in new section on extra-curricular activity and clarification on guests, activities
- risk assessment and mitigations:
  - refining out-break management procedures
  - additional information on the college collaboration fund
- physical activity: additional advice on extracurricular, dance and performance activity
- clinically extremely vulnerable: updated information for staff and students who are shielding
  - revisiting vaccination
  - 2021 guidance summary from test bed countries
  - guidance for international students
- free meals in education: further information on how to submit a funding claim
- recruitment and training: further information and details of how to access the 2 new individualised learner record (ILR) fields
- high-needs funding: further information on the 2021 to 2022 academic year

Steps out of lockdown

Following the successful return to on-site education from 8 March, this guidance has been updated to focus on priorities for the summer term as restrictions are eased from lockdown and the return to full FE.

The steps out of lockdown will be guided by data, not dates, so that we do not risk a surge in infections that would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS. We will review all the dates in the roadmap and implications and subject to change. There will be a review of progress against the 5 tests for each step, and at least 5 weeks will pass between changes in restrictions until we be analysed, followed by one week's advance notice of the restrictions that will be eased.

Only when the government is sure that it is safe to move from one step to the next will the final decision be made.

Step 1 will see students return to face-to-face teaching, the planned easing of restrictions, guided by all stages to date, and before step one fully reinstated:

- face to face extra-curricular activity
- work placements
- education visits
- sessions of overnight training facilities on-site such as hairdressing salons, gyms and sports halls

By the end of the summer term, we hope providers will be able to open their doors to prospective year 12 students for familiarisation events ahead of September, as outlined in study in September.

Subject to the dates and the 5 tests set out in the Prime Minister's roadmap, we expect that the following additional activities will be allowed in FE settings in line with the steps in wider society:

Step 1 - from 29 March

As part of step 1:

- outdoor sports and leisure facilities such as tennis courts and open air swimming pools can reopen
- all students irrespective of age can participate in formally organised outdoor sports
- acceptance provision for any reason can take place outdoors for students aged 19 and over
- the position on face coverings in classrooms and workshops to be reviewed
- clinically extremely vulnerable staff and students can return to work and their education setting from 1 April

Step 2 - not before 12 April

As part of step 2:

- students can return to industry placements, where working from home is not possible and where it is safe to do so, and to other essential activities including corresponding businesses begin to open in wider society, for example, personal care services
- indoor leisure facilities including gyms can reopen to the public for individual or household use
- accepted hospitality facilities can reopen to the public for table service if they can operate outside

Step 3 - not before 17 May

As part of step 3:

- indoor adult group sport can return, meaning recreational group sport is permitted (of FE premises
- indoor hospitality can can reopen to the public
- outside of college room students will be returning to part time work alongside others outside of their college

Review of social distancing

Before step 4 begins, the government will complete a review of the evidence and data on the impact of the easing of restrictions on the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and other decisions on the timing and circumstances under which the restriction on 1 metre plus, the easing of face coverings and other measures may be lifted.

Step 4 - not before 21 June

As part of step 4 open days can be planned.

Introduction

This guidance sets out what FE and skills providers need to know so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full.

It explains the actions college leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting, and how they should respond to a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19). This guidance is for leaders and staff in:

- sixth form colleges
- general FE colleges
- independent training providers
- designated institutions
- adult community learning providers
- local authority providers

It also covers expectations for students with education, health and care (EHC) plans in mainstream FE settings and special post-16 institutions. Special post-16 institutions should read their separate school and other specialist settings.

Apprenticeship providers should read the current guidance on providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

We will keep this guidance under review and update, as necessary.

Changes to delivery

For most students, this summer term will be their first full term of face-to-face education since the start of the pandemic. We want to ensure students can make up for all education they missed during the pandemic and to ensure they have the same opportunity to fulfil their potential no matter their background.

The summer term also provides an opportunity for students to consolidate in building their confidence and resilience as we move back to a more normal way of life.

We want students to benefit from as much face-to-face education as we can safely deliver ahead of the summer holiday and to support students. However, this year will inevitably be a cohort with lost difference and this may not be applicable. The year's 2020 exams approach and the 2021 approach to GCSE, AS and A levels, T levels and other 16 to 19 qualifications mean we can be confident that in practice, for many students, some other 16 to 19 learners half term will not contribute towards their grades.

Students cause to be unemployed or inactive as the year ends of July or over the year in which they born 18. That means that those students (most of whom will be in their 19 or 20 and will be in education or training).

We know that this year, 16 and 17 year olds already have lost more than a third of their time in full of the summer term to support their current students and to welcome prospective students. We would strongly encourage all FE providers to maximise opportunities that mark the progression needs of their students during this period.

You should consider the following:

- design and plan content to support students to study remotely or independently to make up for lost time in education, and to support students who are in summer education remotely resources from Gatsi National Academy to year 11 or other high-quality resources (see Making sure quality content and assessment remains a priority in 16 to 19 study programmes)
- use skills bootcamps to support students transition to A level and other vocational and technical qualifications at college by helping them identify and prioritise skills they need to develop ahead of the start of their course, and to help students drawn from the wider population and training support service available to provide support on study skills, other enrichment activity, careers advice and guidance, and mentoring and coaching to support students' wellbeing and health and wellbeing for all students progressing to further study or employment
- support application and preparation for work, in partnership with employers, including providing work experience, as far as coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions allow

Minimising coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Public health advice

We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and PHE to develop this guidance.

Implementing the system of controls, creates a safer environment for students and staff to learn, work and socialise in education and training settings. It will help to reduce the risks to the public, and staff, the system of controls has six parts. We will further strengthen the measures, to provide more reassurance and to help decrease disruption the virus causes to education.

Risk assessment

You have various duties to protect people from harm, as employers, occupiers or due to other responsibilities. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff students and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within your setting.

You should have active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- effective
- working as planned
- updated appropriately considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice

More information on what FE providers need to do is available on page 3.

System of controls

We know that the predominant new variant of coronavirus (COVID-19) is more transmissible than previous strains of the virus. We have made changes to the system of controls, even with this new variant, we can still keep students safe.

In this section where something is essential for public health reasons, as advised by the Department of Health and Social Care, we use the word 'must' in the guidance. We use the guidance does not create any new legal obligations.

This is the set of actions you must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection'.

If you follow the system of controls, you will effectively reduce risks in your setting and create an inherently safer environment.

Prevention

You must always:

1. Promote contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the setting
2. Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances
3. Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual.
4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
5. Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergent.
6. Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible.
7. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.

In specific circumstances:

8. Ensure individuals wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary.
9. Promote and engage in asymptomatic testing.

Response to any infection

You must always:

10. Promote and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
11. Manage and report confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the setting community.
12. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the setting

When an individual develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or has a positive test result:

Students, staff and other adults must not come into the setting if:

- they have one or more coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- a member of their household is isolating (remain in their room) because of a confirmed or suspected case of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- they are required to isolate twenty-eight days after receiving the second dose of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine
- they have had a positive test

They must immediately cease to attend and not attend for at least 10 full days from the day after:

- the start of their symptoms
- the last date if they didn't have any symptoms but have had a positive test (whether they have been tested because of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or not)

You must follow this process and advice everyone on site or visiting to avoid:

- spreading the virus to students NHS Test and Trace or local public health teams, but a legal obligation to isolate, but you may receive tests to confirm or rule out if they are able to escape the risk of harm. More information can be found on NHS Test and Trace, how it works.

If anyone in your setting develops a new cough or a high temperature, or a change to their usual cough or temperature, they should:

- avoid their home to begin isolation - the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days
- book a test through the NHS Test and Trace, households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
- advice them to arrange for have a test as soon as possible to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19)

Other members of their household (including any siblings and members of their support bubble) should isolate at home for the period of time set out in their household advice. The stay-at-home guidance for the first person in their household to develop the symptoms was taken if they did not have symptoms, whether this was a stay-at-home guidance (COVID-19) or a household with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection household starts to develop symptoms which self-isolating. You must follow the 10 day isolation period and book a test.

If anyone tests positive which not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10 day isolation period from the day symptoms develop.

A non-residential setting, or student displays coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has a positive test, while at their setting they should wear young public transport and, whenever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

Alternatively, if safe, they should walk, ride, cycle or drive wherever possible. If driving yourself, open windows and avoid touching surfaces. If someone in your household or support bubble has tested positive, they should open windows, wear face covering and sit far away from others if sharing a car. They should not use public transport or ride-hailing services if possible to avoid.

Unvaccinated non-residential students who are identified as a close contact should be quarantined for the setting. The local authority may be able to help source a suitable venue which would provide appropriate protection for the other, who must be made aware that the individual is awaiting results of a displeasing symptoms.

If a student is awaiting collection:

- they should be mixed, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, or outside if the weather is suitable, while supervision if required
- a window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if it is safe to do so
- a member of staff should remain with them, but at an appropriate distance (2 metres away from other people)
- if they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate one if possible, and the bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected to standard cleaning procedures before being used by anyone else
- personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn by staff caring for the student if they are unable to keep a distance of 2 metres from others, and if they need to care for a student with complex needs

More information on PPE use can be found in the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and school settings.

In an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk.

Unvaccinated non-residential students who develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) should:

- isolate at home or at a hospital unless advised by a doctor
- not attend the setting
- not use public transport or ride-hailing services

The individual should not use public transport if they are symptomatic. If arranging their return to their family home, or outside, settings should follow advice on transport providers in the safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance.

Public Health England (PHE) has good evidence that routine testing for asymptomatic students is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

Further information is available on how to manage and report confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19).

When an individual has had close contact with someone with coronavirus (COVID-19) or has been tested:

Any member of staff who has provided close contact care to someone with symptoms, regardless of whether they are wearing PPE, and all other members of staff or students who have been in close contact with the person with symptoms, do not need to self-isolate unless:

- the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive
- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should self-isolate immediately and arrange to have a test)
- they are identified by NHS Test and Trace or the Public Health England (PHE) local health protection team as being a close contact of a high-risk or a low-risk case

Close contact guidance from on (27) has as part of a community or wider programme.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitizer after they come into contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned after they have left, to reduce the risk of other people touching infected surfaces. See the guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings.

If you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace, or your local health protection team, and you are identified as someone you have been in close contact of a positive case, you have a legal obligation to do so.

2. Ensure face coverings are used, in recommended circumstances

We recommend that face coverings should be worn by adults and students when in communal areas, where they are in close contact with other people in circumstances and workplace where social distancing cannot easily be maintained and where it is practicable. Face coverings do not need to be worn by students when outdoors on the premises.

This does not apply to situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to carry out a task or would pose a risk to health and safety, for example, mental and physical activity. More information can be found in the face coverings guidance.

Transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear, round or transparent face coverings may be worn. Face shields or visors are not a suitable alternative to face coverings, but they may be effective in reducing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Those who rely on visual signs for communication, or communicate with or provide care to someone who relies on lip reading, should be exempt from any requirement to cover their coverings at the setting or student place.

Face visors or shields should not be seen as an alternative to face coverings. They may protect against droplet spread in specific circumstances but are not a substitute for face coverings in preventing aerosol transmission. In an education setting environment they are not a substitute for face coverings. Face shields or visors may be worn in addition to carrying out a risk assessment for the specific situation and should always be worn in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

FE providers have duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and students, to support them to participate.

The recommendation to wear face coverings in classrooms will be introduced for a limited time until Easter, and as with all measures, we will keep it under review and update guidance after that point.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- cannot put, wear, or remove a face covering because of a medical condition or disability. Illness or mental health difficulties.
- have a communication impairment or relies on lip reading. clear round or facial expression to communicate

The same exemptions will apply in education and childcare settings and you should be sensitive to those needs. Some people may not be able to wear face coverings and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

Access to face coverings

Due to the increasing use of face coverings in wider society, staff and students are encouraged to ensure they have their own coverings. PPE has also provided guidance on how to make a cloth face covering.

You should have a small contingency supply available for people who:

- are struggling to source coverings
- are unable to use their face covering as it has become damp, soiled or uncomfortable
- have forgotten their face covering

Our student should be denied education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

You should have a process for when face coverings are worn within your setting and how they should be removed. You should communicate this process clearly to students, parents and visitors to your setting. Face coverings should be worn in line with PHE's guidance and be discriminated if required to remove a face covering against the rules.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

- cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the covering should be replaced carefully. Staff and students may consider bringing a spare face covering to wear if this occurs (including a disposable face covering).

You must instruct students to:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'bag for waste' bin (not recycling bin)
- place reusable coverings in a plastic bag they take home with them
- wash their hands again

More information is available on preventing and controlling infection including the use of PPE in the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings.

3. Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on the skin. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitizer. You must ensure that students clean their hands regularly, including:

- when they arrive at the setting
- after using the toilet
- when they change rooms
- before and after eating

Consider how other students and staff will need to wash their hands and incorporate this into their

Staff working with students with self-care/toileting may want more opportunities to wash their hands than other staff.

More information is available on preventing and controlling infection including the use of PPE in the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings.

Students who use cabins as a sensory shower or who struggle with Level 3, 4, 5, and 6 if they also need more opportunities to leave their cabins.

Continue to help students with complex needs to clear their hands properly:

Passport and Visual Input cards (including those with Level 3, 4, 5, and 6) can be used to:

- whether you have enough hand sanitiser or hand sanitiser stations available so that all students and staff can clear their hands regularly
- if you need to supervise hand sanitiser use given the risks around ingestion – see the guidance for supervising hand sanitiser use
- building these routines into your curriculum, supported by behaviour interventions – helping ensure those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

Ensure that all students and staff are aware of good respiratory hygiene. Make sure enough tissues and bins are available to support students and staff to follow the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. Ensure you must ensure students with complex needs are helped to get tissues and bins if they need assistance to follow this approach. Refer to the guidance on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and wellbeing curriculum framework, which is to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Some students with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example, those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory input. Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is available for these students and the staff working with them and is not a reason to deny these students face-to-face education.

5. Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products, such as detergents

In line with the risk assessment, in the aftermath of the day, put in place and maintain an enhanced cleaning schedule. This should include:

- more frequent cleaning of rooms or shared areas that are used by different groups
- frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more frequently
- toilets being cleaned regularly
- encouraging students to wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet
- if your site allows it, allowing different groups their own toilet blocks

PHE has published guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings. This includes advice on the general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning when there is suspected virus.

6. Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and you must consider how to implement this in your school environment. Minimising contacts and mixing will also reduce the risk of other infectious diseases.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between students and staff. This is in addition to maintaining social distance. Ensure that children in different groups do not mix. Consider how this will impact on your school day, lessons, options and break requests will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

- student's ability to distance
- age of the students
- feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum

As EYE providers are different, and some resources will be more appropriate for certain age groups, we cannot be more prescriptive in certain buildings.

How to group students

Where does social groups work or not possible in order to deliver the full programme of study, or to manage the practical logistics within and around the site, other measures will need to be considered. Ensure that children in different groups do not mix. Consider how this will impact on your school day, lessons, options and break requests will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

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Ensuring the separation of groups

Ensure you are able to operate in order to deliver the full programme of study, or to manage the practical logistics within and around the site, other measures will need to be considered. Ensure that children in different groups do not mix. Consider how this will impact on your school day, lessons, options and break requests will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

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Although parents/carers in the centre or external areas to see her, you should avoid parents/carers coming into the centre. Ensure that children in different groups do not break lines and avoid lines (and time) for claiming surface in the canteens and playgrounds. Consider how this will impact on your school day, lessons, options and break requests will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not all-setting options and will differ depending, even if implemented partially, for the ways students in their groups for most of the time, but also allowe mixing into wider groups for some activities such as assemblies and transport. Ensure that children in different groups.

We recognise that some staff will need to move between groups, for example, teachers delivering maths and English to students including a small group of students in a different group, teaching assistants providing support to students in different groups, or staff who are responsible for a specialist subject.

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Teaching and learning environment measures within rooms and workshops

Maintaining a distance between people which mode and reducing the amount of time spent in close contact with people is important. Ensure that children in different groups adhere that staff maintain distance from their students, staying at the front of the room, and away from their colleagues where possible.

Ideally, staff should maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other and from students. We recognise that this may not be possible in all circumstances, such as when providing for complex needs, or those who need close control care. Provide educational and care plans for students who need it, and staff to offer increased pastoral support and care to minimise the risk of transmission.

Students should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff their peers where possible. This will not be possible for some students with complex needs, and it is not feasible in some cities where space does not allow. Doing this where you can, and ensure doing this some of the time, will help.

When staff or students cannot maintain distance, for example, when students are being given close control care or personal care, ensure that they are facing away from each other and face-to-face contact is avoided lower between cover, additional mitigation measures should be put in place.

Additional mitigation measures

These include:

- increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning
- keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- ensuring good ventilation, including by opening windows
- seating students side by side and facing forwards, rather than face-to-face or side-on
- moving unnecessary furniture out of rooms to make more space

Some PE rooms such as recreational training, healthcare assisted courses and the performing arts may pose particular risks, such as increased proximity, increased exertion, and increased aerosol or droplet production. Ensure you follow the ventilation or cleaning in accordance with guidance issued for the relevant professional working environments.

Measures elsewhere

Avoid large gatherings such as meetings with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the site kept to a minimum. While young health in the centre or outdoor communal areas is low risk, ensure that children in different groups do not mix. Consider how this will impact on your staggered lunch times and lunch times (and the cleaning surfaces in the canteen and playgrounds).

You should also place clear staff and student spaces are set up and used to help staff to maintain distance. Ensure you follow the guidance to make your workplace COVID-secure to help you clear staff and student spaces.

If your setting operates commercial training programmes, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, ensure you follow the guidance for the hairdressing sector. Staff complying with relevant guidance in sectors within scope of the guidance will mitigate and the current restriction guidance.

Where settings have kitchens on site, these are able to operate as normal, but they and any external catering providers must comply with the guidance for food businesses operating during COVID-19.

Restaurants and food retail facilities can remain open for take-away or delivery.

Other on-site facilities such as gyms, swimming pools, and 3G pitches can remain open for use by staff and students outside the school day, and by other users, such as hirers, open to the public when the corresponding premises and businesses are permitted to open to the public.

Public facing facilities

Other premises may be used for the purposes of training can operate in line with the guidance for hairdressing. Regardless of the location in which you are, you can remain open for:

- education and training, including where education providers use sports, leisure and community facilities where that is part of their normal provision
- childcare and support services for children and young people eligible to attend
- use by state sports bodies to train and compete

Full list of premises that can be found on the national lockdown guidance.

Posting between settings

Consider whether you need any additional processes in place for students who attend:

- attend more than one site or different premises
- move between a mainstream provider and workplace as part of an apprenticeship

An apprenticeship delivery can be extremely flexible. It is up to you, the employer and the employer and training provider to agree on how apprenticeship training is delivered, and how assessments are undertaken. You should consider whether you want to use the flexibilities to support the delivery of apprenticeships, including those from commenced COVID-19 with providing a full educational programme. For example, a block release delivery method may be better or reducing movement between sites.

However, where it is essential for workers to attend their workplace, and there is no other way to undertake the apprenticeship, training should take place.

See current guidance on providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

7. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the virus in the air, which reduces the risks from airborne transmission. This happens when people breathe in small particles (aerosols) in the air where the virus will be present if someone is infectious.

When the setting is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and a comfortable temperature is maintained throughout the occupied spaces.

Ventilation can be achieved by the following measures:

- mechanical ventilation systems – these should be adjusted to increase the ventilation into occupied areas and checked to confirm that local ventilation regulations meets current guidance and that only fresh outside air is circulated. If possible, ensure that the system is set to 'fresh air' or 'purge' mode, and that it is operational as normal as they are within a single room and supplemented by outdoor air supply
- natural ventilation – opening windows (in cooler weather windows should be opened just enough to provide comfortable temperature, and windows should be opened during breaks to escape the air in the space), opening internal doors can also assist with ventilation across a room
- natural ventilation – if temperature external weather dictates, keep the windows and doors open if they are not fire doors and where safe to do so.

The Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and CIBSE coronavirus (COVID-19) advice provide further information.

Temperature should be increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature. Ensure:

- opening high level windows in colder weather is preferred to the use of trickle vents or doors
- opening the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied (for example, between classes, during breaks and lunch, when a room is unused)
- providing flexibility to allow additional, suitable indoor clothing
- rearranging furniture where possible to avoid direct draughts

Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained particularly in occupied spaces.

8. Ensure individuals wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary

Face coverings are not required in the PPE provided in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and a limited number of settings for enabled learners against hazards and risks, such as chemicals and sharp objects, or for medical reasons. Face coverings are not required for face masks are not been proposed for all settings. Face coverings are not required for face masks are not been proposed for all settings. Face coverings are not required for face masks are not been proposed for all settings

The Department for Health and Social Care has launched a self-isolation service hub to ensure that people who test positive for COVID-19 are able to access the support they need to provide to provide full information about their obligations to self-isolate and be able to signpost to the helpline for Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary support.

By providing these details, close contacts of positive cases identified at the setting will be able to access the support they need to self-isolate, including signposting to Test and Trace Support. Individuals who have not been tested but are required to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace will not receive an NHS Test and Trace Account or SMS text message, and will need to call the helpline instead.

In order for any of your staff or students who may be eligible for support to contact Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to be able to claim, you must follow these steps:

- Ensure that you provide a list of appropriate close contacts of your staff or students who tested positive within your establishment and inform these close contacts that they have been in self-isolation.

- Call the service hub on 0121 274 5170 as soon as you have the eligible NHS Test and Trace Support for Businesses referrals to a Test and Trace case handler who will be tested positive.

- Provide the details of the person who has tested positive, along with the details of the relevant close contacts you have identified. If you do not have NHS Test and Trace Account, you will need to provide the details of the close contacts, and tracing the person who is eligible their contacts on the Test and Trace system (CTM).

- NHS Test and Trace will then contact individuals to formally advise them of their need to self-isolate and provide them with an NHS Test and Trace Account ID.

- Following this, individuals who are employed or self-employed, and who are unable to work from home and losing income, as a result, may qualify for Test and Trace Support Payment scheme through their local authority.

12. Contain any outbreak by following PHE local health protection team advice

If you have 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an unusual rise in sickness absence, you should contact your PHE local health protection team for advice.

You should use the information you have collected and discussed with your local health protection team when necessary and advice if any additional action is required. Your local health protection team will be able to advise on the need for any outbreak control plan and on the steps to be taken to implement a control plan.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other students self-isolate or take a precautionary measure. This could mean whole classes or year groups.

If you are responsible the system of controls, addressing any issues you have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole site closure will not normally be required. You should not consider closing sections of your school if health protection teams.

Admitting students and staff back to the setting

The student or staff member who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) can return to their normal routine and stay self-isolating after they have finished their isolation period, as long as they have been fever free for 48 hours (without the use of medicine) or anosmia. This because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks since the infection has gone. If they still have a high temperature after 10 days or an otherwise unwell, you should return them to stay home and seek medical advice.

You should not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before students or staff return to the setting after their isolation period.

In the vast majority of cases, the student, parents and carers will be able to reassure those with symptoms should not attend the setting, given the potential risk to others. Staff and students who are well enough to learn should be encouraged to attend and take the decision to return the student. It is your reasonable judgement. It is necessary to protect your students and staff from possible infection with coronavirus (COVID-19) and you should not be unreasonably considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

Site safety and estates

Site safety

You should follow usual public health guidance on staying safe outside one's home and in public places.

If you deliver higher education provision in your setting you also need the Higher Education coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance.

Estates

You should look to maximise the use of your site and any associated outdoor spaces.

Following a risk assessment, you may determine that small adaptations to your site are required to ensure operational basics. This will be at your discretion, based on your circumstances.

Additional advice on safely encouraging buildings can be found in the CIBSE guidance on operating from lockdown.

Off-site provision and work placements

External work placements

Maintaining contact and mixing between cohorts reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Therefore, providers should, where practicable, limit the number of external contacts and mixing while delivering training and placement.

You should consider face students on placements, from different workplaces, mix with other students and staff, when attending an educational setting. Providers have to ensure students can follow the advice on social distancing.

Providers should also liaise with the students and the organisations who provide work experience to ensure students' student charter or agreements, making clear the responsibilities for staying safe and protecting others. By receiving other, the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, and affected the overall capacity, transport providers may also be impacted.

We are committed to ensuring that all young people undertaking a traineeship can spend time on a placement with employer. The main purpose of a placement is learning in a traineeship, which is work-focused study. We have given you further flexibilities to ensure that young people can continue their traineeships. We have reduced the minimum the number of required work placement hours from 100 to 70 and extended the duration of the programme from 6 months to 12 months. The work placement can be delivered flexibly over the full programme period.

Performing arts

This section will help you understand how to minimise risk during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic for performing arts provided.

Studies have indicated that it is the cumulative aerosol transmission from both those performing and attending events that is likely to create risk. This is particularly evident for singing and shouting, but with appropriate safety mitigation and management, it should be possible to reduce the risk to very low.

Activities should be undertaken in line with the guidance and the guidance for working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts.

Performing arts courses, in normal circumstances, may involve a considerable amount of practical face-to-face teaching and assessment.

You should avoid delivering in-person teaching and assessment during the national and local lockdowns where possible. You should consider how you can deliver practical training so that all students can receive a high-quality academic experience in a way that protects both students and staff.

Performances

You should not hold any performances with an audience until stage 3 of the performing arts roadmap. See the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts for more information.

Consider alternatives such as live streaming and recording performances, subject to the usual safeguarding considerations and permissions.

Music teaching in colleges including singing and playing wind and brass instruments in groups

Students and staff are allowed to sing or playing wind and brass instruments in line with:

- guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts
- supplemental principles for safe singing

Until the relevant stage in the performing arts roadmap, routine 2 metre social distancing will remain in place.

Where you present stage in the performing arts roadmap, you should ensure strict social distancing between such stage or groups and between stages or groups and other people such as conductors, other musicians, or accompanists. Current guidance suggests 3 metres is a safe distance for singing and playing wind and brass instruments is appropriate. You should avoid working where appropriate to maintain social distancing.

Further measures that you can take include:

- staging instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors whenever possible
- if indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms, halls, galleries, or other performance spaces, and open windows and doors
- if playing indoors, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation and the ability of the ability to social distance. It is important to ensure good ventilation, advice on this is in the HSE guidance and on ventilation and air conditioning in workplaces during coronavirus (COVID)
- students should be positioned back-to-back or side-to-side when playing or singing to minimise the risk of aerosol transmission
- position wind and brass players so that the air from their instrument does not blow into another player
- use microphone where possible or encourage singing quietly

Extra-curricular provision

Since 8 March, extra-curricular activities, including wraparound provision was made available:

- to vulnerable students regardless of circumstances
- for all students where the provision either:
  - supports and is related to the student's education and training provision
  - is a sport or physical activity
  - is part of the student's efforts to obtain a regulated qualification or meet the entry requirements of an education institution
- for students aged 16 to 19 where the provision is reasonably necessary to:
  - support their parents or carers to work
  - seek work
  - undertake education or training
  - attend a medical appointment
  - address a medical need or attend a support group

Further information can be found in the guidance on safety and hygiene settings.

Providers may also provide extra-curricular activities, including wraparound provision, for programmes of study that consist of study with a combination of a student's education and training provision, and the timetable is not subject to age restrictions. For example, a student may attend a sport club as part of their study programme, but this sport club is starting or hopes to restart business as usual.

From 29 March, outdoor extra-curricular activities and wraparound provision can be made available outdoors, without restrictions. Its students who were aged under 18 on 31 August 2020.

Where extra-curricular or wraparound provision is formally organised, outdoor sports or physical activity can be up to 30 may attend, indoor sports and physical activity for students aged 18 and over is not permitted unless they are a vulnerable student, it is part of their education or training, or it is part of their efforts to obtain a regulated qualification or meet the entry requirements of an education institution.

From step 2 and to earlier than 17 May, students can access indoor or outdoor extra-curricular provision, including sport and physical activity.

Physical activity and sports

Sport and physical activity play a hugely important role in our lives, however, to uphold wider public health objectives, limits on some activities and settings to decrease social contact and reduce transmission continue.

Organised indoor and outdoor sport continues to be permitted where it is part of education or training provision for students.

Disability sports provision and disabled students participation in sports provision continues to be permitted.

In addition, all other formally organised outdoor sport is permitted for up to 30.

Competition between different colleges could not take place until wider provision sport is permitted from the 29 March.

No earlier than 12 April, and in line with wider easing of national restrictions, all students may train in outdoor sports and leisure facilities for purposes not related to education and training but will need to adhere to social distancing restrictions for outdoor sports and physical activity provision.

Indoor competition between different FE providers should not take place until wider sport provision is permitted for the relevant age group.

Residential students may train in residential accommodation for sports (any sport), during the week and at weekends, may which change in their education provision, subject to social distancing. Indoor sports and physical activity (for example film rooms, swimming pools, gyms, golf, tennis courts and 3G pitches) should be timetabled lessons.

Outdoor recreational and social activity should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not. You should:

- ensure appropriate social distance between student household groups
- encourage outdoor training and learning
- use maximum fresh air ventilation through either opening doors and windows or ventilation systems

Student residential groups should not mix without using college facilities.

Further detail on national current restrictions in place for sport and physical activity can be found in the guidance on proposed sports for public and sport providers.

You have the flexibility to decide how sport and physical activity will be provided while following the measures in your system of controls. Students should be kept in bubbles/groups, and ideally should not be required to travel between bubbles/groups for different individual groups. You can hold sports and activity lessons indoors, but should ensure that indoor activities related to health sports, for example practicing specific exercises, should be conducted outdoors.

For sport provision, outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not. You should:

- maintain ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible)
- encourage outdoor training and learning
- stop propose attendance in training and learning

This is particularly important in a sport setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise.

Extra facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, facilities. You should only consider travel to:

- where national governing bodies have developed guidance under the principles of the government's sport guidance
- which have been approved by the government's sport guidance for the list of sport provision including team sport, contact sport and organised sport events

Refer to:

- national lockdown guidance
- guidance on proposed sports for public and sport providers, safe provision and facilities, and guidance from Sport England
- guidance on sport and exercise from the Association for Physical Education and the Health Sport Trust
- guidance from Sport England on returning to sports
- guidance on extra-curricular sports setting

You can work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities, where these are permitted. You must be satisfied that it is safe to do so.

Education and training delivery

What we expect of FE providers

From 8 March, we delivery required, students aboutness of all ages to benefit from their education and training in full. This means we expect you:

- fully deliver planned hours for students of all ages including those with SEND (with or without EHCP plans)
- ensure that on-site delivery resumes. This may be supplemented by high-quality remote delivery recognising that some providers delivered aspects of provision remotely during the lockdown period
- subject to testing, ensure that students spend significant time each week in school and from the start of the summer term more back to the normal balance of delivery, including up to 16-19 students spending time on site every week

Mode of delivery

While FE providers have been highly successful in delivering remote education during the pandemic, we know that remote education is not a full substitute for on-site education. Remote education, however well delivered, cannot replicate the building of social and cultural capital that is a key part of education and training, and training skills in developing vocational competence. Children have been the biggest losers in this crisis, with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that some students have been unable to attend school and their education has suffered from the disruption of some, hopefully their manifest health.

Therefore, which FE providers should but in the significant orders made during the pandemic to remote delivery and the wider use of technology to provide education. Ofsted's thematic review reported that the primary reasons students, and 16 to 19 study programmes, were not able to participate in remote education included: lack of equipment, such as, lack of IT kit for face-to-face learning remote education and access to the internet, and lack of suitable places to study at home.

The following guidance seek to encourage providers to maximise the ability for learners to receive face-to-face education which also ensures that education in digital learning can continue to be capitalised on when remote provision is high quality, needs and responsibilities, and complements face-to-face delivery.

- on-site Ofsted should search for the large majority of planned learning hours of FE providers, and for 16-19 study programmes, should be expected to be delivered on site, and are in place to continue outbreaks in. If individuals need to self-isolate, or where there are elements of remote delivery, providers should:
  - ensure that the remote education provided is high quality and designed to add educational value to courses
  - meet the expectations set out in principle and blended education expectations

Adult students have been offered a wider variety of delivery modes in comparison to 16 to 19 year olds. You should continue to judge the right balance between delivery modes, which students by adult students to ensure high-quality education and training.

Remote and blended education expectations

If you deliver aspects of your curriculum remotely, you should ensure you meet the following expectations:

Expectations on participation

Set clear expectations of students concerning their participation in the remote education they are offered. They know what and how they are expected to engage and demonstrate their learning.

Live teaching

As far as possible provide live online teaching. This is advised because Ofsted and many providers found during the first lockdown that learners generally prefer interactive live teaching and it allows for greater engagement. Blended learning sessions may include recorded lessons.

Feedback and assessment

Confirm with students the different ways in which they will receive individual assessment and feedback when learning remotely to support their progression. The quantity and frequency of remote assessment and feedback should reflect the individual needs and frequency of the remote education.

It should be at least:

- once every week for academic study programmes
- fortnightly if vocational technical or applied general study programmes

Monitoring attendance

Have systems in place to:

- check, at least weekly, for persistent non-attendance or lack of engagement with remote learning
- quickly agree ways in which attendance and participation can take place

When opting for blended delivery, you should teach planned and well sequenced education and training programmes to give students the best chance to develop knowledge and skills. You should also ensure that fundamental principles of effective learning have been incorporated in the delivery of remote education. Such as:

- providing frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or suitably qualified external specialist
- promoting opportunities for meaningful and intentional dialogue, such as questioning, discussing and reflection discussion
- providing opportunities for practice and immediate feedback on how to progress, using digital facilitation or where cost-feedback where appropriate
- using assessment to ensure teaching is responsive to students' needs

You should give careful consideration on how best to support students with vulnerable and disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This support should be in line with your SEND offer. Ofsted's guidance on remote education without support and on remote education for parents and carers has been updated to reflect the lessons learned during the pandemic.

You should have a named senior leader with overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education, who should ensure that provision meets expectations for remote education.

Full and short inspections by Ofsted remain suspended for the long term. Ofsted continue to carry out progress monitoring visits remotely, and early childhood education inspections are taking place in person. Ofsted's inspection methodology and guidance framework provides a scope for an inspection regarding the effectiveness of delivery displayed, for example face-to-face, remote or online, or blended learning. Ofsted's inspection framework expects inspectors to either carry out, or to be ready to carry out, inspections online.

Provision of remote learning to students unable to attend on-site for coronavirus (COVID-19) related reasons

For students unable to attend on-site for coronavirus (COVID-19) related reasons, for example, because they are self-isolating, you should be able to provide high-quality remote education to minimise disruption to their learning.

While students are unable to attend on-site, you should use your best endeavours to deliver as much of planned provision as possible and meet the expectations set out above concerning participation, live teaching, feedback, assessment, attendance and monitoring.

We recognise that for some students the full delivery of planned hours may not be possible, for example where a student is undertaking a course involving practical learning, or where a student is dependent on the availability of a specialist supervisor or with respect to work experience and placements.

Publication of remote education offers

So that students and parents of students aged 16 and beyond know what to expect of you if they need to learn remotely, you should set out details of your remote education offer on your website.

Your offer could include:

- what remote education is available for different learner cohorts (24 to 16, 16 to 19, adult learners, SEND)
- delivery arrangements, such as timetabling, assessment and use of digital platforms, sometimes referred to as virtual learning environments
- expectations of students
- arrangements for students studying courses that require specialised equipment or facilities
- support for students without devices, connectivity or a suitable environment for learning
- support for students with SEND who may not be able to access remote education without support

Contingency planning

For individuals or groups of self-isolating students and student who are shielding because they are extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19), remote education plans should be in place.

You should continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in education are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, you may need to revise your delivery models to short periods of time. To help with this, we have developed contingency plans, which outline how you can continue in the event of any restrictions.

Any decisions that these should be local restrictions in any education settings will be made by central government on a case-by-case basis.

Circumstances where it may be necessary to restrict on-site delivery and move to greater remote delivery

- if a local lockdown is in place
- if a local lockdown is in place
- if a local lockdown is in place

Decisions to restrict on-site delivery for public health reasons due to a local outbreak

Decisions to restrict opening to public health reasons should only take place where there has been clear public health advice to do so, and this is provided in writing. This will be in the form of a letter from your local Director of Public Health (DPH) or their practice lead. Ofsted and local PHE National Health Protection Service's (NHPS) Directors should be aware of this expectation.

When you have been advised by local health teams to substantially reduce on-site attendance in response to local outbreaks or community transmission, contact your local PHE National Health Protection Service.

It is important for you to inform ESFA so that we understand the implications of your plans for communicating the decision. This should not delay any urgent decisions which may need to be implemented quickly.

Decisions to restrict on-site delivery for operational reasons

Decisions to restrict opening may have operational reasons where for a short period of time, the level of on-site learning for students may be less than 50%. Such a reduction in on-site learning may be necessary because of a high level of staff absence or other operational reasons. The levels, students should continue to receive a majority of their learning on site and on-site delivery should cover for the majority of planned learning hours for all 16-19 students.

If it is only necessary for you to significantly reduce on-site delivery, contact your local PHE National Health Protection Service team to discuss the proposed arrangements, any decision, so they can coordinate with the position and discuss the implications for public health.

Examples of circumstances in which providers may find it necessary to make adjustments:

- a significant reduction of the number of 16-19 students who are on-site during hours of planned learning which is caused by staff absence or other reasons, for example, a high level of staff absence

Support for students who are unable to access remote digital education

The [online safety resources](#) review is providing support with devices and connectivity for 16 to 19 year olds. This forms part of a DfE/EC-Indigo Development to help children and young people who are unable to access remote digital education at home.

Although the majority of providers have responded to return to on-site education, we offer ongoing continuation for important students who, for example, need to self-isolate or shield during the period.

You are eligible to receive devices where you have students:

- aged 16 to 19 who are in receipt of free meals
- aged 16 and over with an EHC plan who are in receipt of free meals

Eligible providers need to register devices by January 2021. We are asking providers to make sure they have ordered devices and have received an invitation to order devices via email: laptop@education@education.gov.uk.

Education providers have been based on estimates of the number of:

- students in receipt of free meals in 16 to 19 and those over 19 with an EHC plan where they are in receipt of free meals in FE
- devices that providers already own

You can access conference for the types of devices you will receive, based on the 3 devices of device available and subject to availability.

The number of devices allocated to providers using this scheme works with FE providers. Providers will be allocated devices based on need (Base the local. Base devices local only be used for publicly funded students aged 16 to 19 and those aged 19 and over with an education, health and care plan.

FE providers eligible to receive devices can also receive connectivity support for financially disadvantaged students who do not have broadband at home.

The majority of mobile networks have now extended their free data offer to 16 to 19 year olds. Mobile providers are: EE, Three, O2, Vodafone, Tesco Mobile, Sky, BT, Talk and Plusnetwork provide for which refreshed providers are supplied with data for free data aplitts for students in full-time education. Providers can request free data for students aged 16 to 19 year olds and those aged 19 to 25 with an EHC plan, who are:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are expected to use their devices for home education

The offer is available to providers who have been nominated to order devices through the [online safety resources](#) review.

You will need to submit student's mobile information through our online service. There is an online [guide to collecting mobile information](#).

If you have any questions, please email: COVID-TECHSUPPORT@education.gov.uk using the subject line 'Remote Education Support'.

If increasing mobile data is not a suitable option for some young people, or if request for devices is not sufficient, we can also use request 4G mobile internet devices via the [online safety resources](#) review.

You can also continue to use the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund to provide financial support to help students overcome barriers to financial barriers to participation so that they can remain in education. This may include the provision of devices and connectivity support where it is [Bursary Fund](#) to provide financial support to students who are unable to access remote digital education at home, in line with bursary funds and the bursary support must be based on individual circumstances and needs.

For adults aged 19 and over we introduced a change to the [Adult Education Budget](#) funding rules to allow providers to use their funding to provide digital devices and barrier support funds to purchase IT devices or internet access for disadvantaged learners who are participating in Adult Education Budget funded learning and accessing or continuing their training. The introduction of this additional flexibility into the funding rules will be accommodated within your existing AEB for 2020-21 and will be kept under review for subsequent years. Providers in receipt of AEB funding have devolved contract the relevant regional combined authority or Greater London Authority concerning adult student support arrangements.

Support for high-quality remote and blended education

Get help with remote education service

Get help with remote education provides:

- guidance for teachers and leaders working with delivering remote education
- help to access technology to support remote education
- peer-to-peer training and guidance on how to use technology effectively
- a dedicated helpline and online support guide and practical tips on how to support effective remote delivery

EdTech demonstrator programme

You can apply to support other schools and colleges with a proven track record in using education technology through the national EdTech demonstrator programme. The programme offers a wide range of support including webinars and training on:

- the effective use of online learning platforms
- how to use EdTech
- supporting the wider school/college community with EdTech
- promoting student and teacher wellbeing during remote teaching

Developing EdTech and online teaching skills

The Digital Education Partnership (DEP) offers support for teachers to develop their online teaching skills.

For practitioners who are just starting out with the use of educational technology (EdTech) a good place to start is the Microsoft Learning Hub for EdTech. Microsoft's Learning Hub provides a wide range of resources and training for teachers. Microsoft's Digital Teaching Platform that will give you a good overview of the basics.

The first suite of training modules, and the Microsoft Digital Teaching Platform to find materials on a wide range of topics including:

- motivating and engaging students in virtual learning environments
- adapting content quickly to deliver online
- different pedagogical approaches to online delivery

For teachers looking confidence or skills in using the Internet and devices, ICT4 provides a wide range of free training and resources to support teachers develop their digital skills. The online learning modules include topics on:

- using devices
- handling information
- staying safe online

DfE have also developed a guide for FE staff on EdTech and essential digital skills. Additional support and training is available and provided by the Education Partnership (DEP) and other organisations such as the Enhance Digital Teaching Platform as well as other useful resources. Information on the Enhance Digital Teaching Platform and other useful resources is available on the Education Partnership.

Through the college collaboration fund, we have funded college partnerships that have produced resources to support the development of teachers' digital skills and confidence in delivering remote learning. These can be accessed via resources, college collaboration fund.

The Futurelearn platform includes free courses to develop skills to effectively deliver online teaching. These include:

- how to teach online
- blended learning essentials
- use of technology in online lessons

Microsoft, Google and Apple also provide free training to key teachers use their platforms to hold remote lessons. Certification is subject to fee.

Digital curriculum content and resources

Our provider-to-provider contract support agencies and national standards for 5 vocational subject areas:

- construction
- digital skills
- engineering and manufacture
- health and social care
- hairdressing

They also provide a wide range of models for FE relating to vocational and academic subjects and qualifications.

The Open University in Learning Hub FE specific resources across a range of subjects and topics, including:

MindMaths UK has launched a clinic development hub which provides free learning resources across a range of vocational areas for use with students and apprentices remotely and in the classroom.

Through the college collaboration fund, we have funded 7 college partnerships to produce free, high-quality digital content and resources for the FE sector. The content covers a range of vocational and academic subjects and topics. The content, which is learning objects and resources covering a range of vocational subjects, for 16 to 19 year and mainly been used published. These can be accessed via the get help with remote education service.

Support from provider associations

Provider associations provide a website for resources and support on remote and blended learning.

- Association of Colleges
- Sixth Form College Association
- Association of Employment and Learning Providers
- Holex
- Natspec

Transport

The guidance on transport for schools and other places of education provides information on how to travel safely to school and college. The guidance also includes information on the measures you should take to ensure that students can travel safely to school and college when you provide dedicated transport for students.

Local authorities are responsible for providing home-to-school transport to children who are required to be provided with transport, in accordance with the statutory guidance. Local transport authorities have received additional funding for school and college dedicated transport to support children and students in their region.

Dedicated FE and skills provider transport

Students on dedicated transport services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and generally carry the same group of students on a regular basis. This helps limit the number of other people with whom they come into contact and therefore the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) are likely to be lower.

Local authorities are not required to authorise aging the social distancing guidelines for dedicated transport services. Instead, they should work with providers to develop and put in place action plans wherever possible. This will help:

- minimise disease transmission risks
- maintain consistent enrollment of adults health messaging to students and staff, and ensure that students feel they are leaving college and heading back into the community safely

Dedicated provider-type vehicles:

- coaches requires picking up the same students each day
- minibuses
- services that are consistently used by different groups of students on different days
- services for students with SEND

The approach that you take will need to reflect the range of measures that are reasonable in the different circumstances.

Speak to your transport provider to confirm the approach they are adopting. Check if follows the research and advice. It is important, wherever possible, that:

- social distancing is maintained within vehicles
- students are grouped together on transport
- organised queuing and boarding is in place
- students wash their hands before boarding transport and again on disembarking
- additional cleaning of vehicles is put in place
- ventilation on the vehicle is maintained, ventilation is maximised, particularly through opening windows and cutting vents

In accordance with advice from PHE, young people should not travel on a bus or taxi carrying when travelling to dedicated college transport. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering. A face covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth.

Wider public transport

In many areas, students make extensive use of the wider public transport system, particularly public buses, to travel to education. Students use of public transport services will be subject to social distancing measures, particularly in peak times.

Where possible:

- consider staggered start times
- students should be encouraged to cycle or cycle where possible
- refer students and staff using public transport to the cycle to work guidance for information
- encourage students and staff that it is the best way to travel to education when travelling to it depends on public transport unless they are exempt from wearing face coverings

Work with your local authority to:

- consider alternative safe transport arrangements where you have concerns about students' ability to access public transport
- consider the transport needs of students with SEND and those with an EHC plan

Safe behaviour off-site

You should consider how to reinforce public health messaging to students and staff. Students should be reminded that they are entering and leaving college and heading into the community each day.

People are more likely to follow guidance on how to behave if:

- it is explained that they are expected to take certain actions
- it is explained why the actions they are expected to take are effective

You should develop guidance to promote safe behaviour in the wider community with local community leaders as well as staff and students. You can encourage student organisations to lead in promoting coronavirus (COVID-19) safety.

Temporary staff and visitors

Consider how to minimise the number of visitors to your site, unless essential. Supply staff and visitors such as specic coaches must follow your arrangements for managing coronavirus (COVID-19) on your site. Consider how you will manage visitors, and how to ensure safe sufficient detail to support each contact tracing requirements, and that they follow your rules.

To help you minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering your premises, consider:

- using longer arrangements with supply staff
- agreeing a minimum number of times across the academy year

Educational visits

In line with the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, we continue to advise against undertaking all educational visits.

We recognise the significant benefits of educational visits for educational development as well as mental health and wellbeing and is taking steps to ensure it can resume at the roadmap.

The government's roadmap is driven by data, not dates. The government will only move from one step to the next when it is safe to do so and based on 4 tests in the COVID-19 roadmap.

On that reason, all dates are indicative and subject to change. Advice will be updated in line with the roadmap.

Educational day visits

In line with the roadmap, should step 2 commence as planned, educational day visits can resume at step 2 and no earlier than 12 April.

Any educational day visits that we conducted in line with relevant COVID-secure guidance. Risk assessments and other risk mitigating considerations will be COVID-secure measures in place at the destination.

You should potentially full and through risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be undertaken safely. As part of this, you should consider:

- consider what control measures need to be used
- ensure you are aware of online advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues
- consult the health and safety guidance when considering visits

Domestic residential educational visits

In line with the roadmap, the department is advising against domestic residential educational visits until step 3 and no earlier than 17 May 2021.

Existing bookings

Should step 3 commence as planned, domestic residential educational visits that are already booked may go ahead at step 3 and no earlier than 17 May 2021. We strongly recommend that you should be conducted in line with relevant COVID-secure guidance in place at that time.

New bookings

You can plan for new domestic residential educational visits. Should step 3 commence as planned no earlier than 17 May 2021.

You are advised to enter into any new financial or contractual commitments at this stage. This advice will remain under review and updated at the earliest opportunity.

Any new domestic residential educational visits must be conducted in line with relevant COVID-secure guidance in place at the time and should be subject to risk assessment.

We are working with Public Health England and the sector on what guidance COVID-195 safe residential visits will look like at step 3. We will provide further advice.

International Visits

The Global Travel Taskforce has been commissioned to set out how to facilitate a return to international travel as soon as possible while managing the risk from imported coronavirus (COVID-19) cases. Updated on 12 April 2021. The advice will be updated following the publication of the report.

Workforce

We expect all schools will be able to attend work.

All staff working on site should follow the control of contacts to minimise the risks of transmission. Following the system of controls will reduce the risks to staff significantly. Some roles, such as some administration roles, may be continue to home working, and you should consider what is flexible and appropriate.

Explain to staff the measures you are putting in place to reduce risks.

Discuss any concerns individuals may have around their circumstances with them. We encourage staff to be flexible and try to accommodate additional requests if appropriate.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff will be advised not to attend the workplace. Staff who are CEV should be supported to work from home and continue to receive continue to follow the rules in place for everyone under the current national restrictions. CEV staff who were previously shielding can now attend the workplace. Staff who are CEV should be supported to work from home and continue to receive continue to provide advice on what additional measures individuals in the workplace.

Employers should look to their staff about how they will be supported, including working from home where possible.

You may want to continue to give clinically extremely vulnerable staff their usual duties while working from home. Clinically extremely vulnerable staff may be asked to work across bubble/year groups.

The shielding guidance is reviewed regularly. CEV individuals will be advised in advance of any substance or and data to inform them of changes or continuation of the guidance.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable staff can attend work. While in the workplace, they should follow the control of contacts to minimise the risks of transmission.

People who are with illness are only clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace.

If clinically vulnerable staff have concerns around their individual circumstances, you should discuss these concerns and be flexible in seeking to address them.

Staff who are pregnant

You will need to follow the specific guidance for pregnant employees. Most pregnant women are considered clinically vulnerable. In some cases, pregnant women may have other health conditions that mean they are considered CEV, where the advice for clinically extremely vulnerable people will apply. Pregnant women are at increased risk of complications, compared to non-pregnant women and adults where.

Your employer risk assessment should already consider any risks to female employees of childbearing age in particular, risks to new and expectant mothers. If you have notified that an employee is pregnant, breastfeeding, or has given birth within the last 6 months, your employer should take the necessary steps to keep you safe at work and prison. An assessment may identify something any additional action that needs to be taken to mitigate risks.

Risks to unborn babies that pose, or can lead to the pregnancy, in the first 6 months after, to refer to Workplace risks to childbearing. Most recommended and managed as part of the general workplace risk assessment. You must take appropriate remedial action to reduce, remove or control the risk.

As part of your risk assessment, you should consider whether adjusting duties or facilitating home working are appropriate to mitigate risks.

You should be aware that pregnant women from 28 weeks' gestation, or with underlying health conditions that mean they are considered CEV, are advised to pause dates of their antenatal consultant (CEV). This is due the risk to pregnant women with underlying health conditions that place them in the clinically extremely vulnerable group.

We recommend that you facilitate the same principles for pregnant women as for other your wider health and safety obligations.

Read more guidance and advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) and pregnancy from the Royal College of Gynaecologists.

Health and safety, and first aid

Employers have a legal obligation to protect their employees, and others from harm and ensure their health and safety while at work. Employers should follow the HSE guidance and risks to the courses. Following the steps in this guidance will mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to students and staff and help you to meet your duties to health and safety and equality law.

The health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on first aid in response to COVID-19 which will support risk assessments and provides guidance for first aiders on how they can provide first aid while minimising the risk of coronavirus. Where it is necessary for first aid to be administered in close proximity, those administering it should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

You should continue to ensure that you comply with legal obligations, including duties under the Equality Act 2010, Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and Regulations made thereunder, the Equality Act 2010.

Recruitment

You can continue recruiting members of staff.

You can promote the Teaching Sector Teaching Partnership. The programme supports the recruitment of industry professionals to teaching roles in the FE sector.

If you are recruiting English, maths or SENCO teachers, you can apply for a secure initial teacher education (ITE) place at ITN 2021.

Teacher training

We strongly encourage you to continue delivering initial teacher education (ITE) including hosting initial teacher training in education training centres. We have no restrictions. ITE trainees are included in the definition of a critical worker. This means that trainees can continue:

- with their qualifications
- to go and their placement on placement

Trainees can also continue to attend their school, providing supporting remote provision, developing lesson materials and offering pastoral support. ITE providers should continue to provide ITE trainees with the support they need to complete their education using a range of different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. This should enable them to provide high-quality learning through a range of different approaches and methods.

Where you are hosting placements, ITE providers may be able to give extra support to trainees who are in their first placement, or who need additional support, to ensure they get what support is available. Trainees will be expected to follow your control measures.

Consider the advice issued by the Education and Training Foundation on ITE practice placement advice, which is intended to support a consistent approach across all programmes when maintaining quality.

Supporting staff

All employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their mental health.

Because some staff may be particularly concerned about attending, you may need extra systems in place to support staff wellbeing. Read about the extra mental health support for leaders and teachers.

Supporting vulnerable students

Vulnerable students are those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including those who are identified as in need as a child protection plan or a looked after child
- have an EHC plan
- are assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who may include:
  - students on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or other services
  - those at risk of developing NEET
  - those being in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who have difficult employing with remote education at home (for example, those with parents in key worker roles)
  - others at the provider and local authority's discretion, including students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

During any restrictions to attendance, we intend to keep in touch with vulnerable students and families. We strongly recommend that you should maintain contact, mitigate against difficulties and disadvantage. Vulnerable students are strongly encouraged to attend an education or training setting unless they are shielding with medical advice. This may mean that for some students, particularly those with mental health issues, the decision of their safeguarding and wellbeing needs.

Our expectations for persistent absence and

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent to explore the reasons for absence and to support the child to return to school
- work closely with other professionals, where appropriate, to support attendance
- notify the student's social worker, if they have one, and the student's virtual school senior (where applicable) sponsor that the student's attendance would be appropriate

If the vulnerable student wishes to be absent from face-to-face education during local lockdowns, the school should discuss with the student and their family how they will be included in the coronavirus (COVID-19) attendance monitoring calls (see section 'Attendance' above). Further guidance is available on how to complete the educational setting attendance form.

Where you have full capacity, you should inform the local authority children's services alternative arrangements for vulnerable students and work towards reopening as soon as possible.

You should work collaboratively with other education providers and local partners to ensure arrangements for face-to-face provision for vulnerable students. This includes:

- the local authority
- the social care
- police
- youth services
- key workers

Transition to FE

You should continue to work with schools and local authorities to support transitions. This includes sharing information about vulnerable child and young people, including children looked after and care leavers, with our responsibilities for sharing information.

Some young people might need additional mental health and wellbeing support. Use external support where necessary, and provide this. See the mental health and wellbeing section for more information.

You should assess which students are in their learning and support or employment post-16 cohort. This is supported through the 16 to 19 tracker tool. To ensure better collaboration between providers, local authorities should use the tracker with virtual schools or personal advisers to review provision and destinations of young people.

Consider extra support for students at high risk of being NEET. It includes advice on help young people to sustain engagement, overcome barriers and achieve their goals.

Students who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Clinically extremely vulnerable students are advised to not attend their FE provision, until 31 March. From 1 April, all CEV students should attend their college unless they are in a local area with a local lockdown or have a medical condition that means they should not leave their home (if or clinician not advised).

Where a student is unable to attend education because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we expect you to offer them access to remote education.

Students who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not themselves clinically extremely vulnerable, should attend their college unless advised not to attend by their doctor.

Further guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable is available.

Clinically vulnerable students

Clinically vulnerable students can attend their setting.

Supporting students with special education needs (SEND)

Special post 16 institutions

From 8 March we expect that every 16 to 19 student (or 16 to 25 with an EHC plan) undertakes the majority of their planned hours on site. Special post 16 institutions should continue to allow students to attend in line with their usual timetable.

Where a young person of a specialist post 16 institution or their parent or legal guardian is clinically vulnerable, or lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable, you should consult a recent GP note that the decision on attendance was made. Further information is available on how to complete the educational setting status form.

You may encounter instances where you cannot provide your usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with also specialist training. You may need to use your judgement to ensure that students are kept safe and their needs are supported with force flexibility. Planning around all the immediate options available, you should consider the impact on students, and you should talk to your local authority. You should continue to work collaboratively with families to ensure an approach that meets the young person's best interests.

Supporting students with SEND to attend college

Many students will have health restrictions exceptionally difficult socially and emotionally.

Speak to the student or their parents, to find out if any challenging behaviour or social anxiety issues are a cause for concern, and if so, how you can best offer the additional support. Reasonable adjustments should be provided to support a disabled young person to access education remotely.

Safeguarding young people

You will receive safeguarding updates about new and additional safeguarding concerns. Discuss these with staff and volunteers aware of specific needs. Don't delay have any concerns about a student. It is important that they act immediately on any safeguarding concerns.

Check what the safeguarding and welfare information you hold on students is accurate. Take extra care to help you about any changes in welfare, health and wellbeing.

Continue to work with and support:

- young people's social worker
- the local authority virtual school head for looked after and previously looked after children
- personal advisers for care leavers
- the local authority safeguarding and welfare partners

You have a statutory duty with regards to 16 and 17 year olds to provide information to local authority services to enable them to track and maintain contact with these young people. Local authorities will need to know if young people are not in education, or are unsafe those students with the support they need to reach their potential.

Continue following statutory guidance on inter-agency working, set out in working together to safeguard children. Use the safeguarding in education toolkit.

External resources that can support the safeguarding of young people include:

- SafeLab, which offers support to victims of exploitation - young people can contact SafeLab by email or can be referred to SafeLab by parents/carers
- The Hub, Hope Agriculture service provided by Barnardo's to help young people who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing
- A national list having helpline lines and services and signposting to every activity with under 18s, developed by Kinships College and the National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS)

Mental health and wellbeing

Many students and staff members will be feeling uncertain and anxious at this time. It is important to support positive mental health and wellbeing, which is necessary for young people to engage in learning.

You should identify young people and members of staff who may need additional support. Ensure staff are aware of who responsibilities for student mental health are, ensure they have appropriate mental health and wellbeing support in place. Vulnerable students and those who have been affected by bereavement may need additional support and wellbeing. The guidance on mental health and wellbeing in further education provides helpful with this.

Work with local authorities and voluntary sector mental health organisations to ensure that support is in place. Contact your local authority to see if they have a list of services in place and those available to support young people.

Support can be given over the phone for any students establishing from specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) mental health services and voluntary sector support services.

NHS children and young people's mental health services may be able to provide support remotely. Professionals involved with children and young people, including mental health practitioners, should continue delivering services to children and young people and NHS children and young people's mental health services where needed. Staff working in these services will be able to provide advice and support to other staff working with young people or their carers can also contact their GP or specialist CAMHS online.

NHS trusts have also established 24 hour urgent mental health helplines in most parts of England for people of all ages. If you have urgent concerns about a young person, their family or carers, you should contact your local NHS trust to find out what is available. You should also ensure that students are aware of this service. Public Health England has published guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Wellbeing for Education Return is resources are available for education staff who will have access to locally developed training and support in supporting pupils' mental health offers. These include a short, recorded webinar, Trauma-informed practice, 90 minutes of recorded training on trauma-informed practice, and 90 minutes of recorded training on supporting children with anxiety, skills and practical guidance. It is also for use by education leaders with all staff, staff or NGOT sessions, or for education leaders. The Department for Education's Mental Health and Behavioural in Education Support portal training course such as bereavement, loss, trauma and trauma and supporting for their information and resources for education staff, parents and carers and students.

The Department for Education, Public Health England and NHS England have jointly released a webinar for school and FE providers (pdf) to set out how to support returning pupils and students.

Other resources include:

- Hub, which includes e-learning modules about young people's mental health
- Young Minds' parents helpline, which has specific advice for adults and young people on maintaining good mental wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- the Association of College's (AoC) coronavirus (COVID-19) resource hub, which includes a section on student mental health
- the Education and Training Foundation's mental health and wellbeing support advice for FE staff
- Student Support's mental health and wellbeing support services for all education staff
- free apps available on the NHS App Store for mental health and wellbeing support
- the Online Mentoring of Students guide from Ican, which contains a section on mental health
- the Coronaheart website which provides guidance on how to prepare for and respond to a suspected suicide in FE colleges
- resources to support student mental health and wellbeing developed by the Association for Student Welfare in Higher Education

Mental health is also covered in keeping children safe in education and the mental health clinicians continue to apply.

Consider supporting students with their mental health and wellbeing through:

- remote one-to-one counselling
- encouraging young people to identify their own self-care strategies during this uncertain time, online resources can help
- providing a mentor or other member of staff who regularly checks that students are engaged and supported
- personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) sessions focused on topics including coronavirus, bereavement, loss and grief
- encouraging participation in sport, AoC Sport promotes and supports sports in further education

Residential providers

If you have any students travelling from or through a red list country please follow the quarantine arrangements for returning school students from red countries and consider risk assessment for residential provision.

If a student is suspected of having coronavirus symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19):

- a test should be booked immediately to confirm whether they have coronavirus (COVID-19)
- you should make sure they and their residential group self-isolate

Where you provide residential provision, you are under a legal duty to ensure that your students are safe and well based upon a thorough risk assessment. Take into account the impact on students.

You can read the NCSC guidance on how to prevent germs from spreading.

You will need to put in place arrangements to bring meals and other essential commodities to the areas where students are self-isolating.

If students with symptoms gets a test and the result is positive:

- contact the PHE advice service immediately and follow their advice. This can be reached by the DfE coronavirus helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 between 7am and 7pm, seven days a week

In the case of any local lockdowns, we ask you to follow the local authority's instructions upon where necessary. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

You will need to review your risk assessment:

- have particular needs that cannot be accommodated safely at home
- do not have suitable alternative accommodation

Where students normally travel between their FE education setting and home during term time for the purposes of education this can continue but students should be reminded to follow the guidance.

Students in residential staff need to leave and enter the residential facility. The manager of the accommodation should operate a staff rota that minimises the risk of transmission by keeping the same staff together with the same students as far as that is possible.

Defending who should self-isolate in your residential setting

Residential FE providers are considered as educational accommodation and will have residential groups similar to class groups and bubbles that are used to determine who should self-isolate if a positive case is identified.

You should work with your bubbles/cohorts, a residential group and who should self-isolate because they are part of this group which depend on the physical layout of the residential educational setting.

Consider who shares a kitchen, bathroom, dormitories, and staffing arrangements.

International students

If you have any international students, aged 16 or over, please follow the guidance for international students, coronavirus (COVID-19). This applies to international students in FE too.

Funding, assessment and accountability

We have issued the 16 to 19 funding documents and funding rates and allocations for 2020 to 2021. Given the unprecedented circumstances, we will continue to review the guidance and notify you of changes.

16 to 19 tuition fund

We have provided extra funding for the academic year 2020 to 2020 to:

- help mitigate the disruption to learning arising from coronavirus (COVID-19)
- support students to catch up

The funding is provided to support small group tuition for 16 to 19 students in English, maths, or other elements of technical or academic study programmes to help address gaps in knowledge resulting from 16 to 19 qualifications.

We have issued guidance on how the funding should be used and allocations have been made.

A further round of funding is available for the academic year 2021 to 2022 and details will be announced in the spring.

Funding for remote delivery to 16 to 19 students

The 16 to 19 funding regulations set out the principles that need to be met to count lessons planned hours. 16 to 19 funding is allocated based on planned hours and delivery of those hours are delivered. If you are planning to combine time in the classroom with online learning, you can count the planned hours of this learning.

You should support students to achieve learning elements of the study programme planned. Timetabled and organised. The planned hours have to be realistic and achievable for the individual student. You must be able to give evidence of this to funding auditors.

Examples of eligible provision

As with classroom-based delivery, in virtual funding, you should plan, develop and deliver a study programme that is suitable for each individual student. Students could include lessons delivered online within your normal working hours.

If students are unable to attend timetabled remote delivery for a good reason, such as illness or caring responsibilities, you can count the planned hours of the session toward timetabled lessons and plan these to study outside the normal working hours. You must get evidence of participation and make sure you support and supervise time shifted remote programmes.

As is currently the case for on-site delivery, you can also include self-work in planned hours, including time spent completing tasks, reading, preparing for assessments, coursework to student, either by a teacher or a digital learning platform or a blended learning environment. You must make sure students can access support and receive regular feedback on their self-work.

Tutors or coursework can be set to incorporate externally sourced material. Provided this has been planned by the teacher as part of a student's study programme and is relevant to the student's learning, teachers will be eligible for funding for the time spent on the funding regulations.

The number of hours a student may study during a week should not be greater than 40 hours per week. The maximum planned dates will count for funding.

Ineligible provision

You cannot record students' private study (homework) as planned hours. For example, it would not be acceptable to provide a student with a set of textbooks and tell them to study the material at home. Similarly, it would not be acceptable under the funding regulations allow for meeting time to be included in planned hours, if it is not clear how both reasonable and a small proportion of overall planned hours.

Planned hours timetabled outside your normal working pattern cannot be recorded as planned hours. For example, asking all students on a course to watch a video in advance of their next timetabled lesson could not count towards planned hours.

Evidence

During funding audit, we want you to be able to provide evidence that:

- students have been engaged in virtual learning
- students have been provided with further learning that actually is a regular timetabled learning
- you set deliver provision remotely
- students are meeting their learning aims

There are you have evidence that the planned hours you record are delivery are timetabled and are real. This could include timetables and learning agreements. For example, you could record lesson attendance of engagement and participation, could include:

- records showing that both students and tutors have been logged on when learning is being delivered
- meeting notes for students to join online learning sessions
- a learning log of the session that supports the planned delivery details on the timetable
- communications between students and tutors such as feedback or reflections on sessions

If students are accessing pre-recorded material, we expect evidence that recordings have been made by the teacher and that students have been encouraged to watch the learning, such as the results of tests to check a student's understanding of the material covered.

T Levels

Allocations have been made to providers that will be delivering the first wave of T Levels in 2020 to 2021 academic year. We have published the T Levels: funding and support for applying to become a T level provider of students enrolled on a T level to deliver the planned number.

Read more about the tolerance and T Levels: extra funding in 2020 to 2021.

We will monitor this approach and communicate any revision for 2021 to 2022.

T Level industry placements

We are closely monitoring the situation regarding the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on industry placements.

We are working with providers and delivery partners to establish whether further support is needed.

See the industry placements: delivery guidance for information about delivering high-quality industry placements.

We are committed to ensuring all T level students spend time in the workplace on an industry placement because we know from international evidence and feedback from employers and students that such placements add real value.

We have structured the roll out of T levels so that the first cohort is relatively small, and we know that most students will not undertake their placements until the 2019 to 2022 academic year.

Free meals in further education

You should continue to support students who are eligible for, and usually receive, free meals. This includes students in further education, who are newly eligible.

You should provide support when it is reasonable are studying remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

16 to 19 Tiered providers will a free meals in FE allocation will be able to apply for COVID-19 retrospective additional funding for 16 to 19 students who are eligible and meet the latest period of attendance restrictions, 4 January to 5 March 2021.

Institutions are required to submit a funding claim to ESFA by a specified deadline to apply for additional funding if they meet the criteria. Funding claims must be for meals costs that have been incurred and paid for by the institution. ESFA will provide further guidance and allocation. More information can be found in the free meals in further education guide.

The claims window will open in April 2021 and further details about how to claim will be added to the free meals guide.

On 8 March, students returned to their 16 to 19 providers and normal free meals in FE provision should be provided to students who are eligible. Given the unprecedented nature of events, institutions should seek to ensure they continue to be supported for the short period where they are unable to attend in person. To support the transition back, institutions may choose to provide a hot meal for students who are eligible, or provide pre-set vouchers, or a combination of both. Institutions will be able to claim for additional funding. This is in line with the criteria set out in the guide up until the Easter break, no later than week ending 2 April.

Read further guidance on free meals in further education funded institutions for 2020.

Local authorities have responsibility for providing free school meals to eligible students who are aged 16 to 19 and who are in education. Contact your local authority for more information. This includes young people up to the age of 19.

The funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support food and essential utility costs.

Funding claims and reconciliation

Information is available for education and skills training providers on submitting funding claims to ESFA.

Advanced learner loans

The Student Loans Company (SLC) will continue to make scheduled fee payments to all providers with an advanced learner loan delivery.

Contact SLC if a student's circumstances change.

Adult education budget (AEB) funding (grant-funded providers)

Currently, approximately 70% of the AEB is delivered by 7 required combined authorities (RCAs) (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, West Midlands, North of Tyne, Greater Manchester, West of England, Tees Valley, and West Yorkshire). The Greater London Authority (GLA) prime approvals through the Greater London Authority (GLA).

These authorities are now responsible for:

- providing AEB-funded education for their residents
- allocating the AEB to providers
- considering any provider flexibility in year.

ESFA will continue to be responsible for the remaining AEB in non-devolved areas.

ESFA AEB grant-funded providers

For 2019 to 2020, we:

- introduced an end of year reconciliation process which lowered the threshold for reconciliation to be in line with providers' average delivery (AEB)
- made provision for providers who were unable to deliver their contracts in full, where they considered the reason arising from circumstances related to COVID-19 delivery

This achieved a balance between maintaining provider stability whilst ensuring the government could be confident that it has paid for what it has paid for. Additional funding. This is in line with the criteria set out in the guide up until the Easter break, no later than week ending 2 April.

The funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support food and essential utility costs.

Apprenticeships

Training providers of apprenticeships in order to ensure flexibility and support for employers. During periods of lost or restricted restrictions, placements in workplaces remotely wherever possible. The young people can continue to attend COVID-secure workplaces, if they are able to do so safely. The learning should be delivered in line with agreed plans for a reasonable.

Access to Work, Kickstart, work placements for young people who are completing a traineeship, and supported internships, where they have agreed to work placements beyond the traineeship.

Students taking part in a supported internship who are unable to attend their work placements due to coronavirus (COVID-19) can apply for Access to Work funding until 31 August 2021 for work-related activities where:

- a job coach leads the activity
- the activities develop employability skills

Access to Work can be contacted whether these activities are delivered face-to-face or via digital technology.

Access to Work is not available to support academic learning activities such as English or maths.

Supported internships are structured study programmes based primarily on an employer. During periods of lost or restricted restrictions, placements in workplaces remotely wherever possible. The young people can continue to attend COVID-secure workplaces, if they are able to do so safely. The learning should be delivered in line with agreed plans for a reasonable.

Access to Work, Kickstart, work placements for young people who are completing a traineeship, and supported internships, where they have agreed to work placements beyond the traineeship.

Students taking part in a supported internship who are unable to attend their work placements due to coronavirus (COVID-19) can apply for Access to Work funding until 31 August 2021 for work-related activities where:

- a job coach leads the activity
- the activities develop employability skills

Access to Work can be contacted whether these activities are delivered face-to-face or via digital technology.

Access to Work is not available to support academic learning activities such as English or maths.

Supported interns who were not able to meet the core aim of their internship in the 2019 to 2020 academic year and have continued their internship into the 2020 to 2021 academic year can receive up to an additional 39 weeks of Access to Work support in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Contact the Access to Work helpline on 0800 121 7479 for more information.

Supported internships returners

Supported interns who were not able to meet the core aim of their internship in the 2020 to 2021 academic year may continue their internship into the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

It is not envisaged that all supported interns will need to extend their internship for a full year. Providers should determine the length of time that a learner will require based on the needs of the individual, and in agreement with the local authority. Please note that the legislative and funding arrangements for EHC plans do not allow for a plan to be extended beyond the age of 25.

Where necessary and appropriate, priority for accessing work placements in the 2021 to 2022 academic year should be given to supported interns who were enrolled on a supported internship in 2020 to 2021.

Recording returning supported internships in the school census and individualised learner record (ILR)

Record these supported internship students in the ILR or school census as completed at the end of the academic year 2020 to 2021. You must then set them up with a new programme covering the additional planned activity in the continuing year with start and planned end dates in the academic year 2021 to 2022. This will ensure that students continue to be funded in the unplanned funding year. Students must be on their new programme for the minimum qualifying period to count as a funded student.

You must only use this recording flexibility for supported internships at the boundary of academic years 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022. Do not use it for any other students or academic years.

High needs funding

Discuss any requirement for high needs funding with your local authority. Students who have high needs will occupy places funded at £6,000 per place (£10,000 per place in special schools) in the normal way. See the high needs operational guide for the year beginning April 2021.

Local authorities should continue to pay high needs top-up funding for the students with high needs whose placements they have agreed, following completion or any necessary review of their EHC plans, if a plan is required, and appropriate risk assessments.

Where you need to make temporary changes to the education and support of young people with EHC plans due to staff absence, self-isolation or the closure or partial closure of a setting on public health grounds, let the local authority's SEND team know and keep these changes as short as possible.

For high needs placements and top-up funding that has not been confirmed before the start of the term in which the student is expected to start or continue their education or training programme, you should speak to the commissioning local authorities to see if you can be paid on account, with later reconciliation of top-up funding amounts when the placements and funding levels are finally agreed. This will ensure staff can remain in employment and be available for when the special provision is needed. Local authorities should confirm the funding associated with high needs placements as soon as possible after the placements are agreed.

Examinations and assessments

Exams and assessments scheduled to take place in March for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) that require a student to demonstrate professional or occupational competence can continue.

They must take place in a controlled environment where the risk of transmission is low. You should have protective measures in place, in line with public health measures guidance to support exams.

Our exam support service provides support to help you manage the process of running exams. It also covers VTQ assessments that are being held in spring 2021.

On-demand exams and assessments, such as those for Functional Skills qualifications, can also continue to proceed with protective measures put in place to ensure they are conducted in line with PHE measures, including remotely. For students who cannot access assessments, alternative arrangements should be put in place to award results.

Awarding qualifications for summer 2021

We recently consulted on arrangements for exams and assessments for 2021. The consultation had 2 parts, one setting out proposals for GCSE, AS and A levels and one for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) and other general qualifications.

The analysis of the consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021 is available. For GCSEs, AS and A levels, exams will not go ahead this summer. We have published guidance that explains the decisions that have been made for awarding qualifications in summer 2021 and the actions that providers need to take.

The analysis of the consultation on alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications in 2021 is available. For 2021, we have identified 3 broad groups of VTQs that will have different awarding approaches. Ofqual has consulted on the technical framework needed to implement the arrangements for each of these groups and the qualifications in scope for each. Awarding organisations will confirm the final arrangements by the end of March.

Qualifications used for progression to further or higher education

Exams will no longer be going ahead for VTQs most similar to GCSE, AS and A levels that are used for progression to further or higher education. This will include many performance table qualifications.

Qualifications used to enter directly into employment

VTQs used to enter directly into employment, exams or assessments should continue where they:

- are critical to demonstrate occupational or professional competence
- can be delivered in line with public health measures

Exams and assessments can take place in a controlled environment where risk of transmission is low.

You should have protective measures in place, in line with Public Health England (PHE) guidance to support exams.

Where the assessment cannot take place safely it will need to be delayed.

Other qualifications

For smaller qualification taken for mixed purposes, such as Functional Skills qualifications and ESOL, exams and assessment should continue in line with public health measures, in person or remotely. You should have alternative arrangements available for those who cannot access the assessments.

The Ofqual Explainer Tool sets out how qualifications will be assessed and awarded in the period up to 31 August 2021.

> Students due to take exams can be prioritised for asymptomatic testing using the kits that we have delivered to colleges. If a student tests positive, they should return home to self-isolate.

Performance data

All exams that were due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 were cancelled. We will not publish any provider-level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020. This includes the 2019 to 2020 qualification achievement rates. No provider will be judged on data based on exams and assessments from 2020.

We will not publish data based on exams and assessments from summer 2021 on school and college performance tables or publish qualification achievement rates.

See guidance on school and college performance measures and qualification achievement rates for more information.

Inspection

We have reviewed our face-to-face inspection activity in further education and skills providers. Full and short inspections will remain suspended for the time being subject to review.

From 15 March, Ofsted recommenced face-to-face new provider monitoring visits for new providers who have not yet received a monitoring visit (though aspects of the monitoring visit may need to be carried out remotely).

Ofsted will continue to carry out emergency monitoring visits or inspections if we have a significant cause for concern. We are engaging with Ofsted and the sector on the inspection arrangements and will provide information about this soon.

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