

20 July – Coronavirus – Weekly update to all early years, children’s social care, schools and further education providers

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

Deadline for claiming exceptional costs associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

The deadline to [submit an application form](#) to claim for exceptional costs associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is tomorrow (21 July 2020).

Please ensure all applications are submitted by this date as there will be no opportunity to request an extension to this deadline. Full details on the additional costs that are covered by this fund can be found in the [guidance on the exceptional costs associated with coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Instructions on how to claim for exceptional costs, which includes a short film, can be found in the [guidance on claiming exceptional costs associated with coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Schools will also be able to claim for costs related to providing free school meal support during the summer holidays that are not covered by the [Covid Summer Food Fund](#) in the autumn.

Expansion of the Opportunity Areas programme to support young people hit hardest by coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

The Minister for the Opportunity Areas, Michelle Donelan, has [announced how the expansion of the Opportunity Areas programme will address the impact of the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). Building on the successes of previous years, each of the 12 areas will be 'twinned' with places facing similar challenges to help unleash the potential among young people in other parts of the country.

Guidance for higher education providers on the reopening of building and campuses

We have updated the [guidance for higher education providers in England on when and how to reopen their buildings and campuses](#), to include information on reopening university libraries, advice on performing arts, the latest advice on social distancing on campuses and the exemptions to the regulations on social gatherings relevant to higher education.

Early years data collection update

The local authority early years and childcare data collection will continue to run in its current format until at least the end of September 2020, at which point we will review its frequency and end date. If local authorities know of providers that are to be closed over the summer holidays, such as school-based nurseries, they should count these as closed.

Data collections due to continue

To help [reduce the burden on educational and care settings](#), the Department for Education and its agencies cancelled or paused all but the most essential data collections, services and requests in April. We can confirm that the following collections, in addition to those already in place, will now continue:

- 2021 T Level Statistical Data Gather
- 2023 T Level Registration
- 2-year-old headcount survey
- Academies Accounts Return
- Alternative Provision Free School place request
- Funding Claim
- High needs place change request form
- Local authority moderation manager and strategic lead contact survey
- Land and Buildings Collections Tool
- Multi-academy trust capacity funding grants: assurance
- National Leader of Governance (NLG) Grant payments and assurance
- September Sufficiency Survey

Change in frequency of the coronavirus (COVID-19) email updates from Monday 20 July

From today, we are reducing the frequency of email updates from every weekday, to one email per week which will be sent on a Monday for the duration of the summer holidays. We plan to resume sending daily updates from Monday 24 August in preparation for the start of the autumn term.

The information below has not changed since yesterday.

Covid Summer Food Fund

The [Covid Summer Food Fund](#) will enable children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM) to be supported over the summer holiday period. All vouchers for the summer holidays must be ordered at least one week before your school's summer term ends. The costs will be met centrally by the Department for Education.

Plans for all children and young people to return to full-time education at the start of the autumn term

The guidance for the full opening of schools, early years and colleges at the start of the autumn can be found here:

- [Full opening of schools from the start of the autumn term](#)
- [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)
- [Full opening of special schools and other specialist settings from the start of the autumn term](#)
- [What further education colleges and providers will need to do from the start of the 2020 autumn term](#)
- [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term](#)
- [Re-opening buildings and campuses for higher education \(HE\)](#)

Please read the guidance in full before ordering to ensure your orders are processed correctly.

Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline – change to opening hours

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care.

Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline by calling 0800 046 8687.

From Monday 27 July, the helpline will be closed on weekends. We will continue to be available to answer your calls Monday to

Friday from 8am to 6pm.

Handwashing advice

It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside) but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides.

Please see the [latest guidance and video on handwashing](#) from the NHS.

The [e-Bug project](#) is led by Public Health England and has a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene. E-Bug has published posters on hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes, to display in bathrooms, classrooms and shared spaces.

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