

This is your daily email to keep you updated on the government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19). If you have colleagues who would like to receive this email directly, please ask them to use this [subscription form](#).

Face coverings in schools and colleges to remain in place

On Tuesday 6 April, the government confirmed that [face coverings](#) should continue to be worn in secondary school and college classrooms as a precautionary measure when students return after the Easter holiday.

The following guidance has been updated to align with this announcement:

- [guidance for providers of holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children](#)
- [guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings](#)
- [what parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Free school meals in schools

Schools do not need to provide lunch parcels or vouchers during the Easter holidays. The government provides support with food and other essentials through the [COVID Winter Grant Scheme](#).

This scheme, run by local authorities, has operated successfully since November, including over the Christmas break and during February half-term. The scheme ensures that individuals, families and children who require it, including those eligible for free school meals, can receive the support they need.

During term time, all children should be able to access a nutritious meal at school and these meals should be free to those that are eligible. Where pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals are required to stay at home, you should work with your catering team or food provider to offer good quality lunch parcels.

Further information on the provision of free school meals and the COVID Winter Grant Scheme can be found in our guidance on [providing school meals during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#).

Claims window now open for free school meals additional costs

You can now claim for additional costs incurred from providing locally sourced vouchers to pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals between Monday 4 January and Friday 5 March, when schools were closed to most pupils. You can also claim for lunch parcels provided during this period and up until the start of the Easter holidays.

Claims can only be made for support that was provided to eligible pupils over the specified period and to the values stated in the [guidance](#). Claims should not be made in relation to support provided through the Edenred national voucher scheme, as all those costs have already been met centrally by the Department for Education. All claims made will be cross-referenced with orders made using the national voucher scheme.

The claims window for these costs is now open and will close at 23:59 on Tuesday 4 May. Schools are able to claim directly, or local authorities and academy trusts can claim on their schools' behalf.

Further information on claiming for additional costs can be found in the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) free school meals additional costs](#) guidance.

Test kit deliveries for independent training providers (ITPs) and adult community learning providers (ACLPs)

Test kits that were ordered before 5pm on Wednesday 31 March will be delivered this week.

The [delivery schedule](#) sets out when your test kits should arrive if they are being delivered by courier. If your delivery is not listed, it is because it is small enough to be delivered by Royal Mail.

Bulk Registration service update for secondary schools and colleges

The [register test kits for your organisation](#) service, more commonly known as 'Bulk Registration' has been updated.

A new version of the [digital guidebook](#), detailing the changes made to the service and a [new spreadsheet](#) to use for the service are now available. Users of this service should note that the old template spreadsheet, used by schools before the Easter holidays, will no longer work in the service.

This change was timed to coincide with the Easter holidays and, now that most testing is taking place at home and will be reported by individuals, it should minimise the impact on users of the service.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing terms and conditions for schools, colleges and other further education providers

The [terms and conditions](#) for coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for schools, colleges and other further education providers have been updated following expiry of the previous terms and conditions on Thursday 1 April 2021.

The updates to the terms and conditions include extending the duration of the testing programme to Friday 23 July 2021 and minor changes to the standard operating procedures for students and the workforce to accommodate testing by independent training providers and adult community learning providers.

We have also updated the section on data protection to state that data in test kit logs should be provided to the Department of Health and Social Care when requested and to confirm that providers should not retain data in their test kit logs for longer than 12 months.

We will take your continued participation in the testing programme as your acceptance of the updated terms and conditions. These will replace any previous terms and conditions that you have agreed to in relation to the testing programme. If you have any queries or concerns in relation to these changes, please contact the Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline on 0800 046 8687.

The information below has not changed since our last update

**Department for Education coronavirus
(COVID-19) helpline**

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) is available to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Please listen carefully to all of the available options before selecting the most appropriate option for your nursery, school, college or university.

Look up your unique organisation number (UON)

If you have not received your unique organisation number (UON) for ordering new coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits you can [look it up using your unique reference number \(URN\) or your UK provider reference number \(UKPRN\)](#) or by calling the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.

Private, voluntary and independent nurseries do not need a UON.

Department for Education guidance

Our guidance to support education providers, local authorities and parents during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be accessed using the links below:

- [Guidance for early years and childcare providers](#)
- [Guidance for schools](#)
- [Guidance for further and higher education providers](#)

- [Guidance for local authority children's services](#)
- [Guidance for special schools and other specialist settings](#)

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You will continue to receive this daily email if you have supplied your contact information as part of your formal Department for Education establishment record (for example, in get information about schools) or you are registered as a team leader in the Test and Trace service.

If your contact information is not held formally by us, you can unsubscribe using this [unsubscribe form](#).