

Subject: 18 August – Coronavirus – Weekly update to all early years, children’s social care, schools and further education providers

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GOV.UK



Department for Education

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

A and AS level and GCSE students to receive centre assessment grades

It has been announced that A and AS level students will be reissued their centre assessment grades. GCSE students will also receive their centre assessment grades on Thursday. Anyone who received a calculated grade higher than their centre assessment grade will not see their grade reduced.

The Secretary of State for Education said:

‘This has been an extraordinarily difficult year for young people who were unable to take their exams. We worked with Ofqual to construct the fairest possible model, but it is clear that the process of allocating grades has resulted in more significant inconsistencies than can be resolved through an appeals process.’

‘We now believe it is better to offer young people and parents certainty by moving to teacher assessed grades for both A and

AS level and GCSE results. I am sorry for the distress this has caused young people and their parents but hope this announcement will now provide the certainty and reassurance they deserve.'

Further information can be found in the [students to receive centre assessment grades](#) announcement.

Launch of the #backtoschoolsafely campaign

We have launched our [#backtoschoolsafely](#) campaign to reassure parents and students that schools and colleges are ready for their return in September.

This is part of the Government's wider Stay Alert campaign. You will see newspaper and billboard advertising from today, with radio and digital adverts from Monday 24 August, which will run until early September, alongside wider engagement with the teaching profession and local communities.

The latest statistics from the Office for National Statistics show there is growing confidence among parents that their children will return to school in September, testament to the hard work of school staff.

Parents are encouraged to visit gov.uk/backtoschool for information and practical guidance to help them plan for their children's return to school.

Guidance on the provision of transport to school and other places of education

To ensure that children can travel to school safely, and disruption for all passengers on the public network is minimised, we have published [guidance for local authorities on the provision of transport to school and other places of education](#) from the start of

the autumn term.

This guidance provides information for local authorities on managing the capacity of, and demand for, public transport, and increasing capacity of both public and dedicated home to school or college services, so that children can travel safely to and from school or college. It also provides guidance about the provision of dedicated home to school or college transport in the autumn term.

Support available for schools and colleges to run autumn exams

An extensive support package has been launched to support all schools and colleges with essential additional costs associated with running exams in the autumn term.

Where it is not possible to run exams on their own premises without disrupting study, schools and colleges will either be able to book sites through the Department for Education at no cost, or arrange sites themselves and claim back those costs. They will also be able to use the Government's specialist staffing and events agencies to book exam invigilators.

Further information on the support available can be found in the [guidance on school and college responsibility for autumn exams](#).

Ofsted to begin visiting registered early years providers from September

From September, Ofsted will be visiting some nurseries and childminders to ensure that standards are being maintained and that safe and effective childcare is available for all who need it.

Ofsted has published [guidance on interim visits](#) that sets out how the visits will work in practice and which providers they will be

visiting.

The visits are part of a [phased return to routine inspection](#). They are not inspections and will not result in an inspection grade, though inspectors will still be able to use regulatory or enforcement powers if appropriate.

Pupil mental health and wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing will be a concern for schools when welcoming children back in the autumn. [Mentally Healthy Schools](#) has produced an [Inset day toolkit](#) which focuses on wellbeing. This is an opportunity for school staff to come together to focus on wellbeing ahead of the autumn term.

We have also published [details of additional funding for local authorities](#) as part of the Wellbeing for Education Return project. The project aims to provide additional support to state-funded schools and colleges. This will enable education staff to promote and support the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and students as they return to full-time education this autumn.

Local authorities may choose how to spend the money in order to best meet local need.

Barnardo's 'See Hear Respond' service

See Hear Respond is a service provided across England by Barnardo's and other national and local community-based organisations in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The programme has been created to help children and young people in England who are experiencing harm and increased adversity during this period by providing support to those who are not being seen by social care or other key agencies.

Working with its partners, Barnardo's aims to reduce the

likelihood of harm and ensure other support and protective networks are in place.

See Hear Respond accept referrals from any source either through the Freephone number 0800 151 7015 or via the [online referral hub](#).

The information below has not changed since our last update.

The exam results helpline available from 12 to 28 August

The Exam Results Helpline, delivered by the National Careers Service, will be available from 12 to 28 August to provide additional support to students and their parents as they receive their exam results. Callers to the helpline will have direct access to experienced careers advisers who can advise on the different options available to them including T levels, A levels, GCSEs, BTECs, apprenticeships and other vocational options.

Support will also be available on topics such as clearing, university, gap years and the autumn exam series.

Phone: 0800 100 900

Opening hours: Monday to Sunday from 8am to 10pm

Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline

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:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm.

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 \(HE\)](#)