



GOV.UK



Department for Education

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

## **Additional funding for free meals in further education**

Due to the unprecedented nature of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we are providing additional funding to enable further education funded institutions to continue to provide meals over the 2020 summer holiday to students eligible for free meals in further education in the 2019/20 academic year.

Institutions should continue to provide meals using their existing arrangements over the summer for students who were [eligible and claiming for free meals](#) in further education during the summer term. Institutions need to confirm arrangements and support with eligible students before the end of the summer term. Further information on this funding can be found in the guidance on [free meals in further education funded institutions in 2019/20](#).

## **Guidance on taking exams during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**

We have updated the guidance on [taking exams during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) to include more information on the GCSE, AS and A level autumn exam series and a new section on the arrangements and timing of summer 2021 exams.

## **Funding available for expert help to get set up on a digital platform**

We are offering free, expert technical support for schools to get set up on an accredited digital education platform. You can apply to get set up on one of two free-to-use digital education platforms: Google's G Suite for Education or Microsoft's Office 365 Education.

Education platforms can support children at home, but also help you support children when they are attending school, for example by improving parent-teacher communications and making homework more interactive. The platforms are purpose-built for remote education. Adopting these platforms now will unlock new ways of working to enhance educational outcomes and school operational efficiencies.

[Schools and trusts can apply via The Key](#), which also provides feature comparison and case studies on how schools are making the most of these platforms. It also provides impartial advice on which platform is right for your school.

## **Support with remote education**

We have launched the EdTech Demonstrator programme, a network of schools and colleges funded to provide peer-to-peer support on making the best use of technology.

The EdTech Demonstrator programme provides advice, guidance and training on ways technology can be used effectively to support education, reduce teacher workload and improve communication. This includes training on how to use education platforms such as Google G Suite for Education and, Microsoft Office 365 effectively. Support can be tailored to the needs of your school or college and will be based on your start point, confidence in technology practices and the time available

to senior leaders to engage in this continuing professional development offer.

You can [find out more about the programme and register your interest](#) in receiving free support.

The information below has not changed since yesterday.

## **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 \(HE\)](#)

## **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.

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

## **Department for Education coronavirus helpline**

The Department for Education coronavirus 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 as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday

10am to 4pm – Saturday and Sunday

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the helpline.

## **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.