

Today's email includes:

- information for schools and colleges on asymptomatic COVID-19 testing
- information for schools on the 12 to 15 year old vaccination programme
- information for former teachers who are considering a return to teaching
- information for schools on the school-led tutoring grant through the National Tutoring Programme
- information for teachers and leaders about fully funded scholarships for national professional qualifications (NPQs)

Information for schools and colleges on asymptomatic COVID-19 testing

Thank you for continuing to encourage staff, students and pupils to test twice-weekly at home. This is a key part of reducing transmission of COVID-19 in secondary schools and colleges and reducing case rates across settings.

Testing during half-term is very important and we would like all schools to emphasise this in your end of term messages. In particular, testing at home before students return to their setting after half-term will be key to starting back in the best way possible.

To help pupils understand the importance of testing and to encourage greater uptake, we recommend you think about the best ways of engaging your students in regular testing. We have

provided a [toolkit](#) to support you in encouraging pupils and students to test regularly. The toolkit provides strategies, best practice case studies and online resources to help increase participation levels. This includes sending GOV.UK automatic text reminders to test, working with student groups to encourage testing and incentivising testing through reward schemes. You may also want to ask pupils to bring in their negative test results on the first day back.

We recommend you use the start of the next term as an opportunity to re-emphasise the importance of testing.

Students who find it especially challenging to test using lateral flow devices (LFDs) should be treated sensitively and signposted to [additional support](#) available to help students test.

Information for schools on the 12 to 15 year old vaccination programme

As included in the sector email on Wednesday 20 October, NHS England will soon offer 12 to 15 year olds the opportunity to get their COVID-19 vaccine out-of-school, such as through vaccination centres. This offer will run in parallel to the in-school vaccination programme.

Parents of children aged 12 to 15 will receive a letter from the NHS with more information on the vaccination programme shortly, including information about how to book an appointment out-of-school, if this option is preferred.

The in-school offer remains very important. The [“how to” guide](#), published yesterday, includes useful information and resources for schools. We would like to draw your attention to five key things schools should do to support the vaccination programme:

- send NHS information onto parents, including letting parents know of the out-of-school vaccination route. This is helpful for children who missed the school visit or were unable to be vaccinated due to having had COVID-19 28 days before the School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) team visit
- identify a link person for the immunisation team at school
- make a suitable space available, identified through early engagement and planning with the SAIS teams
- help to maximise numbers of young people vaccinated each day: if possible, consider using break times
- help on the day of vaccination: considering if support staff or student representatives could help move children to and from the vaccination area

Please do work closely with your SAIS teams to ensure the vaccination programme can run as well as possible.

Information for former teachers who are considering a return to teaching

Do you know any former teachers who are thinking of returning to the classroom?

Returning to teaching might be easier than expected with help and support from the Department for Education.

Our [return to teaching](#) webpage offers a range of useful online resources, including [online events](#) specifically for returning teachers, [inspirational blogs](#) about journeys back into the classroom, [frequently asked questions](#) and [top tips](#) to help bring back valuable experience to the classroom.

If they are unsure about a full return, there is the opportunity to engage with the [National Tutoring Programme](#) to provide tutoring or mentoring to help disadvantaged pupils.

If they hold [qualified teacher status](#) and want to teach maths, physics or modern foreign languages, they could gain one-to-one support from a [return to teaching adviser](#) (RTTA).

They could also consider setting up job alerts through the department's [Teaching Vacancies](#) job-listing service where they can search for roles in specific areas, filter results by job role, education phase and working pattern.

School-led tutoring grant through the National Tutoring Programme

As part of the National Tutoring Programme (NTP), we are pleased to update that all state-maintained schools have now received the first instalment of their grant funding allocation for school-led tutoring.

To help schools keep track of the data needed throughout the academic year, we have produced a [tracker and calculator tool](#) that will ensure schools have the information to hand to complete the school-led tutoring: year-end statement. Whilst usage of this tool is not obligatory, we hope schools find it useful to help administer the grant fund payment.

Further information can be found in the [school-led tutoring: conditions of grant and allocations](#) guidance.

Fully funded scholarships for national professional qualifications (NPQs) now available for all teachers and leaders

A new suite of [national professional qualifications](#) (NPQs) will be available for teachers and leaders who want to develop their expertise in leadership and specialisms in teaching. These

qualifications offer those in the profession the best possible professional development.

From October 2021, all teachers and leaders employed at state-funded schools and state-funded 16 to 19 organisations can access fully funded scholarships to undertake NPQs.

We are also introducing two additional NPQs which will be available from autumn 2022: the NPQ for [Leading Literacy](#) and the NPQ for [Early Years Leadership](#).

For further information or to sign up, visit [teacher training and professional development](#).

The information below has not changed since our last update

Department for Education COVID-19 helpline

The [Department for Education COVID-19 helpline](#) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Advice Service, (formally the Public Health England (PHE) Advice Service) are available to answer any questions you have about COVID-19 relating to education and childcare settings and children's social care.

Department for Education guidance

Our guidance to support education and childcare providers, local authorities and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic 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](#)
- [Guidance for parents and carers](#)

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