

POLICY BRIEF

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny

19 October 2020



The information contained within this Brief is correct at the time of publication (Monday 05 October 2020).

NEW INQUIRY LAUNCHED

The House of Commons Education Committee has launched a new inquiry into Home Education. The inquiry will seek to understand the extent to which current arrangements provide sufficient support for home educated children to access efficient, full-time and suitable education, and establish what measures may be necessary in order to facilitate this. It will also explore the impact of Covid-19 on home education, and any particular needs arising from the pandemic.

The Committee will look at:

- Local authority duties
- Whether a register is needed
- Home education benefits and disadvantages
- Support for home education
- Safeguarding wellbeing and academic achievement
- Coronavirus impact

The inquiry is [accepting evidence](#) between now and Friday 06 of November 2020.

GOVERNMENT POLICY, LEGISLATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

Date of publication	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Full range of guidance that has recently been updated to reflect latest government changes	<p>The following guidance documents have been updated to include sections on managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> <p>Guidance for full opening: special schools and other specialist settings</p> <p>Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak</p> <p>Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</p> <p>Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak</p>
Published 26 August 2020	<p>Face coverings in education (New)</p> <p>All pupils, in all year groups, will return to education full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. This guidance is intended to support early years and childcare providers, schools, including alternative provision, and colleges with new advice on the use of face coverings.</p>
Guidance updated 25 September	<p>Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for children's social care services</p> <p>This guidance is about safeguarding and protecting the welfare of vulnerable children. It has been updated this to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect that the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 have expired • update with the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No2) Regulations 2020 • reflect the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 – the rule of 6.

	<p>The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations expired on 25 September. The regulations cannot be used after this date. However, new temporary regulations will continue to provide some flexibility and actions taken under some other provisions will continue to apply after this date, in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adoption suitability assessments • fostering suitability assessments • private fostering notifications • Children Act 1989 representations <p>The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2020 ('the temporary regulations') temporarily amend a series of 6 regulations. The temporary regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow visits to take place over the telephone, a video link or other electronic communication methods, where face-to-face visits are not possible due to coronavirus (COVID-19) • change the rules regarding health assessment in the process for approving adopters and foster carers, as long as assessments are obtained and considered for the final stage and prior to approval • suspend the minimum frequency of Ofsted inspections, recognising that assurance visits will be conducted using a risk-based approach. <p>The temporary regulations are intended to be used where the flexibilities are still needed to provide effective support for children involved with children's social care services during the pandemic. Use of these flexibilities requires approval at chief officer level in local authorities and reason for use should be properly recorded and communicated to the other safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Ofsted take note of any use of these flexibilities. Providers should be ready to explain why their use was necessary, for what length of time and how any possible longer-term impacts were mitigated. This should be available to share with Ofsted, and others such as Independent Reviewing Officers, as appropriate.</p> <p>The records may be used to inform Ofsted's annual engagement meetings with local authorities and in any local authority or provider inspection activity.</p> <p>This guidance will remain in place until 31 March 2021.</p>
Testing	
<p>First published 26 August - last updated 22 Sept 2020</p>	<p>Coronavirus (COVID-19): home test kits for schools and FE providers</p> <p>Guidance for schools and further education (FE) providers on the initial supply of coronavirus (COVID-19) home testing kits for pupils, teachers and staff. Coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits should only be offered in the exceptional circumstance an individual becomes symptomatic and you believe they may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.</p> <p>Schools can order additional tests kits online. Kits will be supplied in boxes of 10, with one box provided per 1,000 pupils or students.</p>
Mental Health and Wellbeing	
<p>Press release - 25 August 2020</p> <p>First published 14 March - last updated 14 Sept 2020</p>	<p>£8m programme to boost pupil and teacher wellbeing</p> <p>A new Wellbeing for Education Return programme starting in September will support staff working in schools and colleges to respond to the additional pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a direct result of the pandemic, as well as to any emotional response they or their teachers may still be experiencing from bereavement, stress, trauma or anxiety over the past months.</p> <p>COVID-19: guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing</p>

<p>First published 09 Sept - last updated 14 Sept 2020</p>	<p>This advice is to help adults with caring responsibilities look after the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, including those with additional needs and disabilities, during the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>Educational psychologists: support for coronavirus (COVID-19) recovery</p> <p>The Department for Education wants to build temporary educational psychologist capacity in England to support schools and colleges returning in September. This guidance is for former educational psychologists who may be interested in temporarily returning to the profession or, practising educational psychologists who may have additional capacity to offer support for a limited period.</p>
<p>Remote learning and support</p>	
<p>First published 07 August - last updated 01 Oct 2020</p> <p>Press release – 01 Oct 2020</p>	<p>Get laptops and tablets for children who cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19)</p> <p>The Department for Education (DfE) is providing laptops and tablets to schools to help children and families access remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19). We're also helping disadvantaged children who need an internet connection to get internet access. This is in addition to the laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers distributed between May and July 2020 by DfE for disadvantaged pupils in year 10, care leavers and young people with a social worker.</p> <p>New remote education support for schools, colleges and teachers</p> <p>Extra resources announced to support delivery of remote education, including 100,000 additional devices and increased peer to peer support for teachers</p> <p>The Government has also today published a Temporary Continuity Direction, regarding the provision of remote education in schools, under the Coronavirus Act 2020. The Direction means schools have a duty to provide education to children at home, as they do when children are in the classroom.</p>
<p>First published 19 March - last updated 23 Sept 2020</p>	<p>Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</p> <p>Guidance for schools and local authorities on school meals arrangements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.</p>
<p>First published 06 July - last updated 11 Sept 2020</p>	<p>Education plans from September 2020</p> <p>This guidance provides information for education providers about Ofsted's phased return to inspection. The guidance has been updated to reflect that Ofsted's inspection of providers on the Childcare Register will resume from 16 September.</p>
<p>Press release – 11 Sept 2020</p>	<p>School governors and trustees say they are prepared for COVID impact</p> <p>Ofsted and the National Governance Association (NGA) publish a study that shows the business of school governance has continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the support provided to governing boards to address the challenges posed by COVID-19 has varied depending on school and area, governors and trustees said. The research explores the views of governors and trustees in the months during lockdown when schools were closed to most pupils. It looks at how those governing responded to COVID-19, as well as the longer-term challenges they face as all pupils return to school.</p>
<p>First published 29 June - last updated 29 Sept 2020</p>	<p>Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</p> <p>This publication provides a high-level national summary of estimates from the Department for Education's education settings survey and local authority early years survey.</p>