

**September 2021:  
Returning to education**

**Schools and colleges  
pack**



Department  
for Education

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# Welcoming children and young people back to settings this term

**As schools and colleges welcome students back following the summer break, we have pulled together a summary of the latest guidance, assets and communication materials to support schools and colleges in their efforts to engage with parents.**

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, in line with Step 4 of the Roadmap, children and young people are now able to enjoy more freedom and socialisation in their education. We know that going to school or college will benefit pupils’:

- educational development
- emotional, mental and physical wellbeing
- social development
- sense of regular routine

While the benefit of education continues to significantly outweigh the COVID health risk to children and young people, many parents will need reassurance about their return.

**This pack aims to provide communication assets for schools and colleges to engage with families, as well as support to supplement their conversations with parents and staff, as they welcome children and young people back into the classroom.**



# Parent FAQ leaflets

We have developed these leaflets to reassure parents and answer some of the most frequently asked questions, as children and young people return to education.

Download the leaflets [here](#).



**Early Years leaflet**



**Primary School leaflet**



**Secondary School & Colleges leaflet**



# Information to share

## Blog

Share this [blog](#) on DfE's Education Hub about key changes at school and college this year:

## Back to school – what you need to know

[mediaofficer](#), 24 August 2021 - [Coronavirus, Schools](#)



Pupils all over the country are beginning to return to schools and colleges after their summer breaks. For many pupils they will be returning with far fewer restrictions than when they left for the summer holidays.

Now that there are fewer restrictions, pupils will be able to experience a fuller education experience, including, access to more group activities, team sports, playing with friends, plays, and taking part in musical groups.

Here's what you need to know on going back to school.

## Video resources



[How to do a COVID-19 Self Test \(rapid antigen test\) - YouTube](#)

[Step by step guide to COVID-19 self-testing - YouTube](#)

- Feel free to share these resources with parents and students.
- You may also wish to create your own videos with top tips for parents and/or highlighting to parent any local measures you have put in place to support the return to education.

[Share our testing video for parents and carers on Twitter](#)



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# Social media images

- Social assets have been created as part of the national Back to School campaign to inform and reassure parents for the autumn term.
- Feel free to share assets with parents and students. You can download all assets on the PHE resource hub using the link [here](#).



**Back with all  
my friends**



**Back on the  
football pitch**



**Back to drama  
and music  
practice**

 HM Government

**NHS**

**Take two rapid Covid-19  
tests at the start of term  
and then twice weekly  
at home.**

 HM Government

**NHS**

**Let's all play our part  
to keep life moving.**

**Find out more, visit  
[gov.uk/backtoschool](https://gov.uk/backtoschool)**



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# Testing: what secondary schools and colleges need to know

When they return at the start of the autumn term, secondary school and college students are advised to take two on-site rapid COVID-19 tests (3-5 days apart), followed by twice weekly testing at home. The tests are easy to do and results come back within 30 minutes.

Students should report the results straight away, whether positive, negative or void, either online at [gov.uk/report-covid19-result](https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result) or by calling 119, free from your mobile or landline. If the test is positive, then the person should also take a confirmatory PCR test and follow the [latest government guidance](#).

If a pupil or staff member has any of the following symptoms: a high temperature, new, continuous cough or a loss of/change to sense of smell or taste, they should self-isolate and take a PCR test immediately to confirm if they have the virus. Even if symptoms are mild or they have been vaccinated.

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 have no symptoms and can spread it without knowing. Taking regular rapid tests will help give you peace of mind that your child is not spreading the virus and will help protect family and friends.

## For more information:

- To find out more about what to expect when pupils return to school or college in September visit [gov.uk/backtoschool](https://www.gov.uk/backtoschool)
- How to order a rapid COVID-19 test for asymptomatic testing: <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk>
- How to report your rapid COVID-19 test results: <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or call 119 (free from mobile or landline)
- How to order a PCR test if you or your child has COVID-19 symptoms: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Please [revisit the COVID-19 guidance](#) for the latest information.



# COVID-19 measures: what schools and colleges need to know

All schools and colleges are advised to continue with regular handwashing, cleaning regimes, and to keep spaces well ventilated. Schools should also have plans in place on what to do if there are a number of positive cases of COVID-19, or if measures are needed to be reintroduced for a limited period. The following COVID-19 measures are now relaxed:

- Bubbles and staggered start and finish times are no longer advised
- Children can again have break times and lunch together and take part in practical lessons and sports with other classes and year groups
- Face coverings are no longer required for staff or visitors
- Pupils and students identified as a close contact will not need to self-isolate

To find out more about what to expect when pupils return to school or college in September visit [gov.uk/backtoschool](https://www.gov.uk/backtoschool)

## Risk assessment

For more information on what is required of school leaders in relation to health and safety risk assessments and managing risk, see the [health and safety advice for schools](#).

## Transport

Although no longer a legal requirement, wearing a face covering is expected and recommended for young people aged 11 and over on public transport and dedicated transport to school and college - and many private transport companies have made face coverings a condition of travel.

When travelling, families may decide to walk or cycle to their child's education setting.

Please [revisit the COVID-19 guidance](#) for the latest information.





# Contingency Framework: what schools and colleges need to know

The [contingency framework](#) outlines the principles for managing a number of positive COVID-19 cases in education settings. This covers the types of measures that schools and colleges should be prepared for, who can recommend these measures and where, and how decisions are made.

Updates include:

- The new thresholds at which you might consider seeking public health advice and taking further action (after initial ATS tests on return)
- Updates to the circumstances in which local health protection teams or directors of public health might recommend you introduce some additional measures
- Annexed guidance for managing cases in settings from autumn 2021

**Please read the [guidance on managing COVID-19](#).**



# Vaccinations: what schools and colleges need to know

School and college staff have now been offered the vaccine. We estimate that most of the teaching workforce will have been offered two vaccinations by the beginning of September.

All 16 and 17-year-olds in England are now eligible for their first COVID-19 vaccine dose. Anyone in this age group can now find their nearest centre through the 'grab a jab' [NHS online walk-in finder](#).

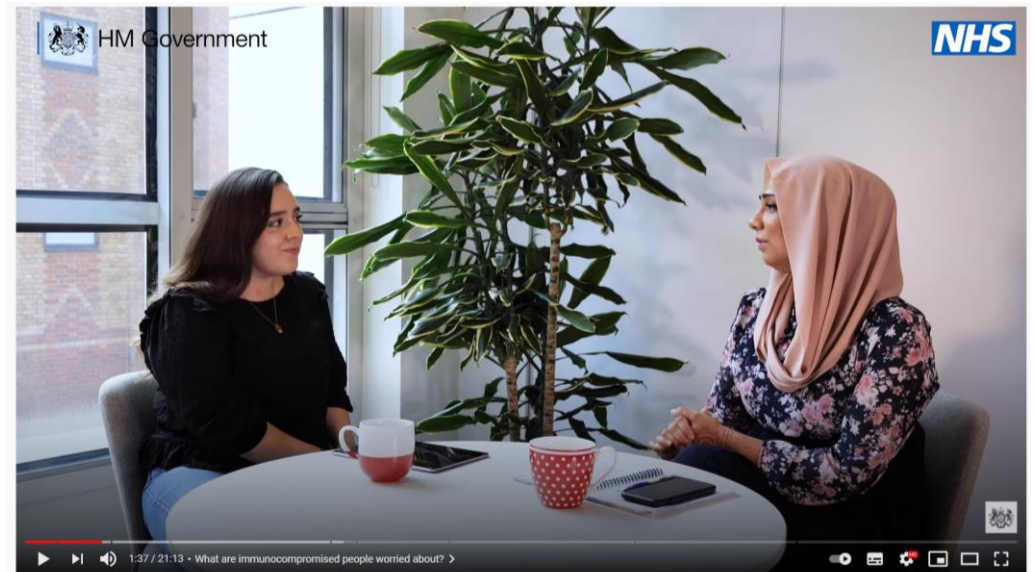
The NHS will also contact 12 to 15 year-olds to receive the vaccine if they were previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable, have an underlying health condition or may live with an individual who is immunosuppressed.

Children at primary school are not being offered the vaccine. Public Health England and the Government's Chief Medical & Scientific Officers agree that there is a very low risk and rate of severe illness in children from COVID-19.

The benefit of attending school continues to significantly outweigh the COVID health risk to children.

For more information you can visit: <https://www.nhs.uk>

## Video resource



**Share this video resource with your networks**

[Vaccines | Q&A with Dr Nighat Arif on vaccine and immunosuppression - YouTube](#)



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# Education recovery: what schools and colleges need to know

There is lots of support available to help pupils and students catch up on any lost learning over the course of the pandemic or to boost their wellbeing.

- Senior leaders and teachers can find out what support is available for their pupils and students on GOV.UK: [Education recovery support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- Tutoring can help pupils make academic progress and catch up on lost learning. Schools can access subsidised tutoring for those disadvantaged pupils most affected by the pandemic through the [National Tutoring Programme](#).
- Schools can use non-statutory [curriculum guidance](#) which offers suggestions to help schools decide how to prioritise elements within their curriculum for education recovery.
- Parents can find out more about what's on offer and who's eligible for support: <https://educationcatchup.campaign.gov.uk/>

## Remote learning

Where appropriate, schools should support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive, to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so. [Get help with remote education](#).



# Wellbeing and mental health support for schools and colleges

## Wellbeing support for pupils and students

Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. You can access useful links and sources of support on [promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools](#).

[Access](#) a comprehensive list of accessible and free mental health resources for all ages.

## Looking after your staff

Everyone working in education has gone above and beyond the call of duty during the COVID-19 pandemic in continuing to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, and in adapting their institutions to ensure all students and staff can attend safely.

The [Education Staff Wellbeing Charter](#) was launched earlier this year as a declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education. All state funded schools and colleges are invited to familiarise themselves with the charter, and to sign up when it is available in the autumn, as a shared commitment to protect, promote and enhance the wellbeing of their staff.

If you need extra help, [The Education Support Partnership](#) (ESP) is a charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools and colleges, this includes a helpline you can contact.



# Stay informed with regular updates

- **Make sure that your school email is up to date**

We send weekly emails to schools to provide the latest COVID-19 guidance. Please check which email address is registered on our national database – Get Information About Schools. [Find out how to update your information.](#)

- [Get email alerts](#) when GOV.UK content has been updated
- **The DfE Teacher Bulletin email newsletter** brings together recent advice and guidance, as well as useful resources and opportunities. [Subscribe to receive the Teacher Bulletin email.](#)
- **The DfE Teaching Blog:** Share [blog posts by teachers](#) with your schools, covering everything from [wellbeing](#), [support for new teachers](#) and [reducing workload](#). [Subscribe](#) to receive teacher blog posts straight to your inbox.
- Download the latest Back to School campaign content on the [PHE resource hub](#).
- **Follow us on social media:** [Facebook](#) , [Twitter](#) , [Instagram](#) , [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#)





# Thank you

And finally, we know this has been a challenging 18 months and you've been working hard to support your pupils and their families, and we want to say thank you.



**Let's get back to...  
breaktime with  
friends**



**Let's get back to...  
school plays**



**Let's get back to...  
school routine**

