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**147 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Dec 18-23 2021**

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**Covid related news and vaccinations**

* **Five to 11-year-olds** with certain underlying health conditions should be offered the Covid jab, according to the government’s vaccine advisers. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended vaccinations for about 330,000 younger children at clinical risk, and also those living with someone who is immunosuppressed. They will be offered two doses of the Pfizer vaccine – in 10-microgram amounts, a third of the quantity used for adults – with a gap of eight weeks. But the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has not recommended that jabs be offered to the age group more widely, saying it needs to consider more data.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation also recommended the normal booster dose should be offered to children aged:

* **16 and 17**
* **12 to 15** if they are in an at-risk group or live with someone who is immunosuppressed
* **12 to 15** who have a severely weakened immune system, who should get four doses
* **All children aged 12 and over** are being offered two doses of the Pfizer jab. They can have a second dose 12 weeks after the first.
* If a **16 or 17-year-old tests positive** for Covid, they should wait 12 weeks before being vaccinated, because of an extremely small risk of heart inflammation - four weeks (28 days) for high-risk groups.
* If a **12 to 15-year old tests positive** they need to wait 12 weeks before getting their second dose.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jcvi-update-on-advice-for-covid-19-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people/jcvi-statement-on-covid-19-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-22-december-2021> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-regulator-approves-use-of-pfizerbiontech-vaccine-in-5-to-11-year-olds>

* The latest Office for National Statistics infection survey estimated that around **one in 20 primary-aged pupils tested positive for Covid** in the week to December 11. In recent weeks younger children have overtaken secondary-age pupils to become the age group with the highest rate of infection. See <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveypilot/17december2021#age-analysis-of-the-number-of-people-who-had-covid-19>
* Head teachers have warned school students could be facing **another year of cancelled exams** as absences due to the rapid spread of Omicron infections continue to impact the education of hundreds of thousands of pupils. Even without lockdown restrictions forcing pupils back to online learning from home, the NAHT says that schools across England are already making preparations for a third year of cancelled GCSE and A-Level exams in the spring and summer of next year
* **Oasis** Community Learning will encourage secondary pupils to **wear masks in class** in January amid fears of a “bigger wave” of Covid, and it said others may follow suit. The trust’s move echoes similar decisions by several councils to take Covid precautions into their own hands, going beyond government guidance, for example Cheshire East and Sunderland are recommending mask-wearing in class in at least some of their schools. DfE advice to schools states: “We do not advise that pupils and staff wear face coverings in classrooms.”
* ESFA has issued “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) recovery premium funding**: allocations. Allocations and terms and conditions for academies and local authorities about the recovery premium grant”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-recovery-premium-funding-allocations>
* The Government is asking **former teachers who have the skills and time to return to the classroom** to sign up at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-calls-for-ex-teachers-to-return-to-classrooms <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/urgent-call-for-qualified-teachers> The Omicron variant is expected to continue to cause increased staff absence levels in the spring term, and some local areas may struggle to find sufficient numbers of supply teachers available unless former staff come forward. It remains important the same comprehensive checks go ahead as they always would for anyone working with children. Potential teachers are therefore encouraged to get the process started as soon as possible and ideally before Christmas Eve to be ready to join the workforce from January. Those who are recently retired, or trained as a teacher and moved career, are asked to consider whether they can find even a day a week for the spring term to help protect face-to-face education. For full details, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-calls-for-ex-teachers-to-return-to-classrooms>

The **NASUWT** warned that the call for ex-teachers “does not address the immediate and acute staffing pressures being faced by schools”. “This gesture will simply not guarantee that all schools will have the teachers they need when they reopen at the start of next term. Far more action is needed to improve the current market for supply teachers, which is nothing short of a national scandal”. See <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/supply-teacher-crisis-cannot-be-ignored.html>

Retired teachers offering to ease school staffing issues are unlikely to be in classrooms when schools reopen in England, **supply agencies** have warned. Agencies say they already have backlogs of potential supply teachers waiting for criminal record checks. The DfE said that the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) would continue to issue 80% of enhanced checks within 14 days, adding that it would "be ready to meet any spikes in demand for its service". However supply agencies say they have candidates who were "at the final stage waiting for DBS" before the government's appeal. "Some of these are taking a month, or two months plus, to actually come back".

**Teacher pay**

* For the Secretary of State’s **letter to the STRB asking for recommendations on teachers’ pay and conditions for 2022**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-review-body-strb-remit-letter-for-2022>

The education secretary has asked the STRB to make recommendations for the next two years at the same time, as part of a move to raise starting salaries to £30,000. Nadhim Zahawi says he wanted to achieve a “significant uplift” to starting salaries, an early career pay offer that “better reflects the challenges experienced in those first few years”. He also says the £30,000 starting salary pledge should be achieved alongside “significant, but sustainable, uplifts to the pay of more experienced teachers”. However, the letter does not explicitly state that the £30,000 pledge will be reached by 2023-24, the year it would have to be implemented to meet the government’s revised target. The government has previously indicated its desire to move to a “flatter” pay structure as it enacts its manifesto pledge on starting salaries. Zahawi tells the STRB he wanted their recommendations to include an “assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders to promote recruitment and retention”. This should be “within the bounds of affordability across the school system as a whole and in the light of my views on the need for an uplift to starting salaries to £30,000.” This is all in the context that future pay rises over the next three years will have to be met from additional core schools funding announced at this year’s spending review.

**Teacher recruitment**

* The DfE has issued “**Teaching internship programme: summer 2022**. How to apply for funding to provide teaching internships to potential teachers in mathematics, physics, and computing”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-internship-programme-summer-2022>
* The **target for teacher training in secondary subjects** has been missed according to new government data, with levels falling to below 2019 pre-pandemic numbers. Overall, 82 per cent of the postgraduate initial teacher training target was achieved in secondary subjects compared with 103 per cent in 2020/21 and 83 per cent in 2019/20. The data also showed that there were 37,069 new entrants starting a postgraduate ITT programme in 2021-22, a decrease of 8 per cent on 2020-21 figures last year, but a 10 per cent increase on 2019-20. This year, three out of five trainee targets for science, technology, engineering and maths subjects were missed. Physics saw the lowest number of trainees, with only 567 new entrants to the subject, comprising just 22 per cent of the 2530 target, followed by computing which saw just 69 per cent (581) of the 840 target set for the subject, while maths entrants missed its 2800 target by 5 per cent. Recruitment targets were also missed for business studies, geography, modern foreign languages and design technology, but exceeded for history, English, biology, chemistry and Classics. The **NEU** said that an additional 18,682 teachers needed to be recruited to restore the ratios of pupils to qualified teachers to 2015 levels, while by 2025 secondary numbers were set to increase by 5 per cent, with class sizes in secondary schools on the rise.

**Learning recovery**

* The online school **Oak National Academy has seen a big increase in pupils using its online lessons this term** - with numbers nearly doubling in one region - indicating the extent of Covid disruption in schools. With many headteachers planning for the possibility of remote learning from January, the Oak figures show how rising numbers of schools have already been making the switch in recent weeks. Across the country, the number of Oak lessons started by pupils increased by 62 per cent over the autumn term, Tes can reveal, as Covid absence grew. In the week ending 12 September, 310,000 lesson starts were recorded by Oak National Academy, while in the week ending 5 December there were 503,000 lesson starts - the second-highest level recorded outside of lockdown.
* **Oak National Academy** is pushing **BT/EE to restore a "zero rating" on its content** so that families can access remote education without facing extra data charges. The letter warns that there are growing concerns that disadvantaged children could be denied access to remote education over winter because they face being charged for data. Oak is concerned about data charges as more than one in six pupils have accessed its lessons on a mobile phone and they are more likely to be disadvantaged. Earlier this year during the second national lockdown, Oak had announced that it was data-free on all major mobile networks - meaning pupils could access lessons without using up data or facing additional charges; BT and EE are the only main networks to have since removed the data free status for Oak's lessons.

**Student welfare**

* The DfE has updated “**Support for vulnerable young people in serious violence hotspots**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-vulnerable-young-people-in-serious-violence-hotspots>
* Many children are **facing their “most dangerous Christmas yet**” as uncertainty over Covid and the cumulative pressures of the pandemic heighten internal family tensions, the NSPCC has warned. A “toxic cocktail” of accumulating financial pressures, disrupted festive plans and strained relationships threatened to create unsafe environments for some children and young people. Fears of tighter Covid restrictions are caused by data showing that serious child harm cases reported by councils in England rose by nearly 20% during the first year of the pandemic, including a 19% rise in child death notifications. There were 536 serious incident reports in England during 2020-21, up 87 from 449 in the previous year and an increase of 41% on the number of incidents recorded five years ago. Last Christmas, the NSPCC’s childline provided 6,000 counselling sessions over the festive period, with the charity not expecting to record a lower figure during the weeks ahead.
* The DfE has issued “**Holiday activities and food programme**. Information for local authorities who will receive funding to support disadvantaged children during the 2022 Easter, summer and Christmas holidays”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme> New data from **Childcare Works** shows almost half a million children eligible for free school meals received meals, exercise, enriching activities like music, sports or cooking classes and opportunities to improve their social skills during the summer holidays. The Government’s Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) clubs reached over 600,000 children and young people in England in total, and councils are offering clubs for the first time this year over the Christmas break. The new data confirms that over 495,000 participating in the HAF clubs this summer were eligible for free school meals, with the remainder of the 600,000 attendees considered to be otherwise in need. The new data confirms that over 495,000 participating in the HAF clubs this summer were eligible for free school meals, with the remainder of the 600,000 attendees considered to be otherwise in need. HAF clubs – extended to become a national programme in 2021 – provide free activities and meals for children eligible for free school meals, with flexibility for councils about how they can best serve the needs of children and families in their area. See <https://hempsalls.com/childcare-works-haf> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>
* Research published by Family Action and Magic Breakfast shows evidence that **breakfast clubs** - run in schools to provide free, healthy breakfasts to children from low-income families - have had a positive impact on pupils’ behaviour, educational attainment and their eating habits. To date, more than 1,200 schools have signed up to the new National School Breakfast Programme to run from next September to 2023, run by Family Action. Backed by up to £24 million over two years, the new breakfast clubs programme, run by Family Action, builds on this positive impact it has already had on participating children and will look to support 2,500 schools up to 2023. See <https://www.family-action.org.uk/content/uploads/2021/12/NSBP-final-impact-report.pdf> <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/food/breakfast-support/breakfast-at-home/>

**Academies and Trusts**

* The DfE has issued “Information on all **academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges (UTCs) open in England, and those in the process of opening**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-developmentb>
* ESFA has issued information for **academy trusts to complete their accounts** **return**. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-accounts-return>
* ESFA has issued “Information and forms for **academy trust chairs of trustees to apply for a suitability check**, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-chair-suitability-checks>
* For summaries of the most interesting points from the “**Academy Schools Sector in England, Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts up to 31.8.2020**”, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/academy-sector-annual-reports-2020-finances/> <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/academy-trust-bailouts-dfe-esfa-finances-accounts/>
* 52.5 per cent of trusts (1,535) **paid at least one person between £100,000 and £150,000** in 2018-19. This increased to 63.5 per cent (1,772 trusts) in 2019-20. Around one in six academy trusts paid their top earners more than £150,000 in pay and pension contributions. The number of academy trusts paying these high-level packages increased from 340 trusts (11.6 per cent) in 2018-19 to 473 (17 per cent) in the most recent set of figures for 2019-20.
* The number of schools **converting to academies** fell by almost 50 per cent last year, recent accounts show, with the government blaming the impact of Covid-19. A new report published by the DfE reveals that 474 schools converted to academy status in 2019-20, compared with 908 in 2018-19.
* The DfE has issued lists of **local authorities seeking academy and free school proposers**, and of all academies and free schools already set up. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-school-proposals>
* DFE has issued **model documents for PFI schools converting to academy status**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-finance-initiative-pfi-academies-model-documents>

**School finance**

* The DfE has issued “**Financial Year 2020-21 LA and school expenditure**”, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/la-and-school-expenditure/2020-21>
* In the financial year 2020-21, LA maintained school income was £23.8 billion; comparable to 2019-20. Total gross expenditure was £23.1 billion; 3% lower than in 2019-20 (£23.7 billion).
* 50% of LA maintained school expenditure was on teaching staff.
* The proportion of schools in deficit decreased to 8.4% in 2020-21 from 12.0% in 2019-20; the biggest decrease since records began in 2003. This is believed to be largely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
* Schools reduced their spending on areas such as supply staff and supplies, and they may also have held back planned expenditure on maintenance.” School spending dropped sharply on staff development and training (-37 per cent), learning resources (-33 per cent), supply staff (-28 per cent), exam fees and catering (both -24 per cent), energy (-14 per cent), water and sewage (-12 per cent). However, school spending on ICT leapt by 16 per cent as learning moved online. And self-generated income halved, falling by £1.1 billion as catering and lettings revenue collapsed.
* While schools have enjoyed huge savings in some areas of spending, costs have soared in others, and certain income streams have been wiped out. The report highlights “substantial variation” across the country in the number of schools in financial trouble. Analysis shows seven council areas had every single maintained secondary school in deficit, while 67 had none.
* LAs spent £41.5 billion on schools, other education, children’s and young people’s services in 2020-21; an increase of 3% from 2019-20. Of which, two thirds (£27.4 billion) was spent on schools; the same proportion as 2019-20.

**DFE**

* For the **DfE Consolidated annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021**, see <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1041620/CCS0121879180-001_DFE_Annual_Report_20-21_Web-Accessible.pdf>
* In a section setting out “significant risks”, the department warned its “approach to addressing lost learning and the implementation of education recovery, digital strategy, and remote education, at school/college level may be insufficient to adequately respond to the lost learning that has occurred during the pandemic”.
* The DfE has also updated the level of risk that a “sustained cyber‑attack could result in the loss of access to critical systems and services, as well as a loss of critical departmental data” to “likely” as of March this year.
* The risk that pupils will have poor quality outcomes, particular in challenging or disadvantaged schools, as a result of a lack of high-quality teachers remains “likely”, as it was in March 2020.

**Education News for schools**

* For the updated “**Ofqual: rolling update**. Information on qualifications which have been disrupted by coronavirus (COVID-19)”, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>
* ESFA has issued “**ESFA: course directory**. The course directory contains information on courses offered by learning providers who are contracted with the ESFA”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-course-directory>
* For a useful summary of **SEND news**, see <https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1440/Rona-Tutts-SEND-summary-December-2021>

**Early years and primary**

* The DfE has issued “How local authorities should collect **key stage 1 (KS1) assessments data** from all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools”, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-1-assessments> and “**Technical specification** defining the scope of the 2022 key stage 1 (KS1) assessments data collection from local authorities”, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ks1-assessments-data-collection-2022-technical-specification>
* The DfE has issued “How local authorities should collect **phonics screening** check data from all local-authority-maintained schools, academies and free schools”, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/phonics-screening-check-data-collection> and “Phonics screening data collection 2022: **technical specification**”, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-data-collection-2022-technical-specification>

**School management**

* The DfE has issued “How to arrange an effective **external review of governance** for your school or academy trust, and improve the performance of your board”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/external-reviews-of-governance-whats-involved>
* The DfE has updated “**Complete the school census**” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
* ESFA has issued “How to use **the Recruit an apprentice service** to create, post and manage apprenticeship adverts”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-vacancies>
* For the latest edition of **ESFA Inform**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-inform>
* ESFA has issued “**Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant** 2021 to 2022”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2021-to-2022>
* The DfE has updated “**The risk protection arrangement** (RPA) for schools”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools>

**Post 16**

* The DfE f has issued “**College collaboration fund** (CCF). A peer-support programme to help FE colleges share good practice and develop quality improvement priorities”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/college-collaboration-fund-ccf> and for a **summary of the projects** developed using CCF funding and resources developed by lead and partner colleges, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-collaboration-fund-ccf-projects>
* ESFA has issued “**Provision recognised as higher education for funding purposes**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-recognised-as-higher-education-for-funding-purposes>
* ESFA has issued information for schools, colleges, local authorities and independent learning providers about **16 to 19 funding arrangements**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/funding-education-for-16-to-19-year-olds>
* ESFA has issued:
* **T Levels: next steps for providers**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/t-levels-next-steps-for-providers>
* **T Level Transition Programme Framework for Delivery 2022 to 2023**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-transition-programme-framework-for-delivery-2022-to-2023>
* **Providers selected to deliver T Levels and providers planning to deliver the T Level Transition Programme**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-selected-to-deliver-t-levels>

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