

# Ealing COVID-19 Governance Update (Spring 1)

Friday 8 January 2021

With the move to Tier 5 announced by the Prime Minister, Monday 4 January 2021, our first spring term COVID-19 governance update, provides you with a summary of key information relevant to the current national lockdown and DfE [actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#) (7 January). This is a constantly changing landscape, and for some areas we are still waiting for detailed DfE guidance. Up to date information, once available will be posted onto the EGFL [COVID 19](#) section.

## Provision

For the period of national lockdown, schools, alternative provision (AP), special schools, colleges, wraparound childcare and other out-of-school activities for children should allow only [vulnerable children](#) and young people and the children of [critical workers](#) to attend. All other pupils should not attend and should learn remotely until at least the February half term.

Early years provision should continue to remain open to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetable hours. This includes early years registered nurseries and childminders, maintained nursery schools, as well as nursery classes in schools and other pre-reception provision on school sites. Only vulnerable children and children of critical workers should attend on-site reception classes.

## Risk assessments

It is a legal requirement that schools revisit and update their risk assessments to take account of any changing circumstances i.e. It should be a 'living document.' Ealing will be updating the risk assessment template [on EGfL](#) and the individual [staff risk assessment template](#) to reflect changes to Government guidance. As part of reviewing risk assessments, you may also wish to review [safeguarding procedures](#) for pupils learning remotely in addition to health and safety protocols.

## School site occupancy

For some schools there has been increased demand from parents of [critical workers](#) to send their children to school during this lockdown. Part of the school's risk assessment will be to balance the need for places with ensuring safety. This may mean school's having to prioritise places. The DfE has confirmed that draft guidance is currently with PHE re what constitutes safe occupancy. Until then bubbles should be kept as small as possible as appropriate for your school's context.

## Vulnerable pupil attendance

Vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining. It is important during this period all vulnerable children can attend wherever possible and there are measures to monitor absence. Social workers will continue to support schools as appropriate. [EGFL information on vulnerable groups](#)

## Free school meals contingency guidance

Extra funding will be provided to support schools to provide food parcels or meals to eligible pupils. The national voucher scheme will also re-open so that in the event schools cannot offer food parcels or provide an alternative local solution, every child can access free school meals while they are learning at home. Details of this are yet to be released. Ealing [COVID-19 FSM](#) information.

## Asymptomatic testing in schools

- Weekly testing for secondary, college, special and AP staff where they are working on site
- Two tests, three to five days apart, to students in year 7 and above attending in person (critical worker and vulnerable children)
- Daily testing for staff and students in the groups above if they are a close contact of a positive case where they are working on site
- [Ealing support and information on EGfL](#)

The DfE say they are, continuing to explore the rollout of testing for staff in primary settings in the second half of January. They have also said they will set out guidance for further increase in testing in preparation for a wider return of more pupils to school in due course.

## Public tests and examinations

- Public exams and assessments scheduled to take place in January will go ahead as planned
- Summer GCSE or A-level exams will not take place. The Secretary of State will work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements. More details will be published in due course, but it has been confirmed they will be teacher assessed
- The Government has said that schools can continue with the vocational and technical exams, where they judge it is right to do so
- KS1 and KS2 tests and assessments been cancelled for 2021.

## Remote education

The DfE have set out [expectations](#) with regard to remote education in addition to a requirement to [publish information](#) about remote education provision on the school website by 25 January 2021.

The guidance for remote learning: KS1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children; KS2: 4 hours a day; KS3 & 4: 5 hours a day. There should also be systems in place for checking, at least weekly, whether pupils are engaging with their work, and informing parents immediately where engagement is a concern. [Support for remote learning](#) on EGFL.

## SEND

DfE guidance on [Supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)](#)  
[Ealing SEND COVID support and information](#)

## Allocation and ordering of Wi-Fi-enabled devices

All secondary schools should have been invited to order through the [Get help with technology service](#). DfE will invite primary schools to order over the coming weeks, starting with the most disadvantaged areas in England. DfE will contact each school by email as soon as they can order.

## Increasing data allowances on mobile devices to support disadvantaged children

The DfE have launched [a scheme which temporarily increases mobile data allowances](#) for pupils who:

- Do not have fixed broadband at home
- Cannot afford additional data for their devices
- Are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education

Children with access to a mobile phone on one of the following networks might be able to benefit - BT, EE, O2, Vodafone, Three, Smarty, Virgin Mobile, Tesco Mobile and Sky Mobile. Other providers may join the scheme at a later stage.

## **National Tutoring Programme (NTP) update**

The NTP will operate throughout lockdown. [NTP Tuition Partners](#) are offering online tutoring for disadvantaged pupils at home, as well as continuing to offer support to vulnerable pupils in schools. It is also possible for primary, secondary, special schools and alternative provision to book blocks of tutoring to start later in the year.

## **The wellbeing of staff, especially school leaders**

We should not underestimate the huge amount of work and strain currently on school leaders and the importance of considering their health and wellbeing. Getting the support right for others is not easy but the support and encouragement received from governors can go a long way. Please can you ensure there is a focus on this for all staff but especially your headteacher/ senior leaders.

## **Other information in this edition:**

- Brexit
- Ealing governor / trustee recruitment event
- DfE funded governance incl. resource management training
- Ealing governance training

## **Brexit**

The transition period for Britain leaving the EU, ended on 31 December 2020. The existing school guidance re Brexit was withdrawn from the .GOV site but summary details for some areas are below. Full details on the [Brexit transition arrangements:](#)

- [Schools admissions: applications for overseas children](#)
- [Qualified teacher status: qualify to teach in England](#)
- [Data protection for education providers.](#)

## **Ealing governor / trustee recruitment event - save the date**

Together with [Governors for Schools](#) we will be holding our [annual governor recruitment event](#), **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 6.15pm - 7.30pm**. Due to current COVID-19 restrictions we will be hosting the event on line. More details will be available nearer to the event.

## **DfE funded governance training (until March)**

- DfE professional development programmes funding for governors, trustees and clerks is ending 31 March 2021. The deadline to register is **1<sup>h</sup> March 2021**. For details see [NGA](#)
- DfE funded training webinars re [planning and ensuring long term financial sustainability](#).

## **Ealing governance training 2020/21**

Details of governance training this spring half term [Ealing governance training January/February](#) All training 20120/21 on [Ealing CPD online](#) and the [ELP governance development programme 2020/21](#) To support with the current lockdown, we will be running a governance question time session in the near future – details TBC next week.

This next half term will undoubtedly be challenging for us all, but particularly school leaders. As board members your continued support for your school with the changing landscape and speed of decisions needed to be taken, as always, is very much appreciated. Thank you.

Best wishes and stay safe

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