

Ealing COVID-19 Governance Update (Spring 2)

Friday 22 January 2021

This Ealing COVID-19 governance update, provides you with a summary of current key information relevant to DfE [actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#). This week we ran a governance COVID-19 question time. The slides covering key messages are [available on EGfL](#) with key points below.

Key messages

- Schools must continue to implement control measures and to promote [lockdown messaging](#) to the school community to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission. This is key to keeping our schools safe and operational
- It is still a legal requirement to revisit and update risk assessments to take account of any changing circumstances - it should be a 'living document.' Prioritisation of critical worker children – schools may need to review criteria in line with risk assessments to prepare if after half term schools remain closed
- Schools should continue to follow the London Coronavirus Response Cell ([LCRC](#)) [resource pack](#) and [Ealing flowchart](#) if there are cases of Covid-19 in schools
- The school should continue to report positive cases for staff and pupils who are at school

This is a constantly changing landscape so for the most up to date information please see the EGfL [COVID 19](#) section. [Ealing borough COVID information](#) and [Ealing Covid-19 cases dashboard](#)

Asymptomatic testing in schools

- Mass testing in schools to find asymptomatic cases, is currently taking place for staff and pupils under trained supervision on secondary school sites. DfE [guidance](#)
- Primary schools should have received lateral flow tests (LFT) home testing kits to commence testing of staff attending primary school sites. Staff will be asked to take their test kits home and carry out the test twice a week and report as per the instructions in the kit
- Testing is voluntary, but those who are eligible for tests are strongly encouraged to participate to reduce the risk of transmission within schools. School staff can access LFT testing at Ealing mass testing sites – see [Ealing info on sites](#)
- Ealing School Nursing Service is providing on-line training at 4pm from 20 to 29 January. Further details are available on [EGfL](#).
- NB. Asymptomatic testing does not replace the Government's current testing policy for those with symptoms – they should continue to [book a test](#) or call 119.

Indemnity insurance - Covid-19 testing

- Information on [indemnity insurance information for Covid-19 testing](#) in schools can be found on EGfL. In summary, the Ealing scheme insurers, QBE, have agreed to extend the medical malpractice policy held with them to include LFT device tests. A copy of the insurance indemnity extension is available at the above link. Please advise Laurence Field FieldL@ealing.gov.uk if there are any changes to reflect the testing position at your school
- It is understood that RPA will indemnify members if a claim is brought by a third-party including pupils or employees however, school should contact their individual insurance provider to confirm their cover.

Finance

- Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year, as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure.

- DfE guidance on [exceptional costs associated with coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance](#)

Early Years Census and funding implications (census day 21 January)

- Advice is to record all children who should be attending on the census day i.e. where a child would normally be expected to attend early years provision but is not able to due to the impact of COVID-19, the expected hours should be recorded in the census. This includes children who are absent due to their own personal circumstances or the operation of their early years setting, and includes children who have previously attended the provision and children who were expected to start attending the provision in January
- We are seeking further clarification and guidance for nurseries and what constitutes a ‘fully’ open nursery and if not ‘fully’ open will this impact on funding?

Free school meals (FSM) and locally arranged vouchers

- Ealing information on [free school meals during lockdown beginning January 2021](#) and [DfE Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): free school meals guidance](#)
- Schools can work with their school catering team or food provider to provide lunch parcels to eligible free school meal pupils who are at home or use other local arrangements which might include vouchers for local shops and supermarkets. The relaunched national voucher scheme is now also now available
- Schools will continue to receive their expected funding for benefits-related FSMs throughout this period. To recognise the additional cost of provision for pupils at home, schools will be able to claim additional funding:
 - Up to £3.50 per eligible pupil, per week, where food parcels are being provided
 - Up to £15 per eligible pupil, per week, where vouchers for local shops or supermarkets are being provided
- Further details on how and when additional costs can be reclaimed will be provided shortly but the DfE has confirmed schools choosing to use local voucher schemes will have the costs fully refunded with no conditions such as the position on financial reserves. Schools should keep an audit trail though
- Over half term the winter grant scheme will operate for eligible families (as over Christmas a £15 voucher)
- No expectation currently for schools to remain open at half term. The Family Information Service are surveying schools to identify provision across the borough and will provide to schools to support families.

Remote education

- Remote education should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will include both recorded or live direct teaching and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. The amount of remote education provided should be, as a minimum
 - Key Stage 1: Three hours a day on average with less for younger children
 - Key Stage 2: Four hours a day
 - Key Stages 3 and 4: Five hours a day
- There should also be systems in place for checking, at least weekly, pupil engagement, and informing parents immediately where engagement is a concern
- Remote education provision must be published on the school website by 25 January
- Ealing Learning Partnership [support for remote education](#) including EdTech and [Ealing SEND COVID support and information](#)

Laptops and data allowances

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

Public exams and assessments

- Summer GCSE or A-level exams will not take place
- The Secretary of State will work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements using teacher assessment - based on what they have learnt, rather than against content they have not had a chance to study
- The Secretary of State has asked Ofqual to explore the possibility of providing externally set tasks or papers
- Schools to undertake quality assurance of their teachers' assessments with some external checks to support fairness and consistency. Changes to grades should be the exception
- Schools can continue with the vocational and technical exams, where they judge it is right to do so
- KS1 teacher assessments; KS2 tests and teacher assessments; phonics screening check; multiplication tables tests, and all statutory trialling have been cancelled for 2021. EYFS profile need only happen if practicable - not a requirement this year.

Ofsted

- All planned inspection activity will be undertaken remotely until after the February half term
- Ofsted has confirmed that they will inspect schools rated 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' as planned. They will also follow up on complaints raised by parents across all grades of school in order to resolve issues
- As these inspections will not involve an on-site visit, they will be unable to cover the full scope of a monitoring inspection
- Ofsted will publish details of the inspection process shortly.

Staffing

- [Ealing update on staffing guidance](#) reflects the latest [DfE advice](#) in the current lockdown. The revisions to the guidance impact in particular on vulnerable groups (e.g. clinically extremely vulnerable staff, clinically vulnerable staff and staff who are pregnant) and those living with vulnerable groups

- Some members of staff will live/be in the same household/bubble as people who are shielding due to being 'extremely clinically vulnerable' and may be understandably concerned about protecting those who are shielding. Individual personal circumstances such as these should be considered when assessing the individual staff members safety in the workplace and how they might be most safely and effectively deployed at this time.

Wellbeing

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 mindful it should not be something that will feel like an extra burden / responsibility.

Parent governor elections

- Whilst there is no updated DfE advice, the [NGA](#) advice is that they recognise that most schools and GBs will now, not be able to hold or complete governor /trustee elections. They advocate a pragmatic approach to the timing of elections and for the time being continuing to function with vacancies where necessary and practical. Unfortunately, legislation does not allow for any electronic elections - the same as general elections
- Where appropriate, nominations can be carried out. If there are more candidates than places, parents could be advised elections would be held as soon as practical and safe. If the exact required number of nominations or less were received, then there is no requirement for an election
- As soon as it is safe to do so elections can be held - subject to risk assessment.

Complaints during lockdown

[DfE Handling complaints during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) whilst the DfE acknowledge that the pressures caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) might affect schools' usual processes and timescales for complaint, they still recommend schools should still consider them, particularly those relating to the provision of remote education. Ealing training on this [Wednesday 27 January](#).

Ealing governor / trustee recruitment event - Thursday 11 March, 6.15 - 7.30pm

Together with [Governors for Schools](#) we will be holding our [annual governor recruitment event](#). Due to current COVID-19 restrictions we will be hosting the event on-line. More details will be available nearer to the event.

Ealing governance training and support 2020/21

- All training 20120/21 on [Ealing CPD online](#) and the [ELP governance development programme 2020/21](#)
- Next Chairs' / lead governors briefing – Thursday 4 February, 6.00-7.30pm
- Next learning conversation session – Tuesday 9th February, 6.30-8.00pm – topic TBC
- Please e mail governors@ealing.gov.uk to suggest what you would like to discuss with colleague governors.

Best wishes and stay safe

Therese and Michelle

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