



This is your daily email to keep you updated on the government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Secretary of State's Statement to Parliament

The Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, has today made a [statement to the House of Commons](#) about the closure of schools in England during the national lockdown.

He stated that schools have not suddenly become unsafe but limiting the number of children and students who attend them is essential to curb the escalating cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) throughout the country and prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed.

The key measures to support the education of children and young people during the national lockdown include:

- early years settings remain open to all
- schools open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers
- clear requirements for schools to provide high-quality remote education
- stepping up the digital support to schools and parents
- working with the UK's leading mobile network operators to provide free data to key educational sites
- continued provision of free school meals or food parcels for eligible pupils, whether or not they are attending school.

The Secretary of State confirmed that we will not be asking students to sit SATs, GCSEs and A and AS Level exams this summer. Together with Ofqual, we will consult next week on how to fairly award all pupils with a grade to ensure they can progress to the next stage of their lives.

The Secretary of State also confirmed that testing is going to be at the centre of our plans to return children back to school and college.

The Secretary of State thanked all social workers, teachers and other education staff for all they have been doing to keep children and young people safe and learning over the last difficult term.

Increasing data allowances on mobile devices to support disadvantaged children

Schools, academy trusts and local authorities can now request help to [increase mobile data allowances](#) for children and young people who:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education.

Mobile data increases can also be requested when schools report a closure or have pupils self-isolating.

Schools can also make requests for children who cannot attend school face-to-face because they are clinically extremely vulnerable or restrictions prevent them from going to school.

If increasing mobile data isn't a suitable option for some children, schools can also [request 4G wireless routers](#).

The information below has not changed since our last update

Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) is available to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm

Please listen carefully to all of the available options before selecting the most appropriate option for your nursery, school, college or university.

Look up your unique organisation number (UON)

If you have not received your unique organisation number (UON) for ordering new coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits you can [look it up using your unique reference number \(URN\) or your UK provider reference number \(UKPRN\)](#) or by calling the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.