

News - COVID-19 guidance, updated 19th March 2020

Thursday 19 March 2020

Parents and students will have seen that the Government last night announced that after Friday 20th March all schools will be closed for the majority of pupils as part of the national efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus. The government has made clear that there will be a much reduced service for the children of key essential workers and for vulnerable pupils. The details of these arrangements and the students this is intended for will be clarified and shared with parents as soon as possible.

The Government also announced that KS2 SATs, GCSEs and A Levels will not take place in the summer of 2020. However an assurance was given to students due to sit GCSEs and A Levels this year that their achievements will be formally and fairly recognised. We expect to be able to share the details of how this will happen very shortly. We expect that students will receive GCSE grades in all subjects they were due to sit and that these grades will be fully valid for all purposes for which these grades are normally used. We understand they will also be issued no later than the normal planned time in the summer so that the processes for progression can, if circumstances by then allow, run as normal.

We recognise that there will be great levels of anxiety and concern over this momentous decision, which has been taken in the context of an unprecedented national and global crisis. As soon as further information is available, we will share it. We understand that grades will be awarded in the context of a formal and moderated process and will be based on all the content that the examination specifications require. Children and young people should therefore continue to work remotely wherever possible under the direction of their teachers to ensure the specification is fully covered.

Parents and students will want to know whether they are included in the provision for key workers. We understand that a detailed list of who these key workers include is to be published shortly, probably later today.

We will be publishing ourselves further details about how we will sustain teaching and learning for all of our students who will be working remotely from home. Teachers and staff have been busy preparing for this contingency.

The Government announced that those entitled to Free School Meals will receive food vouchers. Again, we anticipate that more information about this will be available shortly and we will share this directly with those who are entitled to this provision.

The updated guidance for educational settings published this yesterday afternoon can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19#contents>

The updated government guidance regarding those with symptoms of a high temperature and a new continuous cough can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-government-announces-moving-out-of-contains-phase-and-into-delay>

[The government has set up a special hotline for any parents, pupils or staff who have concerns:](#)

Phone: 0800 046 8687
Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk
Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

Further guidance which parents and pupils may find useful includes:

Updates on COVID-19:
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Latest Department for Education information:

<https://twitter.com/educationgovuk>

<https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk>

Exam preparation and Ofqual advice

“We recognise that students, parents, schools and colleges will be concerned about the possible impact of coronavirus on the 2020 summer exam series. Ofqual’s advice at this time is to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal.

Ofqual continues to work closely with exam boards, other regulators and the Department for Education to plan for a range of scenarios, as the public would expect. Our overriding priorities are fairness to students this summer and keeping disruption to a minimum.

It is still many weeks until exams start and we will issue updated advice if necessary, giving schools and colleges as much notice as possible.”

The latest updates from Ofqual can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/updated-statement-on-coronavirus>

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