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Back to school arrangements

- Gavin Williamson has been criticised for his “**last minute approach**” as teachers, parents and pupils face further disruption this autumn. Secondary schools in England look set to open up to a week late this autumn term as millions of teenagers must be tested twice for Covid. Secondary schools and colleges will be conducting **on-site covid testing** of their pupils, which can start before the start of term. They can stagger the return of pupils over the first week of term as needed to support the delivery of testing. **Pupils should then continue to test twice weekly** at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.
- **Deaths from Covid-19** are now averaging 100 a day across the UK, according to official data, and scientists have warned **that case rates will jump again when millions of pupils return to schools next week**. Prof Ravi Gupta of the University of Cambridge, a co-opted member of the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag), said it was likely there would be a long, protracted period of high hospital admissions and continuing disruption as schools return. The **NEU** said teachers needed **more support from government**, arguing that plans to fit schools in England with air-quality monitors would “only diagnose an issue”. Leaders will also want to consider continuing with **face coverings in secondary schools, social distancing where possible, and special arrangements for vulnerable staff.** Separately, unions have said that start-of-term **Covid testing** for secondary

pupils and college students will almost certainly cause some disruption to their return. DfE guidance says secondary school pupils in England should be tested twice on site on their return for the autumn term, between three and five days apart. ASCL said this would “inevitably mean some disruption during the first week of the new term”.

- A warning by government scientific advisers that schools will likely see **“exponential” increases in Covid** when they reopen has been described as “extremely worrying” by headteachers as the new term approaches. In a consensus statement on the return to schools published today, the government’s Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling warned it was “highly likely that high prevalence will be seen within schools by the end of September 2021”. In the statement, which was issued to the government on August 11, the group said schools will represent a “high proportion of remaining susceptible individuals”, and warned it was “highly likely that exponential increases will be seen in school-attending age groups after schools open”. The group of scientists warned that vaccination will have made “almost no difference” to school-age pupils over the summer. They also pointed out that when schools reopen, mitigations in place to limit transmission “will be much reduced compared to the spring and summer terms”. “Additionally, the prevalence of infection in the community and school-age groups will be higher than in May 2021.” See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1013533/S1355_SPI-M-O_Consensus_Statement.pdf The **NEU** said “Next to nothing has been done to prepare for the possibility of large numbers of cases which will lead to lots of education disruption as children and staff have to isolate because they are positive – or stay off because their Covid symptoms go on longer.” Williamson needed to support schools to “consider face coverings from day one of term, alongside social distancing where possible, and special consideration for vulnerable staff”. “To prevent a sharp rise in cases, the watchwords must be ventilation, air filtration, masks, vaccines and vigilance.”
- According to government statistics, in the last seven days, 238,505 people in the UK have **tested positive**, up 11.1 per cent on the previous seven-day period. The number of hospital admissions is also up 8.2 per cent, and deaths within 28 days of a positive test are up by 14.2 per cent. At present, 77.7 per cent of the population aged over 16 have **had two vaccine doses**. See <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
- A campaign on radio, social and digital media to **reassure parents and pupils it is safe to return to school** in England has been launched by the

government. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/back-to-school-campaign-launches> It stresses that science experiments, sport, music and drama are back on the timetable, now distancing rules, "bubble" groups and staggered starts have been axed. The government campaign is being backed by Olympic swimming gold medallist Matt Richards and NHS consultant paediatrician and television presenter Dr Ranj Singh. Dr Singh said there was **a low risk of coronavirus in children** compared with other age groups. The government's campaign will emphasise that testing is voluntary, but that students should continue using the lateral flow tests provided through their schools "to help uncover hidden cases of the virus at the start of term".

But the **NEU** said while teachers dearly wanted the return to school to be a success, it meant millions of people mixing together, which would **inevitably lead to cases rising**. "This charm offensive from government to parents relies on the notion that the removal of safety requirements will magically transform school and college life. However, its admission, last week, that CO2 [carbon-dioxide] monitors will be needed should be sufficient evidence that Gavin Williamson made a bad call when removing so many mitigations last term - and, once again, squandered the summer break. Sadly, CO2 monitors will not arrive soon enough and only diagnose problems not solve them".

<https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/back-school> The **NAHT** said: "Parents and pupils will see that arrangements for the start of this term are quite different to how things were at the end of the summer term. The government must make sure that families are familiar with these changes, so that they have the confidence to bring their children back in and that misunderstandings are kept to a minimum. It would **be naive to assume that things will be completely back to normal in September**. Scientists are already predicting that Covid cases are likely to increase further when schools reopen and sadly, we know that further disruption is inevitable. A functioning **test-and-trace system** was needed to reassure parents, as well as ensuring effective responses in the event of outbreaks and improving classroom ventilation". **ASCL** said schools and colleges were hoping for the best - but there were concerns about the possible impact of Covid transmission among **pupils, who were largely unvaccinated**. "Our concerns are over the potential risk of a high number of infections among pupils which cause more educational disruption and may lead to some young people suffering serious symptoms. It will be a case of seeing how all this plays out in reality, as the new term starts and progresses. But it will be very important that the government is **ready to act** in the event of a rising tide of coronavirus infections and provide further support to schools and colleges as necessary".

- **CO2 monitors** will be provided to all state-funded education settings from September, so staff can quickly identify where ventilation needs to be improved. Backed by a £25 million government investment, the new monitors will enable staff to act quickly where ventilation is poor and provide reassurance that

existing ventilation measures are working. The majority of c. 300,000 monitors will become available over the autumn term, with special schools and alternative provision prioritised to receive their full allocation from September given their higher-than-average numbers of vulnerable pupils. CO2 monitors are portable so schools and other settings will be able to move them around to test their full estate, starting with areas they suspect may be poorly ventilated. The programme will provide schools and other settings with sufficient monitors to take representative readings from across the indoor spaces in their estate, assessing all spaces in a relatively short space of time. More details will be available following the completion of procurement, however all schools and colleges are expected to receive at least partial allocations during the autumn term, enabling all settings to monitor areas where they believe airflow may be weakest. As the monitors are rolled out the department will provide guidance on their use. The government has also launched a **trial of air purifiers** in 30 schools in Bradford, which is designed to assess the technology in education settings and whether they could reduce the risk of transmission. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-schools-to-receive-carbon-dioxide-monitors> **ASCL** welcomed the announcement, but said the **equipment should have been ready for the start of term** and earlier in the pandemic. "Now we reiterate our call for the government to ensure **that high-quality ventilation equipment is made available** to schools and colleges where it is needed as soon as possible. It asked "what happens next?" if ventilation problems are identified by the monitors once they are installed; what funding the DfE would provide to ensure schools could resolve ventilation issues detected by the monitors. Four in five **teachers** do not feel reassured by the government's drive to install carbon-dioxide monitors in schools to help tackle the spread of Covid, new polling suggests. And nearly a third say they do not commonly teach in well-ventilated classrooms, according to a survey

- **Scotland's** record number of Covid cases is partly **being fuelled by the return of schools after the summer holidays**, the deputy first minister has said. John Swinney said the data showed that high numbers of young people had tested positive in recent days. And he said the case for secondary pupils continuing to wear facemasks in school was growing "ever stronger"; about a third of the new cases were in the under-19s age group
- The DfE has extended the **requirement on schools to provide remote education for state-funded pupils when they cannot attend school due to COVID-19**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-temporary-continuity-direction-explanatory-note>
- ESFA has updated "Coronavirus (COVID-19) **mass testing funding for schools and colleges**. Information about the funding allocations associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) National Testing Programme". See

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-mass-testing-funding-for-schools-and-colleges>

Attendance

- Schools will be asked to **submit Covid-19 attendance data to the government on a weekly rather than daily basis** from October, it has been announced. The educational setting status form, which has provided the government with information about attendance and Covid-related absences throughout the pandemic, reopened for the autumn term on Aug 26. Schools are asked to continue to submit **daily attendance data throughout September** in order to “monitor attendance in schools and colleges after the summer break”. However, from Friday, October 1, the form will move from daily reporting to weekly. Changes have been made to the attendance data form to align it with the latest guidance for schools and colleges, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance> . These changes do not impact how the form is completed. The set of sub-codes, which were introduced last year for schools and colleges to record non-attendance related to coronavirus, have also been updated. Code X03 and X04 which relate to a pupil self-isolating due to a potential contact with a confirmed Covid case inside or outside of school respectively are “not applicable” for the next academic year. This follows a change to the rules last week which means under-18s no longer need to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed Covid case. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-complete-the-educational-setting-status-form>
- The government will only **publish school attendance data every two weeks** from September, it has emerged. It means the first attendance data of the new school year won't be released until September 21, almost three weeks into the autumn term. The next publication scheduled after that is on October 3. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak> The NAHT said there “seems to be no clear justification or rationale for government to be only publishing attendance data on a fortnightly basis”, given that schools will still be asked to submit daily data until October and then weekly thereafter.
- The DfE is preparing to tackle parents and children reluctant to return to school by recruiting teams of “**attendance advisers**” on short-term contracts worth £25,000. The contracts, which were first advertised this week, are to start in November, and the advisers will guide local authorities on measures to meet the

DfE's priority "to reduce overall school absence as we recover from the pandemic". The DfE said: "A small team of attendance advisers are being recruited to work with local authorities and multi-academy trusts to provide advice, guidance and support on attendance where absence rates are higher than average

Vaccinations

- Earlier this month, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advised that all **16 and 17 year-olds should be given a first dose of a vaccine**. But unlike older age groups, **no second dose** is being scheduled. GPs are also inviting **at-risk children aged between 12 and 15**, who are clinically vulnerable to Covid or live with adults who are at increased risk of serious illness from the virus, to get vaccinated. About 30,000 children in this age group have had the jab. The health secretary has told the NHS to prepare to give Covid jabs to children from the age of 12. Sajid Javid is putting plans in place so that the scheme can be rolled out quickly if it is given the go-ahead by scientific advisers. The Department of Health has stressed parental consent will be sought - although it is unclear if children would be able to overrule their parents. Any change to the rollout next month will be dependent on a recommendation from experts on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). **Prof Russell Viner** says he believes all 12 to 15-year olds will be offered a Covid jab in the future but more data on a rare side effect of heart inflammation in young people is needed. **Prof Devi Sridhar**, chair of global public health at the University of Edinburgh, says she is in favour of vaccinating 12 to 15-year-olds because the more infectious Delta variant is "flying through schools" in Scotland.
- **Fewer children** in the UK are being immunised against **deadly diseases** because of "**vaccination fatigue**" due to the Covid jabs drive and GPs being busy, government advisers have warned. The number of teenagers in England being vaccinated against some cancers, meningitis, septicaemia and other fatal conditions, fell by 20% after the first lockdown in 2020. From May to September 2020 there was a decline, the JCVI said, of "approximately 20%" in secondary school pupils having three key teenage vaccinations – the HPV vaccine, which reduces the risk of cervical cancer and several other forms of cancer, the MenACWY, jab, which protects against meningitis and septicaemia, and the Td/IPV jab, which counters tetanus, diphtheria and polio. There was also a significant drop of 2% in numbers of younger children having their first dose of the **MMR jab**, which protects against measles, mumps and rubella.

Updated documents

- **The DfE has updated:**
 - Actions for **FE colleges and providers** during the coronavirus outbreak <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision>
 - Protective measures for **holiday or after-school clubs** and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>
 - **Actions for schools** during the coronavirus outbreak <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>
 - What all **special schools and other specialist settings** will need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

Student health

- The number of young adults who **smoke** in England rose by about a quarter in the first lockdown, research has suggested. The number of 18 to 34-year-olds who classed themselves as smokers increased by a quarter, from 21.5% to 26.8%, says Cancer Research UK. The data does not explain why the changes occurred but experts believe many turned to cigarettes in response to stress. At the same time, **heavy drinking** increased across adults of all ages. See <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/add.15656>
- Teachers and parents have been asked to guard against **norovirus** to prevent widespread outbreaks as schools prepare to reopen classrooms next week. As coronavirus restrictions have eased, health officials have detected a surge in the winter sickness bug, particularly in nurseries and childcare settings.

Student welfare

- **Growing numbers of British children are unhappy with their lives**, with many worrying about school, friends and how they look, a report reveals. The number of 10- to 15-year-olds who say they are not happy rose from 173,000 (3.8%) in 2009-10 to an estimated 306,000 (6.7%) in 2018-19, the Children's Society found. That 6.7% – one in every 15 young people – is the highest proportion in the last decade, it said; on top of this a large number of children

have not coped well with the pandemic. The Children's Society's tenth annual Good Childhood Report, which pulls together a number of different research projects, also found that when over 2,000 UK 10- to 17-year-olds were asked in April-June this year to give a mark out of 10 to gauge their happiness with key areas of life, family came top with an average score of 8.1, followed by health (8) and friends (7.8). However, children were less happy with their future (6.9), school (7.1) and appearance (7.2). More respondents scored below the midpoint, which suggests that they are unhappy, with school than any other domain – 12.2%, compared with just 6% for family. One in 25 (4%) children have struggled with the upheaval Covid has brought, the report found. Although small in number they are likely to be young people who need mental health help, the report said. The Essex University research showed that almost as many boys as girls are now dissatisfied with their appearance. That rose sharply over the last decade from 8% to 13% among boys but increased only slightly among girls, from 15% to 16%, "suggesting [that] boys are increasingly feeling the pressures of looking good", the charity said. School also emerged as a source of discontent. The percentage of children who said they were unhappy with their school life grew from 9% a decade ago to 12% in 2018-19. Body image and school are "two areas where teenagers are coming under pressure and held to high standards, having a detrimental impact on their wellbeing", the Children's Society added. It warned that children who are unhappy with their lives at the age of 14 are "significantly more likely" than their peers to display symptoms of mental ill-health by the time they reach 17 or to have self-harmed or tried to take their own life. Young people with low life satisfaction at 14 should be helped to build relationships and avoid being bullied to avoid descent into mental illness, it advised. Russell urged ministers to produce an action plan to boost young people's wellbeing, start measuring their happiness every year in the same way that is already done for adults, and to improve the availability of early intervention services to stop mental health problems worsening. See <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood>

- England faces a 25,000 shortfall in **foster families** over the next five years, amid complaints of a lack of support for existing carers and a broken system that pits councils against private agencies for potential candidates. Around a fifth of foster households exit the system each year, leaving local councils and specialist agencies scrambling to recruit families just to keep the current levels. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/aug/29/vulnerable-children-at-risk-as-england-faces-shortfall-of-25000-foster-families>

- Teachers can help counteract the rise of the **“incel” movement** and the dangers of **misogyny** with school lessons on respect for women and healthy relationships, ministers believe. A government source said that Gavin Williamson expects teachers to be able to tackle the risks from incel culture through the relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum within schools. The new curriculum, to be fully introduced this year when state schools in England reopen, gives teachers wide flexibility to explore topics such as beneficial relationships as well as darker aspects such as coercive control and hatred of women. Safeguarding and Prevent are also available given that incel is seen as a form of terrorism and schools have a duty to look out for students in danger of radicalisation.
- In a survey of more than 2,000 parents of secondary school-aged students from Impero, three-quarters **of parents had spoken to their children about sexual relationships**, and of these, 44 per cent of parents reported that they **relied on advice from schools** to do so. The survey also found that:
 - More than a quarter of parents (26 per cent) don’t think children need to be taught about consent in relation to sex and relationships until aged 15.
 - Almost a third (29 per cent) feel that 11 or older is the correct age to learn about LGBTQI+ relationships.
 - Overall, just under a tenth (9 per cent) said they will not let their child take part in sex and relationships education in schools. This nearly doubled when only considering parents of non-binary children (17 per cent).
- For an article, “New relationships and sex education guidance is about to come into force. Here’s **what schools and teachers need to be prepared for** and where to find help to ensure this important topic is covered correctly”, see <https://www.tes.com/news/relationships-and-sex-education-what-you-need-know>

Learning recovery

- Although the tuition partners arm of the NTP, currently run by the Education Endowment Foundation, has met its target of enrolling 250,000 pupils by the end of August, **only 205,538 have actually started having sessions**. Schools do have the option to run tutoring in the holidays. But with just 11 days to go until the end of August, it looks likely that most of the 44,000 enrolled pupils who have not had tutoring to date will not start before the end of this academic year. The NTP confirmed that schools with pupils enrolled for this year had to use their allocation by the end of this month, but settings would be able to book tutoring

for the same children next year if they want to. Only 240 schools officially withdrew from the scheme, and this was mainly due to “the difficulties schools have faced this year” with lockdowns. In total 5,866 schools have signed up, which is just shy of the NTP’s own target of 6,000. NTP enrolled 250,509 pupils this year. The EEF is due to hand over the reins of the NTP to Dutch outsourcing firm **Randstad** next month. However, the list of tuition organisations due to be involved in year two of the NTP are still yet to be confirmed. Applications closed earlier this month. Randstad **will face a huge challenge** next year to double the NTP’s reach to 524,000 pupils, including 65 per cent disadvantaged pupils, alongside a new £579 million school-led tutoring fund.

- The Telegraph reports that officials at the DfE are drawing up guidance on how the **next phase of catch-up cash can be spent**. It will set out what funding is available to schools to spend on education recovery during the next academic year. Schools will be encouraged to make use of **three possible ways of accessing tutoring** which could be via an accredited company that is part of the National Tutoring Programme, making use of academic mentors or by paying their own staff more money to work extra hours as tutors. Head teachers will also be allowed to apply for funds from the Department for Education (DfE) to employ retired teachers as tutors.
- Analysis by Labour reveals **extracurricular activities** – sport, music, school trips and drama – **have been in freefall over the past decade**, particularly for primary-age children. The research, pre-dating the pandemic, shows the arts have been particularly hit, with a 47% decrease in theatre and drama and a 36% drop in music participation. Competitive sport is down by 13% and there are similar decreases for participation in visits to heritage sites, museums and libraries; poorest children were likely to suffer most.
- ESFA has issued “Get help with technology: **conditions of connectivity support grants**. Information about the eligibility criteria and payment process for connectivity support funding”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-help-with-technology-conditions-of-connectivity-support-grants> Schools will be able to claim back money to help disadvantaged pupils absent due to Covid get online in the new school year under a new “connectivity support grant” scheme. But the DfE has warned it may reject claims for funding if disruption reported by schools does not match up to its own data. The DfE will make funding available of “up to £75” per pupil to provide mobile dongles or broadband routers between September and December. The document gives guidance on the rules for claiming this

- The DfE has issued "**Schools blended delivery case studies**. Good practice developed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic". Schools have written case studies to share how they have approached teaching classes of pupils both in school and remotely (which is referred to as 'blended delivery'). See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-blended-delivery-case-studies>

International Qualified Teacher Status (iQTS)

- The DfE will create a new international teaching qualification **called International Qualified Teacher Status (iQTS)**, beginning with a small pilot before moving to full roll-out. "iQTS" will be a UK government-backed qualification, based on English methods and standards. It will be delivered by accredited English initial teacher training providers, and will be accessible to trainees all over the world. It convened an iQTS Expert Working Group (EWG) of sector experts to advise officials on the next stage of policy development. iQTS will align closely with the requirements and standards for English initial teacher training, with flexibility allowed for a variety of international contexts. Accredited English ITT providers will be approved to offer iQTS through an approvals process. The DfE will create a framework of approved inspectorates with expert knowledge of both initial teacher training and the international education sector to inspect the provision of the training. The DfE proposes that iQTS should be recognised as equivalent to QTS, accepting that iQTS will be a teaching qualification, unlike QTS which is a professional status. The proposals could lead to an increase of foreign teachers coming to work in the UK. For details, see page 8 of https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1012646/iQTS_consultation_response_August_2021.pdf

Critics have called the plans "arrogant", arguing that it is **hypocritical** for the government to say English teacher training should set an example for international provision **amid plans to radically reform the sector** in the wake of the ITT market review. For an article on the DfE's controversial ITT review, see <https://www.tes.com/news/teacher-training-shake-whats-behind-backlash>

Inequalities in education

- **Teach First** has issued "**A fighting chance for every child**" A manifesto for **ending educational inequality**. See https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-08/Manifesto_v3_Aug2021.pdf Its broad proposals are:

- Increase school funding
- Provide this additional schools funding via increases to the Pupil Premium
- Boost the COVID-19 education recovery package
- Provide ring fenced funding for support services and increase local authority funding
- Pilot a reduction in teachers' timetables in the most disadvantaged schools
- Make the curriculum more inclusive without compromising on content or rigour
- Support the development of aspiring leaders from underrepresented backgrounds
- Invest in careers education at both primary and secondary school
- Increase access to work experience for disadvantaged pupils via 'blended' placements
- Ensure every young person in education has access to a digital device and the internet
- There are more details and case studies in the document

Ofsted

- Ofsted has issued "**Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings**" See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills>
- Ofsted has issued its protocol on arrangements **for gathering further evidence if an inspection is incomplete**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gathering-additional-evidence-to-secure-an-incomplete-inspection>
- Ofsted has issued "**School inspection handbook**. Ofsted guidance on inspecting maintained schools and academies in England under the education inspection framework". See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif> This applies from 1/9/21. It includes a summary of the changes

School and academy management and resources

- The DfE has set out the **financial support available to alternative provision (AP) schools and colleges to support current year 11 students into post-16**

education. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/alternative-provision-year-11-transition-funding>

- The DfE is seeking views on revisions to the current version of the '**Teacher misconduct**': the prohibition of teachers' advice. Closes Oct 19 2021 See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/teacher-misconduct-the-prohibition-of-teachers-the/> For a summary of the proposals, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/planned-changes-to-teacher-misconduct-guidance-what-you-need-to-know/> or <https://www.tes.com/news/upskirting-set-be-relevant-offence-teacher-bans>
- The DfE has updated "**School admissions code**. Statutory guidance that schools must follow when carrying out duties relating to school admissions". See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>
- The DfE has updated "**Standards for school food in England**. Guidance on the standards for planning and providing food in schools". See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england>
- Schools in England are being advised to **stock up on non-perishable food** amid a rising delivery driver shortage that could threaten supply levels by Christmas.
- For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-25-august-2021>
- ESFA has issued "**Pre-16 schools funding**: local authority guidance for 2022 to 2023" See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-16-schools-funding-local-authority-guidance-for-2022-to-2023>
- The DfE has issued **Academy trust revenue reserves** from the 2019 to 2020 academic year and comparisons with the 2018 to 2019 academic year. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-revenue-reserves-2019-to-2020> – The total number of trusts listed has reduced by 3.8% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 but the number of academies has increased by 6.5%. This indicates some consolidation in the sector with fewer Single Academy Trusts (SATs) and more academies being part of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). The average number of academies in trusts has increased from 3.12 to 3.45 during the period. At the end of the academic year 2019/20
 - 95.9% of trusts had a cumulative surplus or a zero balance.
 - 4.1% of trusts had a cumulative deficit.
 - The average revenue reserve across all academy trusts was £1.15 million.
 - The average surplus balance, of trusts with a surplus, was £1.22 million.
 - The average deficit balance, of trusts with a deficit, was £376,000.
 - The total cumulative surplus across all academy trusts was £3.17 billion.

- The total cumulative deficit across all academy trusts was £42.1 million.
 - The total net financial position of all academy trusts was a cumulative surplus of £3.13 billion
- The DfE has issued “**Risk protection arrangement** (RPA) for schools” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-academies> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools>
 - Teachers across England have complained of leaking ceilings, broken heating systems and ventilation too poor to deal with the threat of Covid, as the overwhelming majority of headteachers warned that they do not have the funds to repair their **dilapidated school buildings**. 83% of school leaders said they do not believe they have sufficient capital funding to maintain their buildings and facilities. The finding, from a 1,500-strong survey of leaders conducted by the NAHT comes just months after a government-commissioned study found that the repair bill for state schools in England had ballooned to £11bn. Concerns have been heightened by the new term and an anticipated rise in Covid cases, with teachers worried that faulty windows and air conditioning systems will prevent the ventilation required to lower the risks of the virus spreading. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/aug/28/england-schools-in-urgent-need-of-repairs-say-heads>

Educational news for Schools

- The government should launch a major inquiry to understand the reasons **why boys underperform** at school compared with girls, it has been suggested. Professor Alan Smithers, director of the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham, said we do not have a “sound basis for tackling boys’ performance relative to girls”. He was writing after Mary Curnock Cook, the former head of UCAS, called for an “explanation” to eliminate the possibility of “systemic bias against boys”.
- More than a quarter of parents with under-fives are **struggling to balance work and childcare** because of a lack of nursery provision. A poll of more than 3,000 parents by the Early Years Alliance found that parents in poorer areas were most likely to feel unsupported, with 80 per cent saying the Government is not doing enough to help them access affordable childcare. One in six people reported having to cut their working hours to cope, with the average number of hours worked falling from 36.7 to 21.7 hours per week. See

<https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/news/2021/08/quarter-families-struggle-balance-work-and-childcare>

- In total, 37 per cent of all primary schools in England are **faith schools**, along with 19 per cent of secondary schools. The vast majority of state faith schools are Church of England and Roman Catholic, although there are a smaller number of schools representing other Christian denominations, along with the Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths. According to analysis by the National Secular Society, 30 per cent of families live in areas where two or three of their nearest primary schools are faith based. One in 10 families have the same issue at secondary level. The NSS also said that for the third year running, more than 20,000 pupils have been assigned to faith schools this September, despite their families expressing a preference for a non-faith option. See <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2021/08/three-in-10-families-have-little-choice-but-a-faith-school-nss-finds>
- The DfE has issued "**Statutory teacher induction**: appropriate bodies. Find an appropriate body to assure your teacher induction. Information about the role of an appropriate body and their locations in England". See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-teacher-induction-appropriate-bodies> Appropriate bodies quality assure statutory teacher induction and provide data to the Teaching Regulation Agency to record the progress of early career teachers. Headteachers are responsible for registering every early career teacher serving induction in their school with an appropriate body before induction begins and choosing an appropriate body, including in circumstances where their current appropriate body ceases to operate. The statutory guidance for induction for early career teachers (England) explains more about the role of appropriate bodies in the induction process, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/induction-for-early-career-teachers-england>
- For an article, "**Reception baseline assessment**: all you need to know, see <https://www.tes.com/news/reception-baseline-assessment-eyfs-early-years-primary-schools-all-you-need-know>
- Analysis by RS Assessment and SchoolDash also found that:
 - had **national tests been held for year 6 pupils** this year, it is "likely" that attainment seen in 2019 would only have been replicated in reading, but not in maths or grammar, spelling and punctuation.
 - **KS1** most in need of support, as across all subjects, younger year groups are showing the largest drops in attainment and are "therefore needing the most support".

- The **disadvantage gap** continued to grow across most year groups and subjects and significantly” among year 1 pupils.
 - The “pattern of changes” in attainment in **reading** across the three terms in 2020-21, and found a “relatively positive” picture for children in years 2 to 6. However, year 1 children may be “as much as 3 months behind” previous cohorts, compared to about a month for most older year groups
 - Most primary pupils were still likely to be between two and three months behind in **grammar, punctuation and spelling** at the end of the summer term compared to 2019. However, the analysis suggests year 6 pupils were further behind still, at four months. **Secondary schools** “may need to give extra support to ensure that their new intake of year 7 children have mastered these more technical aspects of English before progressing to the usual Key Stage 3 curriculum”.
 - Although the analysis found improvements across all year groups in **maths** since the spring term, younger year groups “still showed large declines” compared to 2019. It found that children were still on average two to three months behind previous cohorts in the summer. The attainment **gap** has also continued to grow across most year groups, with the largest gap in year 6.
 - See https://www.risingstars-uk.com/rs-assessment/whitepapers?utm_source=organic&utm_medium=sharing&utm_campaign=whitepaper_21
- Councils in England are struggling to assess the level of support children with special educational needs require because of a **shortage of educational psychologists**, with the start of the school year just days away. The DfE have been monitoring educational psychology capacity during the pandemic and the current data identifies that 70% of local authorities are operating with reduced educational psychology capacity.” See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/aug/29/lack-of-psychologists-hits-pupils-with-special-educational-needs>

Issues related to public examinations

- ESFA has issued “**Withdrawal of funding approval from qualifications with low and no publicly funded enrolments** for the funding year 2022 to 2023” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/withdrawal-of-funding-approval-from-qualifications-with-low-and-no-publicly-funded-enrolments-for-the-funding-year-2022-to-2023>

- In a survey of 2,000 people carried out by Nortstat43 per cent of respondents said they felt it **was easier for students to achieve high grades in GCSEs and A-levels in 2021** compared with other years. However, almost a third **believed this year's grades were harder** for students to achieve, mainly because of the disruption caused to their education by the Covid pandemic.
- Ofqual has issued "**Malpractice in vocational and technical qualifications: academic year 2019 to 2020 has issued**" See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/malpractice-in-vocational-and-technical-qualifications-academic-year-2019-to-2020> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-than-1300-vtq-penalties-issued-in-2019-to-2020> Awarding organisations issued 1,381 penalties in the last academic year. Students, at 78%, received most of the penalties, while no penalties for examiners were reported. 973 penalties were issued for performance table qualifications. The number of penalties was highest in paper-based exams (73%), followed by online exams (19%) and, lastly, performance-based tasks. For students, plagiarism was the most common type of malpractice, while the most common type of penalty was a warning followed by a loss of marks. A loss of marks was the most common penalty when a student was found with a mobile phone or other communication device. A 'loss of aggregation or certification opportunity' was most common for 'collusion'.
- **ASCL** expects the government to have a **plan B** in place soon in case the Covid crisis prevents some exams from going ahead **next summer**. It would be "too humiliating" for the government to be in the same situation as this year where GCSE and A-level exams had to be cancelled because of the pandemic without an alternative plan in place. The **DfE** said "Exams are the fairest form of assessment and we intend then to take place next summer. We are consulting on arrangements that recognise the disruption young people have faced over the past 18 months, as well as developing contingency plans if it is not possible for exams to go ahead.

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- ESFA has issued a list of organisations that provide **traineeships**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traineeship-providers>
- Two-thirds of staff in the **further education** sector feel the system does not adequately **educate learners on sustainability issues**, a new report by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has revealed. See <https://et->

[foundation.co.uk/news/the-fe-sector-needs-more-support-to-tackle-global-issues-facing-the-world-warns-new-report/](https://www.foundation.co.uk/news/the-fe-sector-needs-more-support-to-tackle-global-issues-facing-the-world-warns-new-report/)

- £50 million will be invested in colleges, schools and sixth forms delivering **T levels** across England from 2022 to improve and expand teaching spaces and facilities. Sixty-five building projects will receive a share of the funding. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/50-million-to-deliver-world-class-facilities-for-t-level-students> For **successful applications**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-levels-capital-fund-wave-3-successful-applications> For "**T Levels capital fund**. Details on the fund and how to apply." See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-levels-capital-fund>
- Two-thirds of staff in the **further education** sector feel the system does not adequately **educate learners on sustainability issues**, a new report by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has revealed. See <https://et-foundation.co.uk/news/the-fe-sector-needs-more-support-to-tackle-global-issues-facing-the-world-warns-new-report/>
- The Association for Apprentices (AoA) has announced **a new social networking channel and a training platform to better support current and former apprentices**. AoA Connect will be a social networking channel created especially for apprentices and developed in direct response to their feedback. It will offer a platform for peer-to-peer support and allow members to connect with other apprentices based on their region, industry or interest. AoA Connect will also give members access to specially curated content, events and targeted industry news, all designed to keep them informed and engaged. See <https://www.associationofapprentices.org.uk/>

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