

Prime Minister's statement on the national lockdown position

Today, the Prime Minister has announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to the national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity.

If the Government achieves its target of vaccinating everyone in the four most vulnerable groups with their first dose by 15 February then those groups will have developed immunity from the virus around three weeks later, that is by 8 March. It is for this reason that we hope it will therefore be safe to commence the reopening of schools from Monday 8 March.

Education settings, as well as students, parents and carers will be given at least two weeks notice to prepare for a return to face-to-face education.

Schools and colleges will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers after February half-term, as they are now. All other pupils will continue to receive high quality remote education at home. This is in line with the wider national lockdown measures to help minimise the spread of the virus and respond quickly to the new variant.

Early years provision should continue to remain open throughout and should continue to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetabled 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.

The Prime Minister has also committed to providing a programme of catch-up into the next financial year. This involves a further £300m of new money to early years, schools and colleges for tutoring, as well as working in collaboration with the education sector to develop specific initiatives for summer schools and a coronavirus (COVID-19) premium to support catch-up.

In recognition that extended school and college attendance restrictions will have a huge impact on children's learning, the Government will work with parents, teachers and schools to develop a long-term plan to make sure pupils have the chance to make up their learning over the course of this parliament.

The government will also continue to provide support for pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals through the national voucher scheme or lunch parcels to those learning at home during term time next half-term. Support will also be available during the half-term holiday for vulnerable families through the [Covid Winter Grant Scheme](#).

Education attendance restrictions are to be reviewed again in mid-February when the Government will look at when more pupils and students can be brought back into schools and further education.