

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

15 March 2022

DfE Changes – Updates January 2022 – March 2022

Childcare providers no longer required to tell Ofsted about confirmed COVID-19 cases

1. The Department for Education has decided that from 21 February 2022, if you are a childcare provider, you are no longer required to notify Ofsted, or the childminder agency with which you are registered, of any COVID-19 cases in the setting, whether that is of a child or staff member. You also do not have to submit notifications for any cases that have happened in the last 14 days. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Early Years settings and childminders are currently being asked to continue to notify the Local Authority via the school effectiveness inbox if they have positive cases and for any staffing issues which may force closure. This is to offer advice and support and ensure if numbers need to be reduced that we have the most vulnerable children in the setting.

Childminders are currently still being told to close or move to an alternative premises for at least a five day isolation period (or until they have two negative LFTs 24 hours apart) if they have a positive test within their household. Separate guidance for childminders has been produced.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/additional-actions-for-childminders-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/additional-actions-for-childminders-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

More support to keep pupils in the classroom

2. Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi has announced an additional 7,000 air cleaning units to be provided to early years, schools, and colleges to improve ventilation in teaching spaces – further helping to strike the balance between managing transmission risk along with reducing disruption to in-person learning. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Advice continues to be disseminated to schools via the weekly newsletter and termly heads briefings. Headteachers continue to use the school effectiveness email inbox and regional excellence and improvement leads as a point of

contact for advice and guidance. We are still waiting for details of the number of units allocated to Wiltshire schools.

Hundreds of thousands of pupils benefit from tutoring

5. Over 300,000 tutoring courses began last term, nearing the total figure for the previous academic year, keeping the National Tutoring Programme on track to deliver the ambitious target of two million courses this academic year.

6. Of the 302,000 courses which began last term, an estimated 230,000 were provided through the new, school-led tutoring pillar, showing that the introduction of greater flexibility for schools in providing tutoring is proving powerful in making sure the programme is reaching as many young people as possible. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Schools are delivering this programme through a range of means, many using in-house staff due to the shortage of additional staff.

Government supporting schools and colleges to provide face-to-face learning for millions of children and young people

8. Hundreds of former teachers have signed up with supply agencies following the Education Secretary's call for them to temporarily return to the profession, data published on 12 January shows. Initial data from around ten per cent of supply agencies shows that 485 former teachers have signed up with agencies, with some teachers already placed back in the classroom during the first week of term. A further 100 Teach First alumni have also expressed interest in supporting the workforce.

[Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

This has not yet impacted on the workforce in Wiltshire. Last term schools continued to report difficulties in sourcing supply cover in schools.

Reforms to encourage more students to take up language GCSEs

11. In the updated GCSEs, students will be assessed on the most common vocabulary used in conversations and writing, as well as grammar and pronunciation, increasing clarity for teachers and improving the practical benefits for students. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position: *Guidance is disseminated to schools*

New measures to increase school attendance

13. A new consultation proposes that all schools have robust policies detailing how they will support pupils to attend as regularly as possible and sets out how legal intervention including penalty notices should be used in promoting good attendance by local authorities.

14. The latest data shows a radically different approach to sanctions across the country, with some local authorities issuing no fines in 2020/21, while others issued over 1,500. The new standards will make sure interventions such as fines are always used when all other options have been explored. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

We have responded to the DfE consultation and strongly agree with the intention to standardise the sanction approach across the country. A new Local Authority Attendance Strategy is under development, predicated on the good practice proposals in the DfE consultation document.

Further plans to level up opportunities for every child

18. New measures to make sure children are getting the quality of education they deserve are being announced, as the government continues its drive to level up opportunities for every child and family across the country.

19. The government has confirmed it will go ahead with the creation of a register for children not in school at the earliest available legislative opportunity, alongside plans to give schools greater support on behaviour and rebuild hundreds more school buildings across the country. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

We welcome the intention to legislate for a register of children not in school and this aligns well with our existing practice for monitoring children who are electively home educated. Consultations are live for revised behaviour in schools guidance and suspension and permanent exclusions guidance. These have been shared with schools via the newsletter and we will be responding to both consultations via the Education & Skills Behaviour Support Service.

Improvements seen in children and young people's wellbeing

21. Thousands of children and young people in England are benefiting from support for their mental health and wellbeing in education, as new research shows an improving picture in their recovery from the pandemic. The Department for Education has published its third annual State of the Nation report, providing an in-depth picture of the experiences of children and young people aged 5 to 24 throughout the pandemic during the 2020 to 2021 academic year. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

We welcome this report and will review it in the context of data gathered through the Wiltshire school health and wellbeing survey 2020 and 2021.

Flexible apprenticeships to boost jobs in key sectors

23. New flexible apprenticeships will soon be available to create opportunities for more people to earn while they learn in industries that boost the economy. Up to 1500 apprentices will be recruited on the government's new flexi-job apprenticeship scheme, which will allow people to complete short placements across sectors such as construction and creative during their apprenticeship, opening a new paid training route to a career in these industries. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

Employer Engagement Enterprise Coordinator is sharing the information with businesses in the relevant sectors.

Extra support to safeguard political impartiality in schools

25. New guidance to support teachers in tackling sensitive issues in the classroom in a politically impartial way has been published on 17 February 2022. Teaching about political issues and the differing views on these is an essential part of the curriculum, helping pupils to form their own opinions and prepare them for later life.

26. The new political impartiality in schools guidance will help teachers and schools navigate issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the legacy of the British Empire or societal responses to racism in accordance with the law, which states that teachers must not promote partisan political views and should offer a balanced overview of opposing views when political issues are taught.. [Link](#)

Wiltshire's position:

This guidance has been shared with schools. The Wiltshire learning alliance will develop support and gather feedback, as part of their commitment to curriculum support.

School Budgets

27. In the Autumn of 2019, the government announced its pledge to boost schools and high needs funding. Building on the 2019-20 funding levels, the cash increases of £14.5 billion over 3 years would comprise;

- £2.6 billion in 2020-21
- £4.8 billion in 2021-22 (increase by £2.2bn)
- £7.1 billion in 2022-23 (increase by £2.3bn)

In addition, a further £700million was pledged for High Needs nationally in 2020-21, a further £730m for 2021-22 and £780m for 2022-23.

28. The Department for Education (DfE) have continued to allocate school funding on the basis of the National Funding Formula (NFF) which should see all schools benefitting from the additional funding. Nationally, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) shows an average increase of 3.2% in the pupil-led funding factors compared to 2021-22. The 2022-23 year is another 'soft' year with local Schools' Forum still retaining its role in determining the school funding allocation methodology.

29. Schools Forum set the 2022-23 Schools Budget at their January meeting which was ratified by Full council in February. The headlines included:

- £10.869m increased funding (3.42%) for schools
- £4.855m increased funding (8.4%) to support learners with additional needs due to SEN & disability (high needs)
- Increased funding for early years which means the funded hourly rates are increasing from £4.25 per hour to £4.42 per hour for 3&4 year olds and £5.48 per hour to £5.69 per hour for disadvantaged 4 year olds. In addition, the disability access funding is increasing from £615 to £800 per pupil per annum and the inclusion fund is being expanded to support up to 30 hours per week funding for working parents / carers.

30. In addition to this, £9.5m of Supplementary funding for schools, awarded late, to assist with increased social care levy (the additional 1.5% on employers national insurance) and other rising cost pressures such as energy costs. £2.4

More information can be found here [Agenda for Schools Forum on Thursday 20 January 2022, 1.30 pm | Wiltshire Council](#)

Local Authority Budgets for Children & Education

31. Council approved increases in budget for children and education; £1.7m to reflect rising demand and ensure services in statutory SEN are sufficient; £1.5m representing 4% contractual inflation on placements and SEN transport; £0.7m on demand for placements for children and SEN transport. Savings were agreed in relation to fostering excellence whereby the unit cost of an in house foster care placement are lower than external providers; deleting vacant posts and service efficiencies.