

Billion pound Covid catch-up plan to tackle impact of lost teaching time

Children in England are set to benefit from a £1 billion Covid “catch-up” package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time, the Prime Minister and Education Secretary have confirmed.

As plans continue for a full return to education from September, the government has announced £650 million will be shared across state primary and secondary schools over the 2020/21 academic year.

Whilst head teachers will decide how the money is spent, the government expects this to be spent on small group tuition for whoever needs it.

This one-off grant to support pupils in state education recognises that all young people have lost time in education as a result of the pandemic, regardless of their income or background.

Separately, a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the 2020/21 academic year.

This will help accelerate their academic progress and prevent the gap between them and their more affluent peers widening.

This £1 billion package is on top of the £14 billion three-year funding settlement announced last year – recognising the additional work schools will need to do to help students to catch up.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I want to once again thank teachers, childcare workers and support staff for the brilliant work they have been doing throughout the pandemic.

This includes providing remote education for those not in school, as well as face-to-face education for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.

This £1 billion catch-up package will help head teachers to provide extra support to children who have fallen behind while out of school.

I am determined to do everything I can to get all children back in

school from September, and we will bring forward plans on how this will happen as soon as possible.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We cannot afford for any of our children to lose out as a result of Covid-19. The scale of our response must match the scale of the challenge.

This package will make sure that every young person, no matter their age or where they live, gets the education, opportunities and outcomes they deserve, by spending it on measures proven to be effective, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged.

The plan will be delivered throughout the next academic year, bringing long term reform to the educational sector that will protect a generation of children from the effects of this pandemic.

The National Tutoring Programme is designed to reach up to two million of England's most disadvantaged children.

The Government's ambition is that all providers running holiday clubs and activities for children over the summer holiday will be able to open, if the science allows.

Guidance will be provided to the sector on how to implement the protective measures necessary to open safely, and to parents on how to minimise the spread of the virus if they choose to attend.

Today the Education Endowment Foundation has also published a guide to help school leaders and staff decide how to use this funding to best support their pupils and their outcomes.

It provides advice on support strategies schools can use in deciding how to support pupils, including intervention programmes, extra teaching capacity, access to technology or summer schools.

The new package builds on the government's work throughout the pandemic to support the children most in need.

Nurseries, schools and colleges remained open to children from the most vulnerable families and have gone above and beyond to keep in contact with them.

The Department for Education has also invested more than £100 million in remote education – including delivering laptops and internet access to those who need them most.

Sir Peter Lampl, founder and chairman of the Sutton Trust and chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), said:

Despite the heroic efforts of schools, many pupils' learning has suffered as a result of school closures. These children are drawn disproportionately from disadvantaged communities and need extensive support.

We are delighted that the government is announcing a large sum today to benefit those pupils who need it the most. We are proud to support the tutoring programme. Extensive trials show that high-quality tuition is a cost-effective way to enable pupils to catch up. Through a collaboration of organisations across the country, our aim is to make this tuition available to tens of thousands of primary and secondary school pupils. Our hope is that it becomes a powerful tool for teachers in the years to come.