

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

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 today (Wednesday 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.

Given the size of the sample, the actual number of ex-teachers who have signed up is likely to be much larger.

Supply agencies are reporting that the levels of interest they are receiving represent a marked increase in the levels they would otherwise have expected in a normal year.

This comes as millions of children and young people returned to early years settings, schools and colleges last week as the Government continues to prioritise face to face education.

Overall levels of teacher absence are relatively stable compared to the end of last term, however the proportion of staff absent due to COVID-19 is higher than normal as a result of the Omicron variant and is expected to remain a challenge throughout the first weeks of term.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

Making sure all children and young people can attend school or college remains my number one priority.

I want to thank all former teachers who have come forward to support the national effort and help keep our children in face-to-face education. I call on all other former teachers who are able to do the same to come forward now.

The vaccine continues to help us pave the way out of this pandemic and more than ever it is absolutely vital that all those eligible get their booster or second jab, as well as continuing to test regularly.

Once teachers have signed up with an agency and have completed necessary

checks they are able to return to the classroom as soon as an opportunity arises that fits their subject specialism and local need.

The government continues to work closely with the sector to make sure every possible route is being used to keep schools equipped with the teaching staff they need to maintain face-to-face education.

Over a phased return during the first week, all secondary schools were asked to complete one on-site test for pupils to help reduce the transmission of Covid-19 after a period of social mixing. College and university students and all staff were asked to self-test at home before they returned to the classroom.

Proportionate safety measures remain in place in schools, colleges and universities to help reduce the transmission of the virus, including increased ventilation, testing and good hygiene, with older students and staff wearing face coverings in the classroom until the review point on 26 January.

All early years settings, schools, colleges, and universities are advised to continue to follow the latest guidance set out by the department which is kept regularly under review.

ENDS