



DEBATE PACK

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Support for pupils' education during school closures

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Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on the 'Support for pupils' education during school closures' has been scheduled for Wednesday 13 January 2021 from 9.30-11.00am. The debate has been initiated by Matt Western MP.

This debate pack sets out current policy on support for pupils, statistical information, recent parliamentary proceedings and related news.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

1.1 School Meals

During the initial, spring 2020 coronavirus lockdown, schools were closed to most pupils, and meals or food vouchers were provided to children staying at home. The provision of support outside of term time has been contentious issue throughout the pandemic. Vouchers were provided during the 2020 Easter, May half term and summer holidays. [A Covid Winter Grant Scheme](#), to be run by councils in England, has been announced to provide support from December 2020-March 2021.

Most pupils are again not in school during the national lockdown that began in January 2021. Families entitled to free school meals are being offered food parcels or vouchers, funded by the Government.

The Education Secretary [announced](#) on 6 January 2021:

Free school meals: extra funding will be provided to support schools to provide food parcels or meals to eligible students. The national voucher scheme will also re-open so that in the event schools cannot offer food parcels or provide an alternative local solution, every child can access free school meals while they are learning at home. [...]

Further details on the national voucher scheme will be provided shortly. Schools should work with their catering providers so that meals continue to be available to any eligible pupils still attending school – including all infants and those receiving benefits-related free school meals – as well as for meals or food parcels for eligible pupils staying at home where necessary.

Wider information on school meal support during the pandemic is available in section 5 of the Library briefing [School meals and nutritional standards](#).

1.2 Free School Meals data

A pupil is recorded in the school census as eligible for free school meals (FSM) if they meet the eligibility criteria **and** their parents make a claim.¹ The eligibility criteria can be found in full [here](#).

In January 2020 there were around **1.4 million** pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attending schools in England.²

Source: [Schools pupils and their characteristics: Jan 2020, DfE](#)

Constituency level figures can be built up from the published school level figures. These figures are based on the location of the school, not where pupils live. A breakdown of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by each constituency in England is provided in the excel file attached to the debate pack landing page.

¹ DfE, [School census business and technical specification version 1.7](#), December 2019

² Includes state-funded nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, non-maintained special schools, and pupil referral units

This is the most recent data available but may not reflect the number of pupils currently eligible for free school meal **vouchers** (which are provided to eligible children staying at home). This is because of the changes in economic circumstances since January 2020 which have likely increased the number of pupils which meet the eligibility requirements. In addition, pupils currently attending schools that are eligible for free school meals will receive them in school instead of receiving vouchers.

1.3 Provision of Laptops

On [7 August 2020 the Department for Education \(DfE\) announced](#) that further laptops for disadvantaged children would be made available, in addition to the 200,000 already distributed earlier in the year. These laptops were intended for children who could not attend school, either because of local lockdowns or because they are clinically vulnerable or otherwise unable to attend school. The DfE stated:

In the event of a disruption to face to face education at schools due to coronavirus (COVID-19), DfE can provide devices to help children and young people who are otherwise unable to access remote education.

Examples of this include:

- children with no digital devices in their household
- children whose only available device is a smartphone
- children with a single device in their household that's being shared with more than one other family member

Orders would be placed through schools. The announcement set out further information on eligibility and when orders could be placed:

Schools, maintained schools, academy trusts, hospital schools and further education providers who have enrolled 14 to 16-year-olds are included within this offer. They will receive an allocation of devices to be used to support the following groups if they do not have access to a digital device through other means:

- pupils in years 3 to 11
- clinically extremely vulnerable children across all year groups who are [shielding or self-isolating](#) on official advice
- children in all year groups unable to access remote education whilst attending school on a hospital site

Device orders can be placed when:

- face to face education at a school is disrupted following official advice
- a school supports a [clinically extremely vulnerable child who is shielding or self-isolating](#) following official advice
- a school is supporting children who live in an area subject to local restrictions which means they're unable to attend

The criteria for device allocations will be continually reviewed to ensure support is offered in the most effective way in relation to the extent of lockdown restrictions and the number of devices available.

The previous run of laptops had been allocated to local authorities and schools on assessments of local need. A previous PQ response from the Schools Minister had noted that:

Nick Gibb: [...] Local authorities and academy trusts are best place[d] to identify and prioritise children and young people who need devices. The Department is agreeing the number of devices allocated to each local authority and academy trust based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that do not have access to a device.

[\[PQ 47479, 20 May 2020\]](#)

Concerns were raised about the distribution of laptops during the autumn term, with schools concerned that they were in line to receive fewer laptops than they had originally been told. The Schools Minister recently provided an update on laptop provision, including statistical information on the laptops already distributed, and stated that changing allocations of laptops had been caused by the differing severity of Covid-19 outbreaks in different areas:

Nick Gibb: The Department has invested £195 million to support remote education and access to online social care. In addition to over 220,000 laptops and tablets being delivered during the summer term for disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access, we have supplemented this support by making an additional 340,000 laptops and tablets available in the event that face-to-face education is disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Since September 2020, over 100,000 of these have already been delivered to schools. More information about the allocation of laptops to date can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929064/Ad-hoc_stats_note_shipped_data_231020_FINAL.pdf (opens in a new tab).

The targeting of laptops and tablets through this scheme has continually been reviewed to ensure support is offered in the most effective way, to reflect the numbers of schools that have been disrupted and the number of laptops and tablets available at any time. In the context of significant demand, we have updated our allocation process to more accurately align orders with the number of students typically self-isolating, ensuring as many children as possible benefit from receiving a device this term. On 24 October 2020, the Department communicated this change in allocations to all schools. If schools are experiencing disruption to face-to-face education and believe they have a need for additional devices, they should contact the Department's service team via covid.technology@education.gov.uk (opens in a new tab) to request additional laptops or tablets.

[\[PQ 115644, 19 November 2020\]](#)

Following the announcement of a renewed national lockdown at the start of 2021, the Education Secretary [announced](#) further support would be provided:

The government has committed to providing over one million devices to help schools and colleges throughout the pandemic – with over 560,000 of these delivered through 2020. The scale of deliveries has now been increased, with a further 50,000 devices sent to schools

across the country on Monday alone. The government will deliver well over 100,000 devices over the course of this week.

The government is working with the UK's leading mobile network operators to provide access to educational sites. Schools can already request free mobile data uplifts for disadvantaged families, via the Department for Education's website.

The level of additional data for families will vary by provider, but for example Three customers will receive unlimited data and EE customers will receive an extra 20 gigabytes per month. Other providers supporting the offer include Tesco Mobile, Smarty, Sky Mobile, Virgin Mobile, Vodafone and O2.³

Vulnerable pupils and critical workers' children can continue to attend face-to-face provision during lockdown. DfE guidance on [accessing school places](#) sets out that pupils "who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)" come under the definition of a vulnerable pupil and may attend school.⁴

1.4 Electronic devices delivery data

The Department for Education has published several ad hoc [data releases](#) about the progress in delivering and dispatching electronic devices (laptops and tablets) and 4G routers to local authorities and academy trusts.

The most recent national progress data is as of 18 December 2020:

- Around **562,400 devices** were delivered or dispatched since the start of the scheme (2020 summer term).
- Of these around **341,900 devices** were delivered or dispatched since 10 September 2020. Data broken down by local authority and academy trust can be found on p7-50 of [the release](#).
- Around **54,600** 4G wireless routers were delivered or dispatched since the start of the scheme.

The release provides information about the small-scale pilot mobile network operator programme (which is currently in the process of being rolled out to all schools), as well as the BT Wifi voucher scheme which has ended.

The mobile network operator programme refers to requests for an increase in mobile data allowance raised by a Local Authority or Trust to the DfE. These requests can be made when they experience disruption to face-to-face education or for clinically extremely vulnerable children. As of 22 October, **205** requests were made.

In early 2020, [Ofcom's Technology Tracker](#) **estimated** that between 1.14 million and 1.78 million children under the age of 18 lived in households without access to a laptop, desktop or tablet in the UK.

³ DfE, [Education Secretary outlines plans to support young people](#), 6 January 2021

⁴ DfE, [Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](#), 5 January 2021

Ofcom estimated that between 227,000 and 559,000 lived in households with no access to the internet at home, while a further 473,000 to 913,000 lived in households whose only access to the internet was via mobile.

These estimates are expressed as ranges because they are based on a survey. Estimates broken down by local area or school year group are not published.

1.5 Remote education expectations

On 7 January 2021, the DfE updated its [guidance to schools](#) for the current lockdown. Remote education expectations are covered from p46 onwards.

To summarise:

- Remote education should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive if in school, and as a minimum:
 - Key Stage 1 (ages approx. 5 to 7): 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
 - Key Stage 2 (ages approx. 7 to 11): 4 hours a day
 - Key Stages 3 and 4 (ages approx.. 11 to 16): 5 hours a day

It should include either live or recorded direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete work independently.

For younger age groups (i.e., reception and key stage 1 pupils), there is an acknowledgement that online provision often needs more support from parents, and that this can create challenges. As such, the DfE doesn't expect schools to use solely digital means to teach these pupils.

Provision should also take into account pupils' special educational needs.

In terms of actual content, schools should teach a "planned and well-sequenced curriculum". They should also:

- Select and use an appropriate digital platform
- Distribute school-owned laptops to overcome digital barriers
- Provide printed resources
- Allow vulnerable and critical worker pupils to attend in person, where appropriate.
- Have systems to check whether pupils are engaging
- Identify a senior leader with responsibility for remote education

1.6 Oversight of remote education

Ofsted can inspect providers where there are significant concerns about the quality of remote education provided under Section 8 of the *Education Act 2005*, as amended. Routine inspections, in general, are suspended at the moment, but the intention is that Ofsted will continue to inspect schools graded inadequate, and some of those graded 'requires improvement' in the spring of 2021.

In his [Statement to Parliament](#) on 6 January 2021, Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, said that parents who had concerns about the education

provided should first “raise their concerns with the teacher or headteacher and failing that, report the matter to Ofsted”.

2. Parliamentary Material

2.1 Parliamentary Questions

Schools: Coronavirus

17 Dec 2020 | 126836

Asked by: Dr Matthew Offord

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the closure of schools in spring 2020 on children's attainment.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department: Department for Education (DfE)

Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on attainment and progress is a key research priority for the Government, and we have commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to consider catch up needs and monitor progress over the course of the 2020/21 academic year.

The ongoing research is based on a large sample of pupils from Years 1 to 11, and will allow the Department to understand how best to support the sector and which particular groups of pupils have been most affected by time out of school. This research is based on assessments that schools are already choosing to use this academic year, so it adds no additional burden on schools and does not require pupils to sit any additional assessments.

To address the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department has launched a £650 million universal catch-up premium, and a £350 million National Tutoring Programme (NTP) for disadvantaged pupils: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/catch-up-premium-coronavirus-covid-19>. The NTP went live on 2 November 2020 and schools are now able to access tuition to support disadvantaged pupils that need the most help to catch up.

Schools: Finance

30 Nov 2020 | 120848

Asked by: Grahame Morris

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to funding for schools from Parent Teacher Associations, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the amount and (b) the potential merits of meeting the decrease in that funding as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department: DfE

Getting all children and young people back into school for the new academic year has been a national priority. To support schools with this, they have continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in the 2020/21 financial year, £4.8 billion in 2021/22 and £7.1 billion in 2022/23, compared to the 2019/20 financial

year. On average, schools are attracting 4.2% more per pupil in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20.

The Department recognises that many publicly funded schools were not able to secure income from private sources during the period of lockdown, for example letting their facilities, providing wrap around childcare or offering catering services. As schools continued to receive their core funding allocations, regardless of any periods of closure or reduced operation, lost self-generated income was not covered by the exceptional costs fund.

Remote Education: Broadband and ICT

27 Nov 2020 | 116442

Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent progress his Department has made on ensuring that all pupils learning at home as a result of self-isolation or class closures have access to (a) digital devices and (b) adequate broadband provision.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department: DfE

As part of over £195 million invested to support access to remote education and online social care, we are making over 340,000 additional laptops and tablets available this term to support disadvantaged children in Years 3 to 11 whose face to face education may be disrupted. Since September, over 100,000 of these have already been delivered to schools.

This supplements over 220,000 laptops and tablets, which have already been delivered during the summer term. This represents an injection of over half a million devices by the end of the year.

We have also distributed over 51,000 4G wireless routers, which are provided with free data for the rest of the 2020/21 academic year. Routers can be distributed by the local authorities, academy trusts and schools who own them to any disadvantaged children and young people.

In partnership with mobile network operators, we are providing access to free additional data for the academic year, offering families flexibility to access the resources that they need the most.

Schools can request free mobile data uplifts for families who lack sufficient internet access, via the Get Help with Technology service, when they experience disruption to face to face education or for clinically extremely vulnerable children.

Remote Education: Coronavirus

19 Nov 2020 | 115644

Asked by: Kate Green

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools in England were told on 24 October 2020 by his Department that their allocation of laptops for disadvantaged pupils had been reduced.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department: DfE

The Department has invested £195 million to support remote education and access to online social care. In addition to over 220,000 laptops and tablets being delivered during the summer term for disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access, we have supplemented this support by making an additional 340,000 laptops and tablets available in the event that face-to-face education is disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Since September 2020, over 100,000 of these have already been delivered to schools. More information about the allocation of laptops to date can be found

here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929064/Ad-hoc_stats_note_shipped_data_231020_FINAL.pdf.

The targeting of laptops and tablets through this scheme has continually been reviewed to ensure support is offered in the most effective way, to reflect the numbers of schools that have been disrupted and the number of laptops and tablets available at any time. In the context of significant demand, we have updated our allocation process to more accurately align orders with the number of students typically self-isolating, ensuring as many children as possible benefit from receiving a device this term. On 24 October 2020, the Department communicated this change in allocations to all schools. If schools are experiencing disruption to face-to-face education and believe they have a need for additional devices, they should contact the Department's service team via covid.technology@education.gov.uk to request additional laptops or tablets.

Pupils: Coronavirus

21 Oct 2020 | HL8913

Asked by: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help pupils from low income backgrounds who have missed out on schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Answering member: Baroness Berridge | Department: DfE

The closure of schools to all but our most vulnerable children, and those from keyworker families, was a regrettable but necessary measure. Now it is a national priority for all pupils to enjoy full-time education at school as this is the best place to improve their well-being and development. We have put in place a range of measures to help schools address the time lost; this is especially important for disadvantaged pupils who have been affected most by time away from school.

Our £100 million support for remote education distributed 220,000 laptops and 57,000 internet connections to disadvantaged pupils, to enable them to continue learning at home, as well as supporting the foundation of the popular Oak Academy. The £1 billion COVID catch-up package, announced in June, includes the National Tutoring Programme. This will provide up to £350 million of targeted support for disadvantaged pupils who are most at risk of falling further behind. From November, this investment will give schools in all regions access to subsidised tuition supplied by approved tuition partners. The programme will support schools in the most deprived

areas to use in-house academic mentors to give small groups intensive catch-up tuition, small group tuition for 16-19-year olds and the improvement of early language skills in reception classes.

To complement the National Tutoring Programme, our £650million catch-up premium is enabling schools to target funding at specific pupil needs. The £1 billion package helps schools take immediate action to address the lost learning pupils are facing as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and is in addition to the £14.4 billion 3-year investment for schools announced last year.

We continue to provide pupil premium funding, worth £2.4 billion, that allows school leaders to design support reflecting their disadvantaged pupils' changing needs.

Education: Standards

12 Oct 2020 | 98780

Asked by: Abana Oppong-Asare

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to close the educational attainment gap in the last five years.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Department: DfE

We understand that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds may face greater challenges to realise their potential at school. This is why, since 2011, we have given more than £18 billion in extra grant funding to schools through the pupil premium, so that they can provide their disadvantaged pupils with additional support. £12 billion of this has been invested in schools since 2015.

In 2011, we established the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) to research and share the most effective approaches to improving academic outcomes. Since 2011, the EEF has run and reported on hundreds of trials in thousands of English schools. It maintains a range of internationally recognised effective practice resources and, in 2019, published its Pupil Premium Guide to help school leaders make the most impact with their pupil premium. All EEF's website resources are free to English schools. The EEF's Pupil Premium Guide is available here: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/pupil-premium-guide/>.

Between 2011 and 2019, the disadvantage attainment gap narrowed by 13% at age 11 and by 9% at age 16 against a background of rising standards. By early 2020, 86% of schools were judged to be good or outstanding, compared with 68% in 2010. Our reforms, and the focus provided by the pupil premium, supported this improvement.

Recognising the impact of school closures on all pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, on 19 June, we announced a £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package. Alongside our £650 million universal catch-up premium that enables schools to prioritise support for specific groups of pupils according to their needs, we launched the National Tutoring Programme to provide targeted support worth up to £350 million for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils who are most at risk of falling further behind. Schools in

the most deprived areas will be supported to provide intensive catch-up support to their pupils in small groups using academic mentors. This is in addition to our 2019 core funding commitment that will see an extra £14.4 billion provided to schools over the next 3 years.

Schools: Coronavirus

12 Oct 2020 | 98778

Asked by: Abena Oppong-Asare

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to tackle the educational attainment gap following the closure of schools as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Department: DfE

We know that school closures have had an adverse impact on all pupils, and we believe those from disadvantaged backgrounds will have been particularly affected. To ensure we properly understand all the impacts, we have commissioned independent research, which is currently in its early stages. Meanwhile, we have put in place a number of significant policy measures to help schools address the barriers to success that these pupils face, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Our £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package is providing additional funding to support children and young people whose education has been disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The package includes the National Tutoring Programme, which will provide up to £350 million of targeted support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils who are most at risk of falling further behind. From November, this investment will provide schools in all regions access to subsidised, high-quality tuition supplied by approved tuition partners. Schools in the most deprived areas will be supported to use in-house academic mentors to provide intensive catch-up support to their pupils in small groups.

The National Tutoring Programme sits alongside our £650 million universal catch-up premium funding for the current academic year, that will enable schools to prioritise support for specific groups of pupils according to their needs. We have also provided funding to support small group tuition for 16-19 year olds and the improvement of early language skills in reception classes. This £1 billion package is additional to the £14.4 billion 3 year investment in schools that we announced last year. Schools continue to receive the £2.4 billion pupil premium that allows school leaders to tailor the support they provide, based on the needs of their disadvantaged pupils, to accelerate their progress and improve their attainment.

This significant cash injection helps schools to take immediate action to address the learning lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We will continue to monitor the attainment gap closely, both at primary and secondary levels, as the nation recovers from the COVID-19 outbreak.

Children: Coronavirus

16 Sep 2020 | HL7798

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of children during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant school closures who (1) had no digital devices in their household, (2) whose only available device was a smartphone, (3) had access to a single device in their household which was shared with more than one other family member, and (4) the total number of children who were unable to access remote education consistently as a result.

Answering member: Baroness Berridge | Department: DfE

The department has already invested over £100 million to support remote education and has delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets to local authorities and academy trusts for children who would not otherwise have access.

The department allocated devices to local authorities and academy trusts based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that did not have access to a device through other means, such as a private device or through school. Local authorities and academy trusts were responsible for distributing the devices, being best placed to know which children and young people need access to a device delivered through the programme.

Where local authorities and academy trusts identified a need greater than their initial allocation, they could provide evidence and request more devices. No valid request for additional devices for eligible children was denied.

We are now supplementing this support by making an initial 150,000 available additional devices in the event face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions or local lockdowns, and children become reliant on remote education.

[Education: Coronavirus](#)

15 Sep 2020 | 78549

Asked by: Adam Holloway

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of education provided to school pupils during the period of school closures during the covid-19 outbreak.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department: DfE

As part of national social distancing measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, we had to limit the numbers of children and young people attending schools, colleges, and nurseries. That is why, between 20 March and 1 June, education and childcare settings were open only to priority groups.

During the period of partial school closures, schools did a huge amount to deliver remote education to pupils remaining at home. The Department has supported sector-led initiatives such as Oak National Academy, a new organisation created by 40 teachers from schools across England. The Department has made £4.84 million available for Oak National Academy both for the summer term of the academic year 2019-20, and then for the 2020-21 academic year to provide video lessons for reception up to year 11. This will include specialist content for pupils with special educational needs

and disability. The Oak National Academy will remain a free optional resource for 2020-21, as remote education may need to be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum for some pupils alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local lockdown. The Department is currently considering approaches to evaluating the Oak National Academy's effectiveness.

The Department published a comprehensive range of advice and guidance to support schools, including a list of high-quality online resources, which was assessed with support from some of the country's leading educational experts. The guidance also included examples of how schools can support pupils without internet access by, for example, providing physical work packs, which can be seen here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>, and here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/providing-physical-work-packs-for-pupils-with-limited-or-no-internet-connection>.

In addition to the departmental guidance and the work of the Oak National Academy, the BBC developed resources for families as part of a comprehensive new education package. This service was available during the period of partial school closures on television, BBC iPlayer and online at BBC Bitesize. Pupils without internet access were able to access the BBC's education content via the red button.

In June, the Government announced a £1 billion support package to ensure that schools can help all children and young people make up for the lost teaching time. The package consists of two elements: a universal catch up premium for schools of £650 million to help make up for lost teaching time, and a new £350 million National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils and students.

The Department has already invested over £100 million to support remote education, including the delivery of over 220,000 laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access. We are now supplementing this support by making available additional devices in the event face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of COVID-19 outbreaks or local lockdowns, and children become reliant on remote education.

Pupils: Computers

15 Jun 2020 | 58056

Asked by: Matt Western

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his oral contribution of 9 June 2020, Official Report, column 180, when the 230,000 laptops for school pupils were ordered by his Department; and what schedule for delivery has been agreed with the supplier.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department: DfE

The Department has ordered over 200,000 laptops and tablets. This order was placed on 19 April.

The Department is providing these devices in the shortest possible timeframe. Over 100,000 devices have been delivered to local authorities

and academy trusts and thousands of devices continue to be delivered each day. Laptops and tablets will continue to be delivered throughout June.

Computacenter is a supplier on a government framework. Computacenter has been contracted to provide laptops and tablets in order to meet the requirement for disadvantaged and vulnerable children across England to receive devices to support remote education and access to social care services during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Further details of the contract are publicly available: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/e9047eeb-be82-4506-8a97-448ff0d73cfe>.

As with all Government contracts, due diligence checks have been undertaken to assess the suitability of the supplier.

Remote Education: Computers

20 May 2020 | 47479

Asked by: Olivia Blake

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when Government funding will be made available to schools for laptops for remote learning for pupils during the covid-19 lockdown.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department: DfE

The Government has committed over £100 million to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children in England to access remote education, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G routers.

The Department is providing laptops and tablets to disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examinations in Year 10, receiving support from a social worker or are a care leaver. Where care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged children in Year 10 do not have internet connections, we are also providing 4G routers.

Local authorities and academy trusts are best place to identify and prioritise children and young people who need devices. The Department is agreeing the number of devices allocated to each local authority and academy trust based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that do not have access to a device.

2.2 Ministerial Statements and Committee Enquiries

Covid-19: Educational Settings

06 Jan 2021 | 686 cc763-853

Gavin Williamson | Department for Education

Statement on schools in national lockdown.

Home Education Inquiry

Commons Select Committee on Education

Opened 30 September 2020

3. Press Articles and Further Reading

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

3.1 Press Releases

['Give schools extra money to let pupils retake school year'](#)

Social Mobility Commission

7 January 2021

[Requesting details on Government plans to minimise learning loss during lockdown and support for reopening of schools](#)

Children's Commissioner for England

6th January 2021

[Education Secretary outlines plans to support young people](#)

Department for Education

6 January 2021

[The Sutton Trust responds to the latest announcement from the education secretary](#)

The Sutton Trust

6 January 2021

[Different lockdown, same problems?](#)

The Sutton Trust

6 January 2021

[Lockdown school closures mean we need to act now to save children's education and wellbeing](#)

Children's Commissioner for England

5 January 2021

[One million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people](#)

Department for Education

20 December 2020

[School funding boost confirmed for every local authority in England](#)

Department for Education

17 December 2020

[Thousands of schools to benefit from covid early years support](#)

Department for Education

16 December 2020

[New winter package to provide further support for children and families](#)

Department for Work and Pensions

8 November 2020

3.2 News Reports

[Covid-19: The challenges of home-schooling](#)

BBC

11 January 2021

[Praise for 'invaluable' teachers after Ofsted threat](#)

The *TES*

8 January 2021

[Fears schools will be overwhelmed by laptopless pupils](#)

BBC

7 January 2021

[School closures, remote learning, critical workers, nurseries and more: your lockdown education questions answered](#)

FE News

7 January 2021

[Ofsted 'angered' by Gavin Williamson's claim it will act as enforcer during school lockdown](#) [subscription required]

The Telegraph

7 January 2021

[Gavin Williamson confirms return of free school meals voucher scheme](#)

Children & Young People Now

6th January 2021

[Government to increase remote education expectation and demand video lessons](#)

Schools Week

6 January 2021

[750k laptops target by next week doesn't include new devices \(as PM promised\)](#)

Schools Week

6 January 2021

[New Ofsted monitoring inspections will go ahead this term](#)

Schools Week

6 January 2021

[Pupils without laptops can still go to school in England lockdown](#)

The Guardian

6 January 2021

[Online schooling: Calls to cut data fees during Covid lockdowns](#)

BBC

5 January 2021

[DfE under pressure to address digital divide as partial closures kick in](#)

Schools Week

5 January 2021

[Pupils face falling behind because they can't access online learning, headteachers and councils warn](#)

The Independent

5 January 2021

[MPs urge Johnson to ensure all pupils have digital resources for home learning](#)

The Guardian

4 January 2021

[NTP admits catch-up sessions 'may be postponed' as only half of providers can deliver home tuition](#)

Schools Week

4 January 2021

3.3 Commons Briefings

[School meals and nutritional standards \(England\)](#)

House of Commons Library

07 January 2021

3.4 Reports

[Investigation into the free school meals voucher scheme](#)

National Audit Office

2 December 2020

[LGA: More than a million young people in England could be missing full-time education](#)

Local Government Association

16 November 2020

[COVID-19 series: briefing on schools, October 2020](#)

Ofsted

10 November 2020

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