

Official Updates, information and contacts

• DfE Updated guidance:

- **New COVID hotline for schools reporting positive test** – this service can be reached by calling DfE's existing helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting the option for reporting a positive Covid case. <https://www.tes.com/news/covid-case-advice-hotline-schools-set-launch>
- **Accessing Covid tests and support from local health protection teams** - [Guidance on use of the test kits](#) provided to schools and colleges, including what to do if you haven't received these.
- A new [portal](#) on which, from 16 September, schools and colleges will be able to make a monthly order for more kits. You will need a Unique Organisation Number (UON) to place an order, which you should receive on or before 16 September. If you have not received this number by tomorrow, you are advised to call the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119.
- **Parents' evenings and open days** – Many colleagues are unsure what to do about holding parents' evenings and open days this term. Unions have raised these questions with DfE. We understand that the DfE had been about to issue some guidance on this, but is reviewing this in light of the new 'rule of six' announcement.
Our understanding is that events like these are likely to be considered 'educational activities' and therefore exempt from the rule of six. However, we would advise members to proceed cautiously when organising parents' evenings or open days until this is confirmed.
- **Updated guidance on providing free school meals** - In April, the government temporarily extended free school meals eligibility to include some groups who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). It has confirmed that this temporary extension will continue as schools return for the autumn term. It covers both pupils who are attending school and who are unable to attend if they are required to self-isolate or if local lockdown arrangements are in place. Further information on the eligibility criteria can be found in the [guidance for the temporary extension of free school meals eligibility to NRPF groups](#).
- **New guidance on Maternity and Adoption Leave: Your rights as an employee** - This guidance and checklist by ASCL Pay and Conditions Specialist, Louise Hatswell aims to help you know what steps to take and when, and your entitlements and options if you are a senior leader working in a school, academy or sixth form college in England. It has been produced so that ASCL members who are pregnant or on maternity leave are aware of their entitlements. It will also be useful for ASCL members who manage staff who are pregnant or on maternity leave. Download the guidance [here](#).
- **Support for students who have had to defer their place in HE** - On 11 September, the government released details of a [package of support](#) for students who have had to defer their place at higher education establishments in 2020. The package includes healthcare worker and paid tutoring roles, industrial placements, volunteering roles and an agreement by universities to keep in touch with students who have had to defer their place this autumn. The package is aimed for those who were impacted by Covid in some way, although some of the support is available to anyone who decided to defer a place in higher education this autumn for other reasons.

Sharing good practice

News from Tower Hamlets and THEP schools

- **Positive COVID cases in schools – template letters** – please see attached
- **Ofsted QA Pilot visit** – Please see attached documents including questions from two recent pilot visits, one in THEP and another further afield.

Further afield

- **New COVID hotline for schools reporting positive test** – this service can be reached by calling DfE's existing helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting the option for reporting a positive Covid case. <https://www.tes.com/news/covid-case-advice-hotline-schools-set-launch>
- **Remote Learning Contingency Plans** – see attached document from the Mead Educational Trust
- **Operation Encompass Teachers' Helpline** - Operation Encompass has set up a Teachers' Helpline to assist school staff supporting children who may be dealing with domestic abuse. Funded by the Home Office, the helpline will be available weekdays from 8am to 11am throughout term-time and will provide school staff with the opportunity for guidance, information and support from Educational Psychologists. For more information and resources, please [visit the Operation Encompass website](#).

Current leadership thinking/key questions for this week

- We know that time is a premium and there is so much to do. If you can carve out 10, 30 or 60mins in a week for 'leadership thinking', the following 3R framework may be useful.
 1. **Reflect** – what have we learnt about our response so far (this term, the last 6mths etc); what have I learnt about my own response; what have I learnt about my senior team etc?
 2. **Reinvent** – where are we identifying opportunities to do things differently as a result of this crisis? Where can we innovate and change things for the better, permanently? Who can help us look at problems differently/ bring a fresh perspective to 'sticky issues'?
 3. **Refocus** – What were our school improvement priorities before COVID? Are they still relevant in a post-COVID world and how can we recapture the momentum? Do we need to revisit our values or vision in light of what we now know and build consensus around our collective 'why' again?

THEP Support

- **Primary AHT/DHT Network** – Thursday 17th September – 4.15-5.30pm Book through SLA Online
- **THEP Professional Learning courses** – Early-bird discount deadline 18th September 2020. We know some of you have had difficulty accessing SLA Online. We think this has now been resolved but do contact info@the-partnership.org.uk if you are still experiencing problems.
- **Primary Phase Consultative** – Wednesday 23rd September – 9am
- **THEP Primary EYFS and KS1 & 2 training programmes.** Please find attached a NQT registration form. Our first session is on Wednesday 23rd September at 1.30pm. Host julia.weston@the-partnership.org.uk.
- **Year Group training – Year 1** – Friday 25th September 1.30-4pm – book through SLA Online
- Other shared resources and documents can be found here: <http://www.the-partnership.org.uk/web/covid-19>

Headteacher well-being

- **THEP Headteacher leadership coaching programme** – you should all have been contacted by your coaches by now and in the process of booking in your first session. A reminder that these will be conducted online unless specifically agreed otherwise with your coach. Any questions please contact James Heale

Tower Hamlets Education Partnership

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