

FAQs – as at 21 January 2021

This document serves to answer queries that have been raised by members, and the responses provide clarification that has been sought from the DfE.

Question / Issue	Answer
Digital support, exams, free school meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a bit more information on laptops/digital support/Jan exams/summer exams/FSM in the oral statement made by the SoS below: Education Secretary statement to Parliament on national lockdown - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Guidance: Get laptops and tablets for children who cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19)
To what extent will the RPA cover any liability for errors or injury during the administering of tests?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RPA will indemnify members if a claim is brought by a third party (including pupils) or employees. It will cover death, injury, or damage to third-party property, due to the school or colleges undertaking the rapid tests. It would be advisable that these establishments and all other schools and colleges which are not members of the RPA, should contact their individual commercial insurance provider, for definitive clarification on cover. RPA cover is subject to the usual RPA Membership Rules and its terms, conditions, and limitations. It will include defence costs and any damages/compensation that the Member is legally liable to pay to the claimant. The RPA will not provide an indemnity to any other party (e.g., the machine manufacturer) if the other party incurs a legal liability. It is a requirement that risk assessments are undertaken, recorded, and adhered to. In the event of loss or damage to any equipment that is owned by or the Member's responsibility (e.g., through a lease or hire agreement) used in the provision of the testing, the RPA will provide an indemnity to the Member for the cost of repair or replacement. The cover is subject to the usual RPA Membership Rules (including all limitations, conditions, and exclusions).
What does the announcement mean for testing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and colleges should continue with their preparations to implement the rapid testing programme. Once ready, they should commence testing staff and students who are vulnerable or with critical worker parents. With the reduced scale of the testing programme over the next few weeks, schools and colleges should use this time to continue developing their testing capabilities with the Department's support and guidance if required. The plan is also to roll out testing of staff in primary schools later this month, to help support the reopening of education settings.
The extent of list of eligible critical workers is a concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where schools are concerned about lack of their own capacity to enable vulnerable children's attendance where it is appropriate for these children, they are encouraged to work collaboratively with other schools and education providers and other local partners (including the local authority, social workers, police, youth services, key workers etc.) to maximise opportunities for face-to-face provision for these children and young people.
Vaccines for school staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the priority groups for the first phase of vaccine rollout, those over 50 years of age, and all those 16 years of age and over in a risk group, are eligible for vaccination within the first phase of the programme. This will include some staff in the early years sector. Regarding the next phase of vaccine rollout, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) have asked that the Department of Health and Social Care consider occupational vaccination in collaboration with other government departments.

<p>Normally FSM numbers are taken from the October census to inform school budgets. This raises a concern because of increased FSM pupils because of COVID (e.g. a school locally reports 17% more FSM pupils have been registered between October and January). Is the Government going to take the most up to date census for FSM (i.e. January) so that schools are funded appropriately?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No, no plans to shift to from the lagged system. It's always a balance of the advantages, but we continue to think that certainty over budgets that the lagged system delivers outweighs the benefits of funding being as "up-to-date" as possible. And, of course, we/LAs would need to set up new systems (and have little to no time to do that in) if we were going to use January data for schools' core budgets.
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If you have a further query that has not been answered, then please send this to info@isbl.org.uk.