Twitter Thread by Tes



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Education secretary @GavinWilliamson now delivering a statement in the Commons on plans for bringing children back to school. Stay tuned for live updates.

The government's response is proportionate to the risk at hand, @GavinWilliamson says.

.@GavinWilliamson says in a small number of areas where infection rates are highest, only vulnerable pupils and children of key workers will attend primary school face-to-face. This is NOT all Tier 4 areas. The overwhelming majority of primaries will open as planned on Monday.

For secondary schools, it will be a staggered start, says @GavinWilliamson – with staff testing starting from 4 January, exam years returning on 11 January and everyone back in by 18 January

In particularly hard-hit areas, @GavinWilliamson says that exam year students, as well as vulnerable students and children of key workers, will still attend secondary schools in person, with all other classes taking place remotely

.@KateGreenSU says that the government has lost control of the virus and it is now losing control of children's education…it is clear its plans have failed

.@KateGreenSU going in on the detail of the government's plans for schools – asking for data on schools, laptop rollout and how the government plans to support working parents who now have unexpected childcare issues

.@KateGreenSU also asking about those students taking exams (eg, BTECs) over the next few weeks, and what the DfE plans to do to make sure these exams are fair

It appears @GavinWilliamson and @KateGreenSU are locked in a battle to see who can thank teachers the most on behalf of their respective sides

.@GavinWilliamson declines to outline the advice given to the government by Sage, saying only that Sage will publish its findings "soon"

.@halfon4harlowMP says he has "real worries" about the impacts of closures of schools on vulnerable students and families and asks what risk assessments have been carried out – and asks for school and college staff to be put at the front of the queue for vaccinations

.@GavinWilliamson says that the government will do everything it can to avoid "kneejerk reactions" in closing schools

.@GavinWilliamson doesn't address the call to put school and college staff at the front of the queue for vaccinations

GCSE and A-level exams will go ahead as planned, pledges @GavinWilliamson

James Cartlidge (South Suffolk, Conservative) reiterates @halfon4harlowMP's calls for school and college staff to be prioritised for vaccinations

.@GavinWilliamson says that vaccination decisions cover a "whole wealth of areas", and the most clinically vulnerable are being prioritised – once through that "clinical need", decisions over vaccinating teachers and school staff can be made

Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington, Labour) raises heads' anger over the government's detail-light pre-Christmas announcement on testing in schools – calls again for vaccinations for front-line teachers and asks about support for vocational exams

.@GavinWilliamson says on vaccinations that once the vulnerable groups are worked through, he hopes school staff are looked at to ensure "they are high up on the list"

.@YvetteCooperMP uses a local college to illustrate the point that schools and colleges are currently having to plan for mass testing without knowing what financial and practical support they will be receiving to help them carry out said testing

.@GavinWilliamson says the details are readily available

We will be guided by the public health advice on a local basis, says @GavinWilliamson in response to a question on how long these measures will be in place