



# Pearson

## Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



### The week in a nutshell

The **Prime Minister** reiterated, on Thursday, that he still considered **8 March** to be the earliest and “most prudent date to set” for schools in England to start to reopen. This followed Tuesday’s announcement by **Nicola Sturgeon** which outlined plans to reopen schools full time **from 22 February** for P1-P3 pupils, along with pre-schoolers, and a part-time limited return for secondary school students. Schools in Wales are also aiming for 22 February opening too. Learning loss has also been prominent this week with **Sir Kevan Collins** appointed as the **Education Recovery Commissioner**, to deliver measures that will help students who have missed out on face-to-face education. And an **Institute for Fiscal Studies** report suggesting the cost of lost schooling will amount to billions of pounds lost in the long run. The report also suggests that the £1.5bn allocated so far to help children catch up will not be enough to prevent inequalities from widening.

This week’s **Policy Blog** is by **Cindy Rampersaud** and covers the latest phase of the Post-16 Review of Level 3 qualifications. We have also **published our response to the consultation**.

As well as including all previous editions of Policy Watch, our **Policy Hub** includes our latest **policy blogs** and recordings of **events**.

### Top stories

**The Prime Minister has appointed a new commissioner to oversee educational catch-up which will consist of a “comprehensive programme of catch-up aimed at young people who have lost out on learning due to the pandemic.”**

- **Sir Kevan Collins’** most recent role was as Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation. In his new role, he will work with Government to deliver measures that will support children who have missed out on face-to-face education. He will report directly to the PM and the Secretary of State but his role will see him consulting closely with parents, teachers and schools.

**The Government announced that thousands of students will benefit from an additional £50m support to assist them with financial pressures caused by the pandemic.**

- The new funding will allow universities to provide support for those facing additional costs for alternative accommodation, loss of employment or extra costs to access online learning.
- **Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan** said that this “additional support will provide real, tangible help for those students struggling financially as a result of the pandemic.”

**The Institute for Fiscal Studies has released a report which notes that the costs of lost schooling could amount to hundreds of billions of pounds in the long-run. Key findings include:**

- Early evidence already suggests this loss of schooling is contributing to lower educational progress and skills, **particularly for disadvantaged pupils.**
- Existing evidence on returns to schooling would imply a long-run loss in earnings of **£350bn.**
- So far, governments across the UK have allocated about £1.5bn towards the cost of catch-up. **This is highly unlikely to be sufficient to help pupils catch-up or prevent inequalities from widening.**

The Scottish Government announced that the youngest Scottish pupils, from P1 - P3 as well as pre-schoolers **are likely to be phased back to the classroom** from 22nd February.

- A final decision and further details on the plan will be taken in a fortnight (16 Feb), as well as a time-scale for in-person learning for colleges and universities. There could be a part-time return for senior school students who are taking national qualifications.

## Pearson news

**Pearson response to Post 16 Level 3 qualification review** Pearson has published its response to the latest stage of the DfE's review of Post-16 qualifications at Level 3 [Click here](#)

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## Pearson tweet of the week



## Other news

### COVID-19

- [COVID-19 Committee - What will this period of online learning mean for children's futures?](#)
- [NAHT - responses to consultations on awarding qualifications in summer 2021](#)
- [Sutton Trust - The Sutton Trust responds to Ofqual consultation on awarding grades](#)
- [AOC - AoC respond to Ofqual consultations on awarding grades \(summer 2021\)](#)
- [Universities Alliance - UA submission to Ofqual & DfE consultations on summer 2021 grades](#)
- [Institute for Fiscal Studies - Costs of lost schooling could amount to hundreds of billions in the long-run](#)
- [Institute for Fiscal Studies - The crisis in lost learning calls for a massive national policy response](#)
- [Sutton Trust - The Sutton Trust responds to the latest IFS report](#)

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## Parliamentary

- Prime Minister appoints Dr. Alex George as Youth Mental Health Ambassador
- Ministerial Statement - Higher Education Update
- Urgent Question - Support for University Students: Covid-19
- Department for Education - Government announces £50 million to support students impacted by Covid-19
- EDM 1416 - Tabled 27 January 2021 - Plan for schools to safely reopen during the covid-19 outbreak
- Education Committee - Letter from the Department for Education regarding vaccinations, infection rates and testing for COVID-19, dated 29 January 2021
- Education Committee - Letter from the Chief Regulator at Ofqual regarding the awarding of qualifications in 2021, dated 1 February 2021
- Education Committee - Letter from the Commissioner for Public Appointments regarding the appointment process of the Chair of the Office for Students, dated 28 January 2021
- Education Committee - Work Appointment of the Chair of the Office for Students (2 February 2021)

## Regulators & inspectorates

- Ofsted - launches point-in-time surveys

## Schools

- New Commissioner appointed to oversee education catch-up
- Social Mobility Commission - Social Mobility Commission unveils Annual Review 2020
- NASUWT - Education recovery must recognise unprecedented challenges in schools
- NEU - comment on delay to Ofsted inspections
- BACP - MPs launch inquiry into children and young people's mental health services

## FE & skills

- Centre for Progressive Public Policy - It's risky business to have an employer-dominated skills system

## Higher Education

- UCAS - Students turn to technology with university choices
- Universities Alliance - University Alliance response to the Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England second stage consultation
- Russell Group - response to DfE/Ofqual consultation on summer 2021 assessment

## Scotland

- Scottish schools to start phased return this month
- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) - Virus levels must fall substantially for school return to be confirmed

## Wales

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- Welsh Government - Pledge to support youth with extra £9.4m investment in children and young people mental health services

### **Northern Ireland**

- Alternative Awarding Arrangements for CCEA Qualifications in Summer 2021
- CCEA - welcomes the Education Minister's announcement on the alternative awarding arrangements for summer 2021
- Northern Ireland Executive - £12 million to support students announced

## **What's happening in Parliament next week**

### **House of Commons**

- Tuesday 9th February: COVID-19 Committee - Education Committee - Left behind white pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, Accountability hearings

### **House of Lords**

- Tuesday 9th February: COVID-19 Committee - Living online: the long-term impact on wellbeing

**Recess dates announced** – Both the Commons and Lords will rise on Thursday 11 February and return on Monday 22 February