

Thursday 12 January 2012

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Need to Know 2011/12 - Information for heads, principals and governors

Spring Term

In the Schools White Paper '*The Importance of Teaching*' we committed to reducing bureaucracy and prescription on schools. Since then we have been working hard to reduce bureaucracy and give heads and teachers the freedom to focus on what really matters.

As part of this, departmental guidance has been reduced by more than half - if something is statutory it is clearly indicated. In our communications to schools we focus on highlighting the key things that need to be implemented and planned for, as well as clarifying the misconceptions that circulate around the things that schools need to do or have in place.

This is the second termly bulletin of 'need to know' information following positive feedback on the first one produced for the 2011 Autumn Term. It signposts important information to help you plan ahead, prepare for and implement changes that will take place during the remainder of this academic year, including mandatory legal requirements. We have tried to be as precise as possible, but some of the timings are indicative and may change. To receive the latest news and updates please consider the options for keeping in touch with the Department at the end of this email.

[Act now - updated timeline of milestones for 2011/12](#)

Now the [Education Bill](#) has gained Royal Assent, we have updated our implementation timeline to include information on when provisions and mandatory requirements will come into force, as well as other important information to help you plan ahead, including:

- The new inspection framework for schools, along with an evaluation schedule and supporting guidance, which will be published this month;
- Information about how schools can register their interest in converting to Academy status in time for the new school year. Further information on how to register an interest can be found [on the Department's website](#).
- The consultation on proposed changes to school organisation legislation, including the statutory process for closing and making alterations to maintained schools, which will begin in March;
- Any newly accredited qualifications that will be included in the headline indicators for the 2014 Key Stage 4 performance tables, which will be confirmed in March

[Reducing burdens and bureaucracy - update](#)

We have updated the 'myths and facts' document for schools. This document addresses a number of common misconceptions about the activities schools are required to undertake and makes clear the areas where burdens and prescription have been lifted, including:

- Parental consent is not necessary for every off-site educational visit - only those involving nursery age children, taking place out of school hours or of higher risk (e.g. using a climbing wall)
- There is no statutory obligation to produce a written lesson plan for every lesson

[Statutory policies and other documents that schools should have in place - new](#)

This document makes clear the policies and other documents that schools must have in place, the legislation to which they relate, and to which types of schools they apply.

We are also in the process of revising, updating and reducing the statutory guidance aimed at schools to reflect changes stemming from the Education Act.

Keep up to date with the latest news in education We want to make it easier for you to access the latest information. Here are some of the ways you can keep up to date with the DfE:



[Follow us on twitter.](#) We post daily links to the latest DfE news, as well as important new guidance and interesting stories.



[Join our Facebook group.](#) We use our new Facebook group to support major consultations - such as the curriculum review - and to encourage ongoing debate on key issues like behaviour.



[Visit our partner page on TES Connect.](#) We will host forums, webchats and highlight key announcements and other information for teachers on our new page.

DfE

[Respond to our consultations.](#) On our e-consultation website you can access all of our live and archived consultations, or view the results of consultations.

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