

Supporting children, young people and families – special educational needs and disabilities (Covid-19 2020)

Schools, colleges and nurseries are closed until further notice for **most** children. However schools should offer places in school for children of keyworkers, vulnerable children (e.g. who have a social worker) and children with education, health and care plans (EHCP) who would be at **significant risk** if their EHCP provision and placement did not continue - namely **those who could not safely be supported at home**.

Having an EHCP does not necessarily mean schools will offer children and young people a place, but it does mean the school should be considering them individually to identify if they need this. Schools and professionals who normally work with children and young people, will be **keeping in touch** with families throughout this period.

The Government advice about Coronavirus (Covid 19) is that council staff must work from home if possible. We are continuing to work with schools and others to support vulnerable children and young people and children of key workers. EHCP Coordinators and Managers will be in contact with parent/carers, schools and other professionals.

All EHCP Coordinators are contactable by phone and email and have Skype for Business for meetings.

Please see below for some details of how we will continue with our essential work:

Special Educational Needs and Disability Advisory Panel (SENDAP)

We will continue to run SENDAP remotely every week using Skype and telephone calls. This will decide whether to agree requests for an EHC Needs Assessment. It will also decide whether to issue an EHC plan after an assessment.

EHC Needs Assessments

We will prioritise completing EHC needs assessment and producing EHC plans. We will continue to work to legal deadlines where possible. Our new digital EHC Hub is now live and we encourage parents and carers and education providers to use this for new assessment requests. The digital EHC Hub can be accessed via www.northlincslocaloffer.com all SENCOs have been provided with a log in.

Professionals will continue to provide advice towards EHC needs assessments. They will do this using their knowledge of the child or young person. They will also speak with other professionals about the children and young people. Their reports will be sent using the digital EHC Hub.

Co-production of EHC Plans

The SEND Team will write a draft plan. And will send this by email to families, schools and advice givers – and via the HUB (for assessments started after 28th January 2020). We will contact families by phone or Skype to explain the contents of the plan. We will also ask families for their views and for any amendments they would like to see. Families can also email their comments to us – and use the HUB (if the assessment started after 28th January 2020). School staff and professionals will provide their views using the Hub. We will consider all amendments requested. We will then issue a final EHC plan.

Annual Review meetings

Schools may need to postpone annual review meetings due to take place in the summer term. We support schools holding a review by virtual meetings by telephone or video. Examples of video applications are Skype, Zoom or Facetime.

Short Breaks allocation supporting children, young people and families.

Our main priority is to continue to support families throughout these extremely challenging times in a safe way. We fully acknowledge that the measures introduced will create specific challenges for specific families, particularly those with complex health needs and where behaviours may challenge. Families are often supported by a number of professionals and resources which due to the risks identified regarding Covid- 19 may have been significantly reduced.

Support will continue to be offered via telephone and other methods to families where deemed appropriate, however where it is identified that there is a significant risk of parental/ carer fatigue and subsequent risk of family breakdown individual risk assessments will be undertaken. All risk assessments will be completed, or supported by a Specialist Social Worker. Short breaks will only be offered if deemed essential to reduce this risk and enable the young person to remain with family.

Any short breaks offered will:

- Be carried out in the young person's home where possible
- Not be carried out if the young person, or a member of their household is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or is self-isolating due to symptoms
- Will not be offered to families where the young person has been offered a school place but chosen not to attend
- Adhere to strict hand hygiene guidance

If short breaks are completed within the Cygnets setting:

- No more than two young people will be on site at any one time
- Families will not enter the building, medications etc. will be collected from parents in the foyer
- High standard of infection control and hygiene in place. Objects and surfaces which are touched regularly are frequently cleaned & disinfected
- Sanitiser and/or wipes to be easily accessible throughout the home
- Clear signage outlining risks and hygiene procedures visible throughout the home
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be on site for use by staff if required
- The number of staff within the home at any one time or when children are not present will be reduced wherever possible
- If a young person, or staff member displays symptoms of COVID-19 during a short break they will be isolated in a well ventilated room until able to leave the building.

Specialist Social Work

Social Workers will continue to complete visits to young people and their families and complete reviews to ensure support remains appropriate given the current situation. Social workers will be using creative strategies to ensure visits and reviews are completed safely, using a range of technologies. If any families have any concerns regarding this they are encouraged to discuss this with their social worker at the earliest opportunity.

Specialist Teaching Teams and Education Psychology

All families that teams are actively involved with have been contacted by letter and some with follow up emails. Teams are in daily contact with schools and are:

- Providing parents/carers with telephone and email details to contact teams, ensuring they are aware of the support offered.
- Providing advice and resources - sent or delivered to families as appropriate.
- Discussing individual children and young people with schools to ensure support is available.
- Adding information and resources to the [Local Offer](#) and continuing to update this over time.
- Developing strategy and ideas to support successful and smooth transition once schools return.
- Continuing to triage new referrals which are discussed on a weekly basis.
- Providing reports for EHCP assessments and reviews.
- Supporting children into new school 'hub' provisions.
- Attending and requesting virtual professional meetings to review and plan additional support.
- Developing parental support forums through social media platforms.
- Developing virtual parent 'drop-ins' alongside Children's Centres using WhatsApp video conferencing.
- Seeking out and sharing best practice from schools to support pupils.

Helpful information for families

Our [SEND Local Offer](#) website has useful resources for families including:

- **Kooth** – A free online mental health and emotional wellbeing support service to help children and young people living in North Lincolnshire.
- **How to register for support** if you or your child has a medical condition which makes you **extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families** open letter to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities their parents/carers and families, and all others who support them.
- **Update from the Carers' Support Centre, Brigg** .
- **Education, Health and Care Plan Risk Assessment**. Education and training providers will consult with families and professionals and use this risk assessment to support decision making.
- You can **watch British Sign Language versions of government advice**.

- Coronavirus support for **employees, benefit claimants and businesses**
- **Coronavirus – What it means for you** – Citizen’s Advice website.
- **Free School Meals** – is your family eligible?

There is also a wide range of resources which will help you support and reassure your child if they are remaining at home, including:

- **Special edition newsletter March 2020** – A variety of information and teaching and learning resources for parents
- **MENCAP Easy Read on Coronavirus**
- **Neurodiversity 101 – Anxiety**
- **Talking to children about Coronavirus**
- **Coronavirus video for older children** – excellent guidance about the coronavirus and staying calm suitable for older children
- **Coronavirus video for younger children** – an animated video for young children on staying at home

- **Sure Start Newsletter**
- **A compilation of resources for students and families** with English as an additional language
- **5 point scale – angry birds blank**
- **5 point scale Adult guidance chart**
- **5 point scale- fan blank**
- **Coronavirus Social Story**
- **Daily schedule**
- **Friendly and unfriendly actions**
- **Full pack home symbols**
- **Ideas for making the most of your Lego at home**
- **Learning in Lockdown** – a website/blog with lots of interesting ideas to engage children updated everyday
- **Nice Hands social story**
- **The Stay Home Superheroes**

For further information please contact:

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