

Update to SEN Information Report in the light of COVID-19

This is an update to the SEND Information Report, setting out the arrangements in place to support our children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during the COVID-19 related partial school closure starting from 5th January 2021.

Since the situation in which we find ourselves is fast-moving; this report is based on current information available and is subject to change.

What are the entitlements of children and young people with SEN when schools are closed to Coronavirus?

From 5th January 2021, all schools were ordered to effectively close, retaining a skeleton staff to provide education for the children of key workers, and some 'vulnerable children'.

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker, looked after children and those with a statutory **Education, Health and Care plan (EHC)**. This, however, remains a family-based decision, with the school and Inclusion Manager supporting each family individually. The majority of children with SEND, who receive SEN Support at school but do not have an EHC plan, are expected to stay home unless they have a social worker or a parent or carer who is a critical worker.

As announced by the Government, it is likely that this criterion is unlikely to change before February half term 2021. With reference to the first period of national lockdown, once the current transmission and death rate is in decline and new guidance is issued by the Government; we would anticipate extending eligibility criteria to include Pupil Premium children and those with significant additional needs who are not in receipt of an EHC plan. The school will use their current inclusion register to inform these decisions.

Do schools have to allow all children with EHC plans to attend?

No – it will depend on whether they would be as safe or safer attending school rather staying home. The aim of this period of national lockdown is to reduce the current transmission rate of Covid-19, to ensure this within our setting, we must be sure that individual's and staff's safety can be maintained.

For those with an EHC Plan who ARE attending school during this period of national lockdown, we have maintained our best endeavours to ensure that familiar and appropriate staff are included within staff bubbles to maintain as much EHC plan individual provision as possible. The Inclusion Manager continues to collaborate with parents and staff to determine how, in these current circumstances, we can maintain 'best endeavours' to deliver statutory provision, as identified within the EHC plan.

For those with an EHC Plan who ARE NOT currently in attendance, the school have considered the following.

- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the availability of appropriately trained staff (school will liaise with the local authority if a place is needed for an eligible child, but the school is unable to provide the specialist staffing for it)
- the views of parents and children will be considered in determining whether children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in school

In addition to these risk assessments, all families with children who attend Graffham CE Infant and Duncton CE Junior Schools; and have an EHC plan receive regular communication from teachers, support staff and the inclusion manager, via their preferred method of communication. This maybe email, Class Dojo, phone calls or text messages. These phone calls are to check that families can access appropriate help and advice during the COVID-19 situation and to ensure that any risks to a child or young person's health, well-being or safety if they do not receive a particular provision or intervention, are addressed.

How long are schools likely be closed?

Schools should currently be providing support to some vulnerable children and the children of key workers. On 5th January 2021, the Government announced that all schools would be effectively closed (except critical worker families and EHC plans) until at least February half term. We await further guidance as to when schools are expected to re-open.

My child has an EHC plan – does the Local Authority still have a legal duty to deliver provision?

Yes – however, given the significant disruption to staffing, it may be very difficult for schools or Local Authorities to deliver the precise provision in the EHC plan over the next few weeks.

The school continues to liaise with children, families and outside agencies to maintain our very best endeavours to support statutory provision stated within EHC plans.

As a school we will continue to keep in touch with you. In the meantime, as parents/carers please contact us if you have any enquiries about the provision for your child including how we can help with any provision.

My child has an EHC plan and was due to have an Annual Review. What will happen now?

As in the first national lockdown, school will continue to complete virtual Annual Reviews. Care is taken to ensure that children, families and staff are made to feel as comfortable as possible during this process. Appropriate technology will be provided for families if this is a problem for them.

A request for statutory assessment for my child has been sent to the Local Authority – will they still carry out an assessment?

The Local Authority will continue to carry out EHC assessments. The Authority's ability to comply with deadlines may be hampered by staff absence; and the way EHC assessments are usually conducted may be affected by the availability of staff and restrictions on face-to-face contact and working from home. The Local Authority will endeavour to continue to fulfil statutory duties within a reasonable time frame.

My child has an EHC plan and is still attending school – how will my child's learning be supported at school?

It is important to note that school will endeavour to provide as full a curriculum as possible. Learning will be planned around three elements:

- 1) the current needs displayed by the child
- 2) provision stated within the EHC plan
- 3) current targets
- 4) activities provided by class teachers via our online learning platform, Class Dojo

Currently, schools are able to maintain statutory hours for those in receipt of an EHC Plan. However, due to staffing issues there may need to be alterations to the frequency and timing of the delivery of provision in school, e.g., moving to a part-time timetable, different staff providing provision. Where possible, this will be discussed with children and their families. Contingency plans are already in place and have been discussed with the families involved.

How can I support my child's learning at home?

Home learning is accessible via our Class Dojo pages. Each class and year group have their own pages, alongside a whole school community page. Skills based learning activities are posted throughout the week, with planning and paper packs available on request for families. We are trying to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum experience and so are including video-based learning from our PE, music, art and Spanish specialists.

Further information can be found in our Remote Learning Policy, please visit our Covid response page on our website:

<https://graffhamandduncton.w-sussex.sch.uk/covid-19-academic-year-2020-2021>

For those with an EHC Plan and who are not currently attending school, additional videos and activities are posted onto individual Dojo Portfolios from teachers and support staff.

If your child has an identified Special Educational Need and is on the register the class teacher will have taken account of their needs when planning for and providing for work to be completed at home. However, if your child is working below age related expectations or has specific SEN needs that means they access the curriculum at a different level, please use information and links from earlier year groups.

If your child is staying at home, is currently working with a therapist and direct therapy is not possible it may be possible for:

- A speech and language therapist to deliver sessions via video link or phone call
- An occupational therapist or a physiotherapist video linking to a child's home and modelling exercises that the parents could do with their child
- Advisory teachers from Inclusion support to hold a consultation with you via phone call

All families currently working with a therapist have been contacted directly via the therapist, inclusion manager or class teacher. The inclusion manager is liaising with all therapies and agencies regularly to ensure needs are being met.

Please contact us if you have any enquiries about accessing any additional provision for your child or if you have any general queries about delivering home learning to your SEN child.

Please ring the school on 01798 867324 (Graffham) / 01798 342402 (Duncton) or send a joint email to the Inclusion Manager, copying in your child's class teacher to: jhannell@graffhaminfant.org.uk

What if I need more support (equipment, food etc)?

In the shorter term, if you are a low-income family and your child or young person (up to the age of 17) is "*disabled or seriously ill*" you may be able to access support from the Family Fund: The DfE has announced that Family Fund will receive a multi-million pound grant to assist it in providing vital equipment to make low-income families' lives easier while implementing social distancing measures, including the families of children or young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This could include computers, specialist equipment and educational toys. Families in England can find out more about this, including the eligibility criteria, and apply for grants from Family Fund directly at: <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/faqs/how-do-we-apply>

St Giles Church Parish Priest's Discretionary Fund: "We're pleased to offer support to members of our school community through this special fund. We can offer supermarket vouchers to assist with extras for example, or other more specified support, with full respect for anonymity as required. Knowing life can become challenging for families at times, we encourage any school family who may appreciate a little extra help to contact Revd Vivien or Helen confidentially. The fund has provided some support for families this year. Do contact if you think we might help you. We will be glad to do so if we can. Contact details for Revd Vivien at reverendvivien@gmail.com 01798867199 or contact Helen through Messages in Class Dojo or letter or email. Every blessing Revd Vivien"

From 25th January 2021, **The National Free School Meals Voucher Scheme** run by the DfE has re-started. This entitles all of our identified Pupil Premium families to a £15 weekly food voucher to be spent at a selection of supermarkets. Please contact our Office Managers; Graffham – 01798 867324 (Kathie Gyles) or Duncton – 01798 342402 (Vanessa Dudman).

Foodbank Vouchers – if you are struggling to provide enough food for your family; we have vouchers for our local food bank scheme available at each school. Please note, this is currently running as a delivery service.

During this period of partial Covid school closure, **ALL** children in school are entitled to a free hot school meal. This is managed by the school on a daily basis, no ordering is required.

West Sussex County Council's Community Hub gives practical support and information to anyone adversely affected by Covid-19, which could include the provision of food and essential household supplies. This is a confidential helpline, open 8am-8pm, seven days a week. 0330 222 7980 or www.westsussex.gov.uk/covid19communityhub

Links to other useful services at this time include:

- West Sussex Local Offer (a directory of West Sussex SEND services)
<https://westsussex.local-offer.org/>
- Free, thirty-minute parent consultations with the Educational Psychology Service:
https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/609-educational-psychology-telephone-consultation-service
- West Sussex Early Help (family support programme):
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-and-health-information-for-professionals/children/early-help/early-help-services/>

Parents can phone the Early Help Duty line between 9am-4pm, Monday-Friday
07860 858 616

- West Sussex Parent Carer Forum:
<https://www.wspcf.org.uk/>
- Reaching Families – a West Sussex based charity support children and families
<https://www.reachingfamilies.org.uk/>
- West Sussex Mind
<https://www.westsussexmind.org/>
- Oak National Academy (excellent online learning activities for those with additional needs)
<https://classroom.thenational.academy/specialist>
- Oak National Academy (manageable therapy activities for in the home):
<https://classroom.thenational.academy/specialist/therapies>

These links can also be found at on our School Website:

<https://graffhamandduncton.w-sussex.sch.uk/special-educational-needs>

How can I help my child cope with the changes?

We understand that this is a significant change for many families. Please try to establish a home routine and give yourself and your children time to adjust to this new routine. Do not place too much pressure on yourself or your child to complete schoolwork. Maintaining positive mental health and emotional well-being is very important.

What plans will be made for my child to re-integrate back into school?

We know that any transitions for many of our children with SEN can be stressful and need to be well planned, in advance, and should not be introduced abruptly. We understand that reintegration back into school and/or transition to a new class or school is going to be made even more challenging following the current situation. Furthermore, we know that children's reactions to returning to school will vary greatly and some children will need much more additional support.

As such, our aim will be to support transition and re-integration by working closely with you as parents/carers to determine an individual return to school package which will meet the needs of our learners with an EHC Plan.