



Date: 02/07/20

Dear parent/carers,

I am writing to you as the parent/carers of a child or young person with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability in a mainstream or special school to update you on our work in Worcestershire during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As you will know in recent weeks many children and young people have gone back to mainstream schools following the government's announcement that those in Reception, Years 1 and 6 in primary schools and Years 10 and 12 in secondary schools should return.

The government has also asked special schools to make provision for increasing numbers of children during this time and all schools are asked to offer a place to children with Education Health and Care Plans, if a risk assessment indicates it is safe for them to be in school.

This has been a challenging time for families and schools. There has been a lot of work needed to plan for how children can return safely to schools and a lot of uncertainty for families as they wait to hear what will be available for their child. While some children may really enjoy going back to school, some will feel anxious and will need support to prepare for this change in their lives.

The government has shared their vision that all children (except those who are shielded) should return to school in September and before this time, the rules about social distancing will be relaxed. We are expecting the guidance from government very soon about how they would like schools to manage this change and are already thinking ahead to plan for this.

You may have questions or concerns about the changes that have happened in recent weeks and those that are to come. We would like to reassure you that we are continuing to work closely together with schools, health, social care and parent representatives to plan for the changes, to ensure that our children with SEND are able to make a successful and safe return to school. We are tracking attendance carefully to understand how many children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those receiving SEND support have returned to school and how this is changing over time.

If you have any questions or concerns about how things will be different for your child or how the plans affect them, your first step should be to talk to your child's school. If you still have concerns that your child is not receiving the support or provision they need, you might choose to raise this by using the school complaints policy on their website which explains to you how to do this.

If your child has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you can talk to the SEN casework team who will provide you with support and advice and may talk to the school on your behalf if appropriate. You can also speak with advisors at our SEND Information, Advice and Support Service, who will be able to help you understand your rights and support you in your conversations with schools. This service is available to all parent/carers of a child with SEND and not just those with an EHCP.

<http://www.hwsendiass.co.uk/>

You might also want to look at our SEND Local Offer pages which have lots of information about SEND and Covid-19 (including supporting Emotional Health and Wellbeing) at the following link:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20780/coronavirus_covid-19_send_local_offer

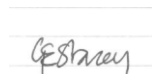
If you are looking for additional information about how to manage as a family during this challenging time you may also want to look at your child's school website. This will often include information about their 'Early Help' offer which sets out how they work with families who require support in challenging situations.

Worcestershire's Here 2 Help web pages also contain lots of useful guidance and support which may be of help to families of children and young people with SEND.

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help>

We appreciate there is a lot of uncertainty, but please be assured that we will continue to work together to ensure our children with SEND are safe and receiving an effective education now and in the future.

Yours sincerely



Gabrielle Stacey

Assistant Director for SEND and Vulnerable Learners