



Eastfield Primary Academy

SEND Information Report COVID-19 Annex

Date Policy Produced: May 2020

Policy Produced by: Scott Nicholls

Date of Policy Review:

Policy Reviewed by:

Date of Policy Review:

Policy reviewed by:

SEND Information Report - COVID-19 Annex

Aim

This is an Annex 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 20th March 2020.

Vulnerable children and eligibility

Vulnerable children include those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

These risk assessments will consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This will be on an individual basis and with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered
- 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 Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans, with local authorities needing instead to apply 'reasonable endeavours' to support these children and their families.

Safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing

Eastfield Primary Academy continues in its commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its children during this period of general school closure.

Where children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in school, Eastfield Primary Academy will continue to ensure a safe space for these children to attend and flourish. The Principal will work alongside the SENCo and the Deputy SENCO to ensure that appropriate staff, facilities and provision are available to secure a safe, appropriate and positive placement for those children. The support appropriate to each child in this circumstance will be recorded and reviewed on an individual basis. Any updates to a child's situation will be updated on their risk assessments which are then shared with the Local Authority and the Senior Management Team.

Eastfield Primary Academy will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Having worked with parents and other professionals to decide whether children with EHC plans will be attending school, we will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not attend for two consecutive days.

Where children with EHC plans do not take up a place in school and are cared for at home, an individual risk assessment will be completed and a communication plan will be put in place for the child. This will be recorded on risk assessments for each pupil which are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Authority.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Eastfield Primary Academy, its Principal (DSL) and SENCo will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan for children with EHC plans.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, who have not been offered a place in school, contact details for key staff will always be available on the school website. This will ensure that parents of children with SEND will always have a way of contacting and communicating with school staff where needed.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website.

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

All schools have been ordered to effectively close, retaining a skeleton staff to provide education for the children of key workers, and 'vulnerable children.'

'Vulnerable children' include those who have a social worker and those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHC plan). **The majority of children with SEN, who receive SEN Support at school but do not have an EHC plan, would be expected to stay home, if it is safe to do so, unless they have a social worker or a parent/carer who is a key worker.**

My child has an EHC plan - do I have to send them in to school?

Despite schools staying open for some children, the guidance is quite clear: **'If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.'** Each child, with an EHCP, has been offered a place in school during closure and it is the decision of parents/carers, the school and the local authority will contribute to a risk assessment, and a final decision will be made (more so by the Local Authority).

Under the Coronavirus Act, the criminal penalty for parents failing to send their children to school will be temporarily dis-applied.

My child has an EHC plan - does the local authority still have a legal duty to deliver provision?

From a legal perspective this remains the case. However, given the likely 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. In Coronavirus Act 2020 which contains two key amendments to the law:

- The absolute duty to make the provision in an EHC plan (section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014) has been temporarily amended to a lesser duty to use **'reasonable endeavours'**. This means that during the specified period the LA needs to do whatever it reasonably can to put provision in place, but if they cannot do so, they would not necessarily be breaching the law.
- The duty on schools to admit a child where the EHC plan names that school (section 43 of the Children and Families Act 2014) can be temporarily dis-applied.

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. Please ring the school on 01469 572455. There will be a member of staff available weekdays from 9am. Any queries will then be passed to the SENCo, Scott Nicholls or Laura Dalling, who will contact you directly.

Again, if there could be a risk to your child or young person's health, wellbeing or safety if they do not receive a particular provision or intervention, please raise this with us without delay.

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

Under the Coronavirus Act, the requirement to carry out annual reviews can also be temporarily disapplied where this is considered to be "appropriate and proportionate". (The order bringing this into effect has not yet been made but we expect it to happen imminently.)

However, currently schools will continue to hold annual reviews if at all possible. This will of course need to be carried out remotely and we will speak to you first about how this will be managed to ensure that the contribution of parents and children/young people continue to be at the heart of the process. We may conduct an annual review remotely.

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 the school will not be providing a full curriculum; they will be providing care for the children and incorporating education provision and a range of activities, but this will NOT be fully in line with a child's EHC provision.

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

If your child has an identified SEN (EHCP or SEN Support), the class teacher will take account of their needs when planning for and providing work to be completed at home. This may include:

- suggesting different ways in which children can present their work;
- giving more detailed instructions;
- providing parents with suggestions to make tasks more practical in nature;
- providing alternative work which is targeted at their level of need where they may not ordinarily access curriculum subjects at age expected levels.

What plans will be made for re-integration and transition to new classes/schools?

We know that any transitions, especially for many of our children with SEN, can be stressful and needs to be well planned, in advance, and should not be introduced abruptly. We understand that re-integration back in to 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 is to plan carefully for transition and reintegration and work closely with you as parents/carers to help prepare your child/children and guide them through these transitions carefully. The Local Authority are currently planning guidelines and processes which we will then adapt for our school and to meet the needs of your child. Once these guidelines are agreed, we will be in touch with all parents/carers, including discussing any bespoke planning for individuals.

Who can I contact?

We realise that these are difficult times for everyone. We try to make sure we keep in contact with all parents and carers of children with SEN (and those with an EHCP). If you have any worries or concerns, please contact the school on 01469 572455 or email office@eastfieldprimary.co.uk