

Our Ref: CW/DC

All Sandwell Headteachers

During COVID-19 please email:
Debbie_Campbell1@sandwell.gov.uk

Date: 23 March 2021

Good morning

There's one advantage to being just a little bit older than most of you.... I did manage to get my first COVID jab on Sunday. Apart from a couple of hours when I experienced some annoying (for my wife) 'man-flu' symptoms it all soon passed and now I am just looking forward to getting the second jab in a few months' time. I must say how impressed I was with the organisation in the vaccination centre and the amount of people who were working there voluntarily to ensure I was one of ¾ million people vaccinated in the country yesterday.

However, the nurse who administered my shot was in a very playful mood as she could tell I was no big fan of needles. As she moved towards me with the syringe, imitating the Apollo 11 moon landing, she whispered.... *'one small prick for a man, one giant prick for mankind'*. I roared out loud and nearly fell off the chair. It certainly broke the tension.

I told her to stop as she would have me in stitches but she pointed out that if I want stitches then I would need the surgeon who was volunteering in the next vaccination booth. I had clearly been out-quipped by one of our nurse angels and have absolutely no idea at what point she stuck the needle into me!

I can't praise the nurses, doctors and health workers enough! What a job they continue to do!

DfE Key Updates

Shielding Guidance: The government has [announced](#) that shielding guidance is being paused. From Thursday 1 April, Clinically Extremely

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Vulnerable (CEV) people are no longer advised to shield. CEV people must continue to follow the [national restrictions](#) that are in place for everyone. From Thursday 1 April, all CEV children should attend early years provision, school, college, wraparound childcare and out-of-school settings, unless they are one of the very small number of children under paediatric or other specialist care and have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend.

National Survey from Children's Commissioner: The new Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has begun a major review of the future of childhood, which will address the barriers holding children back in the 21st century. This review begins with '[The Big Ask](#)': the largest ever survey of children in England, to gather children's views on what the government should prioritise in planning the recovery from the pandemic. The Big Ask will be launched on Monday 19 April in the form of a short online questionnaire. Schools will receive a link to the questionnaire shortly after it has launched. We encourage you to share it with as many students as possible.

Examination Centres – Private Candidates: There is support available to examination centres to assist private candidates gain their qualifications. Further information can be found in the [private candidate support grant guidance](#).

The Healthy Children Programme 0-19 Health Visitors & School Nurses commissioning guidance has been released: See link [here](#). The guidance has been republished to reflect new evidence and guidance to support local authorities commissioning 'public health services for children and young people' and in particular delivering the healthy child programme 0 to 5 and 5 to 19. It focuses on the contribution of health visiting and school nursing services leading and co-ordinating the delivery of public health for children aged 0 to 19. The healthy child programme aims to bring together health, education and other main partners to deliver an effective programme for prevention and support.

Parents Refusing to have Children COVID Tested

As you know, there may be some parents who are reluctant to have their children COVID tested even though they have developed symptoms. This

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can of course be very disruptive for schools as the whole group of children in a bubble may be affected and have to self-isolate for ten days. To assist with these cases Sandwell Public Health has produced a letter which you can share with parents if, and when, necessary. Please see attached letter.

Also, it may be worth reminding your own staff that if they have COVID symptoms then they should still self isolate and book a PCR test as LFD testing is designed for use with people who do not have symptoms.

Commonwealth Games

With just under 500 days to go until the start of the Commonwealth Games we are now looking for schools/Academies to become a Sandwell Council Legacy partner. Being a Legacy Partner allows you to change young people's lives in ways you never dreamed and to ensure many more of them benefit from the legacy of the Commonwealth Games. Attached is the formal invite letter to express your interest of becoming a partner and a copy of the Birmingham 2022 Legacy Plan.

Important Update - Devices distributed through the Get Help with Technology Scheme

Devices provided to you through the DfE Get Help with Technology programme came with Microsoft Intune installed. As some of the devices provided have not connected to the Microsoft server for a considerable period of time, the certificate for this software will expire soon. When this certificate lapses the DfE will be unable to manage the devices and apply safeguarding and content filtering settings. Regular connection of your devices to Intune ensures that certificates are refreshed and will not expire. If you have reset the devices and installed your own device management software. You do not need to take any further action.

If you still need devices to have DfE settings installed: DfE settings for all devices will end on 30 September 2021. To continue to use DfE's temporary device management solution, arrange for your devices to connect to the internet immediately to have their certificate renewed. To prepare for device management from 1 October 2021, we would encourage you to apply your own device management software and security settings as soon as possible. This can be done at any time.

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Instructions for resetting devices and installing your own software are available [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact [here](#).

DFE Get Help with Technology Survey: Since March 2020, the DFE has been providing laptops and tablets, routers and mobile data uplifts to support children's remote learning during the pandemic. The DFE would like to hear from children and families about how useful this support has been, and what has worked well - and not worked so well - about the interventions. Could you please share the following link to those families that have benefited from the scheme [a 5–10-minute survey](#). The survey is entirely anonymous and the details of the school the child attends is not requested. The survey will close on Monday 26 April 2021.

The survey collects the responses via Google forms, so responses will come directly through to the DfE for analysis. The results will be analysed and can be shared. A paper copy of the survey is attached so you can see the kinds of questions that will be asked as well as a FAQ for children and families.

Early Years Survey

A reminder to please complete the early years survey by 3pm on Thursday even if your nursery is closed because of Coronavirus. The survey is [here](#)

Safeguarding Training

Signs of Safety Training (2 days) - Dates: 24 & 25 March - Cost: £67

There is some pre-course work that is required before attending which should take no longer than two hours. To secure your place email

Training_SCT@sandwellchildrenstrust.org

Further information

Please find attached the following additional information

- The latest Sandwell SitRep
- Commonwealth Games legacy information
- COVID testing: Letter from Lisa McNally to parents
- Help with Technology information

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With it being almost exactly a year since the first lockdown, I thought I would leave you today with a quote from Christopher Reeve which sums up the wonderful work staff in our schools have done during this pandemic very succinctly.

“A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.”

Please can you pass on our thanks to all the heroes in your school who have done such a great job in the last year. Tell them that their work has been endorsed by the original Superman.

Yours sincerely



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