

COVID19 SENCO Newsletter

Issue 4



Department for Children, Adults and Health
Education, Learning and Skills

This is the fourth of our series of newsletters for SENCOs and Headteachers written jointly by ELS and the Inclusion and Behaviour Support Service teams. It includes relevant information from the Education Continuity Newsletter and additional information for SENCOs.

integra.
schools

DfE Support for Digital Devices

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

The DfE are working on guidance regarding digital devices for disadvantaged and vulnerable children. Details can be found [here](#).

Local authorities, trusts and other relevant organisations overseeing schools will be given guidance on how to place online orders for devices for eligible pupils from Wednesday 22 April. Schools, parents and pupils will not be able to order the devices themselves.

Digital devices for care leavers and children with social workers will be given to local authorities, who will manage distribution to children and young people. Schools may be asked to help manage distribution where appropriate.

Many schools have already taken steps to support virtual learning for vulnerable pupils by providing devices. The virtual school has also been working with leaders to support digital learning deployment. Further information will follow from the LA, once the DfE guidance is published.

Helping Children with SEND – updated DfE Guidance

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

Advice for parents and carers looking after children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can be found [here](#).

Updated DfE guidance on SEND risk assessments

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

The government have updated the guidance on risk assessing SEND pupils. This was published on 19th April and can be found [here](#).

Supporting Children with LD ASD with Covid Isolation

Cardiff Community Child Health have created a comprehensive information pack aiming to support parents of children with an ASD or Learning disability during this tricky time and will hopefully make things a little more manageable.

It covers a range of topics including,

- structure & routine,
- looking after yourselves
- behaviour management
- sleep routines
- indoor activities

This is a useful resource for SENCOs to share with teachers and parents.

The link to the resource is [here](#). Click on the attachment link to download.

Coronavirus EP Reviewed Resources

Adults who are supporting children and young people with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic have a key role in promoting their understanding, supporting their anxiety and fear and enhancing their well-being. This may also be in a context where the adults themselves are struggling with the pandemic at differing levels.

As a group of South Gloucestershire Educational Psychologists we were aware of the sheer amount of information available to parents and professionals, and sought to review and organise this so that adults could access the information they need more readily and also be assured of our views on its quality. We have provided a wide range of links with a short description of each above the link. Links are separated into age ranges (early years, primary and secondary) and within this we have provided subheadings as relevant. Please see the attached for further information.

From the South Gloucestershire Educational Educational Psychology team.

Many of the resources identified as useful for parents are already on the Integra Home Learning site and the rest are being added.

EEF Special Needs in Mainstream Classrooms – Guidance Report



This much anticipated report was published by EEF in March. Based on reviewing the best available international research and consultations with teachers and other experts. It offers five evidence-based recommendations to support pupils with SEND, providing a starting point for schools to review their current approach and practical ideas they can implement.

The overriding message from the report is a positive one - they are emphasising that SEND is not a distinct a specific issue requiring new programmes. Their evidence indicates that the most effective strategies are to prioritise familiar but powerful strategies, like scaffolding and explicit instruction, to support pupils with SEND. This means understanding the needs of individual pupils and weaving specific approaches into every day, high quality classroom teaching—being inclusive by design not as an afterthought. They suggest this should be supplemented by carefully implemented interventions and working effectively with teaching assistants to offer additional support where needed.

The report describes the five key evidence based recommendations and then illustrates how these could be used in your school using case studies, evaluation tools, and practical strategies- this is an important report and will be invaluable for head teachers and SENCOs.

The five evidence-based recommendations are below.

Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception

An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should:

- Promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils;
- Ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching;

- Adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the EEF's improving Behaviour in schools guidance report.

Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach.

- Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals.
- Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.

Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.

Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess.

The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils.

- flexible grouping;
- cognitive and metacognitive strategies;
- explicit instruction;
- using technology to support pupils with SEND; and
- scaffolding

Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions

Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully.

- Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND.
- High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress.
- The intensity of intervention (from universal to target to specialist) should increase with need.

- Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need.
- Interventions should be applied using the principles of effective implementation described in the EEF's guidance report Putting Evidence to Work: A School's
- Guide to Implementation.

Work effectively with teaching assistants

Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND.

TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher.

The EEF's guidance report Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants provides detailed recommendations.

SENCo and Governor Relationship Toolkit

A strong working relationship between SENCOs and SEN governors is crucial to effective provision for SEND pupils. Anita Devi has created a toolkit to support SENCOs. It provides talking points and tools to help secure better outcomes.

Anita is a special educational needs consultant, policy developer, strategist and trainer. She has experience from early years to postgraduate provision in the UK and abroad.

The toolkit can be accessed [here](#).



SENCO and governor relationship toolkit

Anita Devi

This toolkit focuses on one key relationship dynamic: that between the SENCO and the SEN governor.

The aim is to provide SENCOs and governors with talking points and tools to enhance their working relationship to collaboratively secure better outcomes for pupils.

ACE Ambassador Group Information

The following website links will be of interest to SENCOs who are supporting children who have suffered adverse childhood experiences. These can be shared with staff who have children in their class who they are trying to support. They were shared via the ACE Ambassadors group.

A good 5-6 minute video by Dr Karen Treisman talking about survival modes and resurfacing past traumas.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msNO7ZmLXns>

Young Minds website has an abundance of information for parents, young people and professionals specific to the COVID-19 pandemic. They vary from simple tables of what to ask your child during this time to blogs and reports. <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Minded website which is aimed at keyworkers but the tips they offer are relevant to those of you too who are not keyworkers. <http://covid.minded.org.uk/>

COVID-19 specific webpage by the NSPCC with tips for working from home, separated parents and talking to children about their worries around the pandemic.
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

A fact sheet from Child Trends on ways to promote children's resilience during the pandemic.
https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVIDProtectiveFactors_ChildTrends_April2020.pdf

There is a "Coronavirus" tab on the ACEs online library on Trello now with articles and material related to the

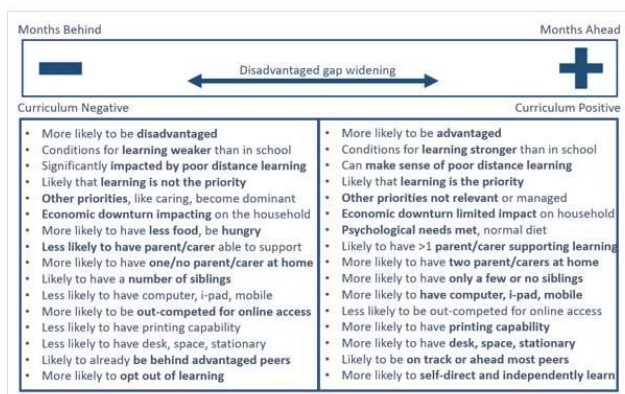
effects that the pandemic may have on children and families. **Remember it isn't hosted by Internet Explorer but any other browser will allow access to it.**
<https://trello.com/b/1IACXrr/adverse-childhood-experiences-resource-library>

Addressing Disadvantage

Dr Dan Nicholls has highlighted some key principles in his blog. [Weblink](#)

Create effective Distance learning through the eyes of disadvantaged children through the pandemic; based on the following principles:

1. **Accessible:** High clarity, specific instructions, dependable in format, encourages routine. – limit all barriers to accessing and completing learning.
2. **Sequenced:** Ordered and progressive, does not assume high levels of inference or cultural context. – random content in the wrong order does not support learning and progression.
3. **Proportionate amount:** Is achievable, meaningful, and encourages completion – too much work will encourage opt-out.
4. **Engaging and compelling:** Build in hooks and engaging tasks that encourage return and continuation of learning. – reducing disadvantaged propensity to self-deselect.
5. **Human interaction:** The more we can give a sense of human interaction and narrative with the more likely it will generate motivation.
6. **Validation and feedback:** Encourage further working by validating and acknowledging completed work



Book Corner

Book Review by Jo Chambers The Good Hawk. A novel by Joseph Elliott.

Joseph grew up locally and has always had a keen interest in SEN, through family and worked for a while as a TA in special schools. If you have young children, you may recognise him as Cook in CBeebies' Swashbuckle!

I've recently read Joseph's debut novel [The Good Hawk](#) and, despite it being a departure from my usual

reads, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Here, Joseph explains about the characters in his book.

The Good Hawk is an epic, fantasy adventure set in a mythic version of Scotland where fearsome warriors, magical creatures, and deadly secrets lurk in every shadow. One of the two protagonists is a fifteen-year old girl called Agatha. She is funny, kind, impulsive and loyal, and she also happens to have Down's syndrome. The novel is not about Down's syndrome, though. Far from it; indeed, in the world Agatha inhabits, the condition is not even named. It is just a part of who Agatha is and, despite others in her clan who belittle or patronise her on account of it, she proves time and time again that her differences are often her greatest strengths.



Read more at <https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/news/new-book-release-the-good-hawk-by-joseph-elliott/>

Integra home learning website

Our website gives parents advice and support at <https://www.integra.co.uk/home-learning/>

This includes learning activities, but also information on how parents can support their child's wellbeing and manage the situation at home. We have included a special area called SENSational learning to help parents support the needs of their child at home.

Contact the Inclusion and Behaviour Teams

Email contacts for inclusion and behaviour support. Contact your usual support person or if urgent ring Julie Cole who can ask them to ring you back.

Jackie Muggleton	Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk
Claire Phillips	Claire.phillips@southglos.gov.uk
Sara Tanner	Sara.tanner@southglos.gov.uk
Linda Boyce	Linda.boyce@southglos.gov.uk
Louise O'Rourke	Louise.ORourke@southglos.gov.uk
Alison Little	Alison.little@southglos.gov.uk
Eleri Sears	Eleri.sears@southglos.gov.uk
Jo Briscoombe	Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk
Inclusion & Behaviour Services Leader	

Pdnet

pdnet is network for those supporting learners with a physical disability. It is a free to join, national network. It is worth considering their free online training. Level 1: Raising Awareness of Physical Disability This free online training module is the first in a series and is designed for anyone working within an educational setting who needs to develop their awareness and understanding of physical disability, the impact it can have on learning and steps that can be taken to overcome barriers. The pdnet Members Forum provides members with the platform to share information, knowledge and best practice with other physical disability professionals from across the country. <https://pdnet.org.uk/>

Nasen Mini Guides

There is a wide range of miniguides on a variety of topics and these are free to download. There is a wealth of information here so a great place to sign-post TA's to as well. Current topics include:

- Improving Healthcare: learning disabilities and autism
- Understanding the eye care and vision needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
- Acquired Brain Injury: The Hidden Disability
- Children with Medical Needs: What schools and settings need to know
- Gils and Autism: Flying Under the Radar

<https://nasen.org.uk/resource-listing/miniguides.html>

Boardmaker Online

<https://goboardmaker.com/pages/coronavirus-resources>

Access PCS (Picture Communication Symbols) for over 40,000 words, including Coronavirus symbols, and behavior support templates, such as daily schedules.

Due to Coronavirus they have increased their free trial duration to 90-days so it's a good time to refresh visual timetables and make curriculum based resources. Perhaps this is something your TAs can get on board with? In addition, **Boardmaker Activities-to-Go are free**, ready-made activities that include books, games, communication boards, behaviour supports, and more. The topic based ones are useful for SFN learners to do at home.

NATSIP – National Sensory Impairment Partnership

<https://www.natsip.org.uk/getting-started>

A place to start - Top 10 Tips - these tips are intended to support colleagues who are new to working with a pupil with sensory impairment. They provide a quick introductory guide to useful resources for those who may be short of time and need a starting point.

The Mainstream Training Pack <https://www.natsip.org.uk/mainstream-training-pack> is aimed at teachers, SENCos and TAs in mainstream or special schools and settings who may be new to working with pupils with sensory impairment. It aims to improve the confidence and basic skills of mainstream or special school staff who are working with children and young people with a sensory support team will provide, but aims to provide a clear place to start impairment. The pack **does not** replace the advice and support your local sensory support team will provide, but aims to provide a clear place to start

Links for SENCos

In South Gloucestershire, we are keen to share innovative ideas for supporting SENCos.

We will disseminate these ideas to all schools.

Please email your ideas to our School Improvement Team at:

Faye.bertham@southglos.gov.uk

Inclusion and Behaviour Teams at

Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk

Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk

RNIB Bookshare

<https://www.rnibbookshare.org/>

This collection provides free textbooks and materials to support your curriculum offering a range of accessible formats that can be read electronically or adapted to suit the reading needs of learners. There are currently 522,700 titles including novels and workbooks with more being added all the time!

- Listen to books with high quality text-to-speech voices
- Hear/see highlighted words on screen
- Read with digital braille or enlarged fonts
- Create physical braille or large print
- Read from your Internet browser
- And more!

Users do not need to be visually impaired – eligibility includes physical and learning disabilities also. See the website to check. Pupils can have access at home and school.