

# COVID19 SENCO Newsletter

## Issue 5



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

This is the fifth 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.



It is important that all schools understand the changes to the guidance on how we will meet our responsibilities under the new guidelines details of this are summarised below with a link to the full guidance.

The local authority is putting together a plan to ensure that we are able to meet these expectations. As part of these arrangements we will be contacting every school to speak with the SENCO or head teacher. The purpose of these calls is to have a conversation about the children with EHCPs and the reasonable endeavours you are making to meet the needs of these children.

### Government Update on SEND and EHCPs From the Education Continuity Newsletter

#### Education, Health and Care Plans: Guidance on temporary legislative changes relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) link to guidance

The Government has legislated on SEND so as to strike the right balance during the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) between: the needs of children and young people and managing the demands on local authorities (LAs) and health bodies to respond.

#### Admissions

These remain unchanged, consultations with schools will continue and placements will be named in the usual way.

A school, named in an EHC plan must admit the child or young person and must admit the plan even if temporarily closed – child or young person must be placed on the roll and treated similarly to other pupils including risk assessments as required by the Covid legislation

We must make reasonable endeavours to secure the provision in the EHC plan

#### New assessments

It is important to note that only some aspects of the law on EHC needs assessments and plans have changed temporarily.

The impact of coronavirus may mean that the process and provision in place previously may need to change for the time being. Assessments will be completed as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### Annual reviews

Annual review requirements remain in place. A review meeting, even if by necessity briefer than usual, can be reassuring for parents, children and young people, through ensuring that their EHC plan is up-to-date. Where it is impractical for an annual review of a plan to take place for a reason relating to coronavirus it must be completed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Please refer to advice given previous on annual reviews.

#### Reasonable Endeavours

For children with existing EHCP plans we must use 'reasonable endeavours' to secure or arrange the provision, this means considering what we need to provide during this period. This must be considered in partnership with parents on a case by case basis.

- Some children's plans will continue to be delivered as usual.
- For others, their provision may be being different to that which is set out in their EHC plan, for some, or all, of the time that the notice is in  
To decide this we need to consider:

- the specific local circumstances, e.g. workforce capacity and skills, temporary closures of education settings; guidance on measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus;
- the needs of and specific circumstances affecting the child or young person; and
- the views of the child, young person and their parents over what provision might be appropriate

## We must understand

What?	Securing something different to the provision stated in the plan, e.g.. in relation to availability of staff, availability of technology and any significant risk that may cause harm
Where?	Location where provision is to be provided may be altered – early years setting, school, college, community setting, home, clinic
When?	Frequency and timing of provision may be altered or modified in the light of available staff and risks that may cause harm
How?	Method of delivery may be altered, e.g.. virtual rather than face-to-face and smaller rather than larger groups for teaching (in line with the guidance on reducing transmission of coronavirus)
By Whom?	Changes to the person delivering the provision, e.g.. a learning assistant under virtual supervision rather than a specialist therapist or teacher

## Examples of alternative arrangements

- Alterations to the frequency and timing of the delivery of provision in school, e.g. Moving to a part-time timetable.
- A temporary placement in another school - mainstream or special, with the agreement of the parent or young person
- Attendance at a local hub.
- Video class sessions for children to keep in touch with classmates and teaching staff.
- Home learning reading programme, provided by SENCo, reviewed weekly.
- EPs providing brief therapy interventions.
- Specialist SEN Teachers providing advice and support to parents re autism, visual or hearing impairment or literacy.
- A SaLT delivering sessions via video link

## It is essential that you

- Keep a record of the provision you arrange;
- Confirm to the parents or young person what it has decided to do, and explain why the provision differs from that in the plan for the time being;
- Keep under review whether the provision it is securing or arranging means that it is still complying with the reasonable endeavours duty, and takes account of the changing circumstances for the child, and for services.

## Safeguarding Monitoring

### From the Education Continuity Newsletter

We have now held over 50 safeguarding conversations with school leaders in South Gloucestershire. Thank you for your time in holding these extremely important conversations. We would like to share some positive themes with you.

Monitoring shows that schools are robust and resolute in their contact with vulnerable families who are not attending. In the vast majority of cases, where a school cannot make contact with a family, the pastoral lead/Head/SENCO/TA deliver food parcels/work and make contact this way. This is very strong practice.

Heads have really welcomed the opportunity to talk about their processes and concerns. It has been an affirming process in what is a very challenging time for school leaders.

There is strong evidence of swift follow up from 0-25 team and Lynda Cordukes (Education Safeguarding Advisor) when concerns are raised about specific children.

Where school attendance numbers are low and schools have concerns about families who do not fit the government criteria, Headteachers are working with families to risk assess and offer places on a case by case basis. E.g EHCP pupil safer at home but younger sibling (no EHCP) offered a school place for some respite and support for the family

Schools are providing excellent resources (physical resources and online) to support families with mental health and well-being. Schools are keeping in close contact with the most vulnerable (via phone, text, video, doorstep visits)

If a case has stepped down from social care and you have concerns about the child, please follow the usual route and re-refer into ART. You can also contact Lynda Cordukes for advice and guidance [Lynda.cordukes@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Lynda.cordukes@southglos.gov.uk)

## Council for Disabled Children News

They have recently shared an FAQ around SEND support during the Coronavirus pandemic. Questions submitted to their mailing list of [CDCOquestions@ncb.org.uk](mailto:CDCOquestions@ncb.org.uk) are collated, answered and shared with DfE on a weekly basis.

Additionally they have gathered resources and guidance relating to disabled children, young people and their families and this can be accessed [here](#). See the attached document for the FAQs. These include questions about:

- Social worker contacts
- Maintaining healthcare for children with complex health issues
- Claiming for funding while home-schooling

## AET Tools for teachers – shortened package

A shortened version of the AET Tools for Teachers resource to support during these challenging times. This contains six essential tools for teachers supporting autistic children and young people through home schooling and return to school.



This document is attached and focuses on six tools that fall under the headings below

- Tool 1 – social stories
- Tool 2 – visual timetables
- Tool 3 – now / next or first then
- Tool 4 – reward charts
- Tool 5 – strategies to address hypo / hyper sensitivities
- Tool 6 – communication cards.

## Mentally Healthy Schools Resources

Through their website they have made toolkits available to support during these challenging times. Their fourth toolkit focuses on managing anxiety and improving wellbeing during the coronavirus crisis.

It includes resources for staff, parents and carers and children to help manage anxiety and improve wellbeing. Practical activities include mindful crafts, breathing exercises, self-care ideas, videos, emotional expression worksheets and helpful strategies.

There is also a relaxation story and a six week 'wellbeing through sport' programme to do at home.

Resources include strategies and tips to reduce anxiety for both adults and children.

The resources are suitable for early years, KS1, KS2, parents / carers and school staff.



## National SENCo Forum

The SENCo forum is a useful online support group for SENCos. It is for new or experienced SENCos and any SEN professional. Through the forum you can:

- Ask other SENCos questions and share best practice
- Check the SEN calendar for national SEND events
- Network with other UK SENCOs and SEN specialists
- Take part in discussions on the forum and read what others have said
- Find out about NASENCo accreditation and talk to others about their experiences
- Find out about careers in SEN

<https://www.sencoforum.com/>

This is a link to a Top Tips for SENCos document written by a member of the forum

<http://www.learning-works.org.uk/tips-for-sencos-pdf>

## School Share



Wansdyke Primary school in Bristol have produced a guide on how to support your child during school closure if they have SEND. Please see attached.

This 27 page document includes sections on:

- Organising your day
- Speech and language – language strategies
- Speech and language – working memory
- Speech and language attention support including attention autism
- Speech and language – speech and pronunciation concerns and phonics
- Sensory breaks and mindfulness
- Anxiety and worries
- Autism
- Social stories for the current climate and staying safe

The sections include guidance, games, activities and links.

The school website is

<https://www.wansdykeschool.org.uk/>

## 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.

All our past parent newsletters are on the website highlighting simple ideas for parents.

Our website also includes an area highlighting competitions.

## Online CPD Available

We are going to be offering online training for SENCOs and school staff on various aspects of SEND. These presentations are 'golden oldies' and are still frequently requested, this is a great opportunity for colleagues to refresh their knowledge. There has been a high uptake already and if a course is full register for the reserve list and we will rerun.

Delivered by Jackie Muggleton they will include opportunities for reflection and follow up and technology permitting there will also be interactive elements.

### Dyslexia Inclusive Classroom

**TBC 1pm - 3pm** [INC/20/216](#)

- What is Dyslexia?
- Identification of dyslexia.
- Dyslexia friendly classrooms as part of high quality teaching.
- Interventions and approaches.

### High Quality teaching for SEND

**12 May 1pm - 3pm** [INC/20/218](#)

- High Quality teaching for SEND – why?
- What is HQT for SEND
- Delivering HQT in your classroom

### Working Memory Deficits

**15 May 1pm – 3pm** [INC/20/217](#)

- What is working memory
- How do we identify working memory deficits.
- Working memory friendly classrooms as part of high quality teaching

## Developing Impactful Reading Interventions

**18 May 1pm - 3pm** [INC/20/215](#)

- What needs to happen for children to acquire great reading skills.
- How do we know what to teach?
- Right book for the child
- The Reading repair kit – 1-1 intervention for struggling readers.

The above sessions are each £20 to attend. We are also offering the following free session.

### The SENCo Book Club

**11 May 1pm - 3pm** [INC/20/219](#)

This occasional event will look at latest publication to discuss their implications. Our first virtual meeting will be on May 15th and will focus on EEF Special Needs in Mainstream Classrooms – Guidance Report. 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.

## 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	<a href="mailto:Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk">Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk</a>
Claire Phillips	<a href="mailto:Claire.phillips@southglos.gov.uk">Claire.phillips@southglos.gov.uk</a>
Sara Tanner	<a href="mailto:Sara.tanner@southglos.gov.uk">Sara.tanner@southglos.gov.uk</a>
Linda Boyce	<a href="mailto:Linda.boyce@southglos.gov.uk">Linda.boyce@southglos.gov.uk</a>
Louise O'Rourke	<a href="mailto:Louise.O'Rourke@southglos.gov.uk">Louise.O'Rourke@southglos.gov.uk</a>
Alison Little	<a href="mailto:Alison.little@southglos.gov.uk">Alison.little@southglos.gov.uk</a>
Eleri Sears	<a href="mailto:Eleri.sears@southglos.gov.uk">Eleri.sears@southglos.gov.uk</a>
Jo Briscoombe	Inclusion & Behaviour Services Team Leader <a href="mailto:Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk">Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk</a>



### **Makaton**

Makaton uses signs and symbols to help people communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech in the spoken word order. This website explores the use of Makaton and offers online training plus current offers in its shop during the school closure period.

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

### **The Communication Trust**

The Communication Trust has been established to support those working with children and young people, to support their speech, communication and language Resources for professionals span Early Years to Further Education. Includes a series of booklets providing guidance on ages and stages of development. Available in age ranges 0-5, 5-11 and 11-18. Communicating the Curriculum A practical resource that supports primary schools to define and monitor progression within the National Curriculum Programme of Study for Spoken Language in Years 1-6. Schools Commissioning Guidance A series of 'One Stop' Guides to take settings through some key steps to consider when planning to commission speech and language therapy services. There are many other resources in addition to this so it's well worth a look

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/>

### **The Ace Centre**

The ability to communicate is fundamental to a basic quality of life, yet for many people **effective communication** is difficult because of a **physical impairment, language disorder or learning disability**. The Ace Centre works with **people of all ages** who face such challenges and offers resources and training.

<https://acecentre.org.uk/>

## **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](mailto:Faye.bertham@southglos.gov.uk)

Inclusion and Behaviour Teams at

[Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk)  
[Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk)

### **Dyspraxia Foundation**

Dyspraxia, a form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD) is a common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination in children and adults. It may also affect speech.

There are a number of useful information sheets covering a range of subjects such as Early Years, PE, teenagers, child-friendly definition, dyspraxia and menstruation

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about-dyspraxia/information-sheets/>

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

### **Down's Syndrome Association**

A wealth of information available for professionals involved in all aspects of supporting children and adults with Down's syndrome. There is a lot of information on the website and a helpline for additional queries. Including pupils with Down's Syndrome – Early Years gives practical advice and information and Celebrating Success - Early Years, has examples of good practice. There is similar guidance for Primary and Secondary. The Education Support Packs are well worth a read.

<https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/>