

COVID19 SENCO Newsletter

Issue 8



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

This is the eighth of our series of newsletters 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.

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ELS SENCo Briefing

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Briefing on 8 June.

Lead: Jackie Muggleton

To book an invitation please contact 0-25 Business support 0-25BusinessSupport@southglos.gov.uk

Time	Description
13.00	Welcome and updates
13.05	The South Glos Way – What is it and how will I use it as a SENCO? Faye Bertham Find out more about the upcoming launch of 'The South Glos Way' inclusion and SEND graduated approach and toolkit. We will also be exploring routes of support for those pupils who are at risk of exclusion. You will find out more about the work of the SEND clusters and High Risk Group in this interactive session. Bring your mobile phones, to join in with our Mentimeter online quiz!
14.00	Supporting pupils with SEND during the pandemic <ul style="list-style-type: none">Information on DfE guidance for pupils with EHC PlansBest practice approaches to 'reasonable endeavours'Q&A
15.00	Close.

Emergency Family Fund for parents/carers

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

On 19th May, the government announced £37 million for children with special educational needs and disabilities in England.

The fund will be available for individual families to apply for funding with support from professionals.

Here is all you need to know to apply for a grant:

- The fund is being administered by the Family Fund who can be accessed [here](https://www.familyfund.org.uk). The website is www.familyfund.org.uk
- There is a really helpful film explaining eligibility available [here](#)
- If you have not applied through the family fund before then you will need to download and submit an application. If you have used family fund before you can apply online.
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- There are a whole range of things grants can be applied for but typically the fund is looking for applications for disabled or critically ill children who are staying at home more than usual due to the pandemic. Funding for equipment, goods, and services such as household items, education equipment or specialist equipment.
- Grants are usually worth £400-£500 per family but can vary on need.
- The press release is available [here](#).

Evidence of family income (being in receipt of tax credits, universal credits or other welfare benefits) is required with the application which should demonstrate evidence that additional needs impact on the family and that conditions are long term (likely to last more than 12 months) or life limiting. The full criteria is available [here](#).

Anyone can apply, parents/carers themselves or professionals on behalf of the family.

Behaviour Policy COVID-19 Addendum

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

As more pupils return to school, it will be important for schools to consider their behaviour policy and any amendments that will need to be made in light of pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs and new COVID-19 routines and expectations. Attached to this newsletter is a sample Behaviour Policy addendum that schools can use and adapt. It has been written in partnership with Darren Brown, Headteacher of Longwell Green Primary School and our Educational Psychology service, with a key focus on support and early intervention, as the effects of the lockdown and non-school attendance will impact on children and young people in different ways. We hope school leaders find this useful.

Supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

The Government has updated the guidance on 'Supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening'. [Weblink](#)

As settings prepare for wider opening, they should continue to offer places to vulnerable children and young people and should look to bring back more children and young people with EHC plans.

Updating Risk assessments

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

There will be many children and young people with EHC plans who, following their original risk assessment, have not been attending their educational setting because it was determined that their needs could be more safely met at home. Risks change over time and therefore schools and setting should keep risk assessments up to date to reflect any changes in circumstances, including changes to coronavirus alert levels and the wider opening of education and care settings to more children and young people. With lower risk level it will be right for educational settings, working with families, to bring back more children and young people who have not been attending their educational setting. This will be based on individual risk assessments and within the limits of what the educational setting is capable of accommodating, given any staff absences and the need for protective measures.

It is also recommended that risk assessments continue to be maintained for children and young people with EHC plans who remain at home, so that they continue to guide your decisions on which children should be attending school and when they return to school.

When attendance is not appropriate, assessments can help make decisions about the support children and young people should receive at home, noting that circumstances may have changed.

What should be considered when updating risk assessments?

The risk assessment will need to balance a number of different risks, including:

- The ability of parents or carers to sustain the level of care and support that their children need
- Child or young person's views
- Any risk to siblings or family members including safeguarding risks. Where a child or young person with an EHC plan has a social worker, the social worker should also be involved in the risk assessment, along with the local authority virtual school head if the child is in care
- The potential impact to the child or young person's wellbeing
- The risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan temporarily cannot be delivered in the normal manner
- The potential health risks, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions/ clinical vulnerability
- Any other out-of-school/college risk or vulnerability

If a risk assessment determines that a child needs continue to be more safely met at home, please consider whether moving either equipment or services into home would enable them to be supported there. This may include physiotherapy equipment, sensory equipment, and online sessions with different types of therapists, phone support for parents in delivering interventions, where necessary.

Phased Return

The aim is for pupils with EHCPs who have not been attending, and are in eligible year groups, to experience the same return to their settings as their peers, informed by their individual circumstances and risk assessments.

In special schools and post 16 specialist settings decisions should not be made using the child's year group as a primary deciding factor. In these settings, year groups may not be as indicative of key transition points or moments that are particularly important for life chances.

Particular care will be needed in planning for and supporting children and young people with EHC plans to return to their schools and colleges. Educational settings should contact parents and involve them in decisions about their child who has an EHC plan. Similarly, they should involve children young people who have EHC plans.

Where applicable local authorities will reinstate safe home to school transport arrangements.

Preparing and supporting children

Guidance has been published on how to [implement protective measures in education and childcare settings](#). This advice seeks to support settings to enable more children to return to school in the safest way possible, focusing on measures they can put in place to help limit risk of the virus spreading within education and childcare settings.

Children and young people with EHC plans will need careful preparation for their return, for example, social stories to help with the transition.

We encourage settings to provide additional support to pupils with EHC plans about to make a transition to another setting, or onto adult life.

What about the risk to staff working hands-on with pupils and students who cannot adhere to strict hygiene practices?

It is recognised that some children and young people with special educational needs present behaviours that are challenging to manage without close hands-on contact. In these circumstances, staff should minimise close contact wherever possible, increase hand-washing and other hygiene measures, and clean surfaces more regularly and maintain existing routine use of personal protective equipment. Educational settings should follow the Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings and the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings.

Does school or college provision have to be delivered as it usually is for children and young people with EHC plans?

Due to the unprecedented circumstances presented by coronavirus, the section 42 Children and Families Act 2014 duty to secure the provision within an EHC plan has been temporarily modified so that local authorities and health commissioning bodies must use their 'reasonable endeavours' to discharge this duty.

As per the actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020 guidance, no school will be penalised if it is unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to its pupils during this period.

DfE Case Studies

DfE have published a case study on supporting the wellbeing of primary pupils with SEND.

In this case study a special school for primary pupils with SEND shares its approach which includes:

- Use of ClassDojo
- Home learning packs
- Use of a designated 'key worker' for each child

Read the whole article [here](#).

DfE Supporting Wellbeing

DfE have also updated their guidance on supporting pupil wellbeing and sharing methods that schools are using to do this. This guidance is part of their wider guidance on remote education practice.

Some examples listed are:

- Use of Microsoft Teams to maintain a sense of school community
- Finding opportunities for children to share their achievements
- Use of remote registers to raise concerns about pupil engagement and motivation

Read the article [here](#).

Promoting Social Connection

How do we promote social connection, whilst at a distance?

There have been a lot of discussions about how we support children's play, well-being and mental health whilst also trying to adhere to social distancing.

There are actually lots of games that can be played at a distance and many of these support skills such as communication, listening, teamwork, while at the same time as having fun!

Traditional games such as 'Rock, Paper, Scissors', 'Simon Says', 'Move like an...' 'Musical Statues' and physical activities like chalk walks:

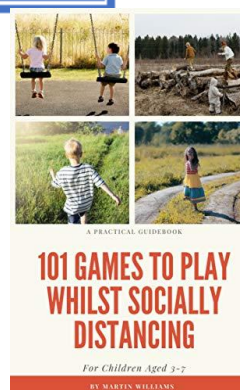


Other games can be adapted such as no-contact football rounders.

There is a fantastic resource compiled by Nicola Winter which can be accessed [here](#). As well as team games, both quiet and energetic, it also contains some arty activities which can be organised outside.

There is also a great set of game cards at this [weblink](#).

At the time of writing, this book was free to download and provides activities for younger children, many of which would be suitable for older pupils, or could easily be adapted. [Weblink](#)



For our pupils who find active games tricky, perhaps because they have visual impairments or are wheelchair users, this is a useful piece of equipment which can easily be wiped down afterwards:

It's fun and a great upper body workout! I'm sure you have lots of ideas of your own. We would love to hear about what's working well for you.



Five Ways for Children to Heal after the Pandemic

Mary Meredith, writing for TES, talks about how schools can help children who find it hard to return to life as normal. She suggests five key elements (grounded in research) of a wellbeing strategy as a starting point.

1. Hold a formal act of remembrance as a community
2. Place relationships front and centre and build social capital – through therapeutic work and trauma training
3. Identify and support children in most need of social buffering – some children will express their need for this but we need to look after dissociated children and those hiding through freezing
4. Reaffirm boundaries, rules and routines as safety measures – including consistency being critical – schools participating in the Better Behaviour Project will be well placed to plan for this.
5. Re-evaluate and reaffirm core values, recognising all.

Read the full article [here](#).

Principles of Nurture Graphic

In our last newsletter we highlighted how the principles of nurture can support post-lockdown education.

EdPsychInsight has produced this graphic summarising this which could be shared with staff. We have attached this to our newsletter.



<https://www.epinsight.com> | Twitter - @EPInsight

6. The importance of transitions

- Explore feelings about the return to school by asking for letters, drawings or videos.
- Make an online virtual tour to show the layout of classrooms, corridors and communal areas.
- Help children anticipate new routines through verbal/visual countdowns, rhythm or music.
- Consider transitional objects which help the child to feel connected and held in mind.

5. All behaviour is communication

- Playfulness to reduce stress - personalised greetings and fun rehearsals of new routines.
- Acceptance of the child's thoughts and feelings - "You loved spending time with your parents every day and it's sad to leave them".
- Curiosity to help elicit the child's views - "I noticed you've been quiet since coming back...".
- Empathy - "I know this is really tough for you. The classroom looks so different from the last time you were here".

4. Language is a vital means of communication

- "Name it to Tame it" - talk through difficult situations like a story.
- Use emojis, short scripts and role-plays to recognise and regulate emotions - "I am feeling ___ because..." and "When I feel ___ I can..."
- Use warm and welcoming language - "I've missed seeing your smile". "When I saw ___ on TV, it reminded me of you".
- Agree on simple, concise and factual statements about the passing of relatives, typical responses to grief and coping methods.



1. Learning is understood developmentally

- Rather than "catching up", we may need to revisit previous topics & concepts.
- Opportunities for play and activities which evoke laughter and satisfaction should be initially prioritised over academic expectations.
- Provide meaningful, practical and multi-sensory experiences for new learning, with tasks which are broken down into small steps and actively modelled.
- Consider attachment needs - tasks which can be completed with little support via time-limited bursts of independent working and regular reassurance from staff.

2. The classroom offers a secure base

- Consider a whole-school Social story, which acknowledges the difficulties of the lockdown, welcomes the children back to school, shows how things will be different and explains why.
- Emphasise structure and predictability - visual scheduling; seating plans; clear labelling of new areas for storing resources and possessions.
- Identify designated places for relaxation and calming sensory input.
- Create a sense of belonging by decorating a wall with photos of the children and key staff.

3. The importance of nurture for wellbeing & self-esteem

- Notice their strengths and creativity during the lockdown - ask parents for photos and videos of rainbow paintings, homemade dens, Joe Wicks workouts, etc.
- Offer choice in new tasks and routines, as a way of providing control and promoting autonomy.
- Celebrate and remind them of success - keep a book or box with evidence of their effort and achievements.
- Give hope during more challenging tasks by praising their effort and persistence and emphasising how we learn through practise, mistakes and small steps.

<https://www.epinsight.com>

Learning disabilities, autism and internet safety

A 24-page guide has been produced by Cerebra using information originally written by Elizabeth Archer. It outlines suggestions to help parents limit the risk of their child having negative online experiences and suggests actions that they could take if children do. It includes the following sections:

- Making your home internet safe
- Making mobile internet safe
- Preparing your child to use the internet
- Risks – dealing with cyberbullying, privacy and preventing grooming, antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, spending money online
- Benefits – exploring social interests and learning tools, extended social network and access to peer support, communication tools.

We have attached the guide which we hope you will promote to parents.

Coronavirus Back to School Social Story

Elsa Support have created a free social story for schools and parents to use which we have attached.

There is also a link to their Separation Anxiety Resource Pack within the resource.

Support for Parents

Parents may be anxious at this time and we have a SEND helpline that they can use staffed by members of the ISS, BSS and EP teams.

Parents can contact us with their COVOD queries on SENDCOVIDenquiry@southglos.gov.uk or 01454 866123.

The telephone helpline is available between 9 and 1 on weekdays (except Bank Holidays) but parents can leave a message or email in at any time.

We aim to get back to parents within 48 hours. Any questions posed to this helpline will be used to inform an FAQ section on the South Gloucestershire website.

Contact the Inclusion and Behaviour Teams

As more children returned to school you may wish to discuss individual pupils and how they can best be supported.

Our teams can help with this.

Please see the contact details below.

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	Inclusion & Behaviour Services Team Leader Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk

Website to Support Emotional Regulation

This link takes you to an area of the useful Do2learn website - The **Emotion Colour Wheel** can help visually group feelings. The circle is divided into colours to show some basic emotions. Brighter, bolder colours are associated with more intense emotions. There are tips for using the wheel, activities and worksheets.
<https://do2learn.com/organizationtools/EmotionsColorWheel/overview.htm>

Website with apps to support sensory regulation

Free apps on this website for stimulation, relaxation, fun, digital art and speech therapy. Many of the apps are cause and effect style apps, using digital techniques developed over time. A particularly good section on sensory apps.
<https://www.sensoryappphouse.com/>

Websites to Support Communication

This website allows you to create your own visuals for pupils with a range of communication needs. You can print your visuals off on a range of different templates – flash cards, small visuals for communication folders, activity boards, bingo boards, visual timetables etc. <https://www.visuals2go.com/>

Locate VI resources and learn strategies to support pupils who are blind and visually impaired. You have to sign up and then there is free access to printables, presentations and a goal bank. Includes interactive sensory stories.
<https://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/>

This website has been created by an American Speech and Language Therapist to support teachers, speech therapists and parents. There is a section with free resources to support with developing receptive and expressive language, speech sounds, pre-verbal children, increasing sentence length etc.
<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/free-speech-language-resources/>

Whole School SEND NQT Videos

These SEND guidance videos has been created in collaboration with Centre for Education and Youth (CfEY), and many other experts. They aim to develop an NQTs knowledge of SEND and introduce them to resources and tips for the classroom. They cover **ADHD, Acquired Brain Injury, Autism, Down's Syndrome, Dyscalculia, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Hearing Impairment, Physical Disability, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Visual Impairment.**
<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send/find-wss-resources/nqt-videos.html>

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

Priory Woods School and Art College Resources

Priory Woods School and Arts College caters for pupils from the ages of four to nineteen with a range of educational needs including pupils with severe learning difficulties and pupils with profound and multiple needs. From the Resources section of this school website there is access to a number of simple programs to support, specific curriculum areas. These programs can be run online or downloaded for Mac and PC. There are also switch and touchscreen activities to use.
<http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/page/?title=Resources&pid=3>

PMLD Thematic Units

This website has thematic units designed to support teachers in delivering a vibrant and motivating curriculum for learners aged 3–19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/curriculum_microsite/SEN_PMLD_thematic_units/index.asp