COVID19 SENCO Newsletter
Issue 12

This is the twelfth 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.

The Recovery Curriculum

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

Work on the recovery curriculum continues to make good progress. We now have 5 cells, with representatives from primary, secondary and special schools from the maintained and academy sector.

Cell co-leaders will be meeting this week with their teams to shape the groups' goals and immediate actions. **The key to each cell's work will be to compliment schools' current curriculum offer and provide a wealth of resources and information around the 5 key themes, to hopefully save teachers and leaders time.**

As the content of the group work grows, this will be stored online for anyone in South Gloucestershire schools, to access. It is also not too late to join any one of the 5 cells. Please email Sharon Gray sharongray.co@gmail.com and CAH Business Support CAHBusinessSupportBMR@southglos.gov.uk if you have school representatives who would like to be involved.

Cell 1: Strategic Oversight Group
Cell 2: Stress, trauma, loss and bereavement
Cell 3: Valuing the unique learner (SEND, EAL, PP, GRT, more able, the tutored child)
Cell 4: The reconnection to reparation, recovery to resilience curriculum. (Rising strong curriculum, Enduring strong curriculum, Transitions)
Cell 5: Stakeholders (parents/carers, governors/trustees, Headteacher and staff well-being)


South Gloucestershire Local Authority - Reconnection to Reparation, Recovery and Resilience.
A collaborative system led approach through and out of the current pandemic.

The South Glos Way – Children at the heart of all we do – Photo Call and Pupil Voice!

From the Education Continuity Newsletter
We are now in the final stages of publication of The South Glos Way online toolkit and graduated response for inclusion and SEND. To make this online platform come to life, we are looking for schools to volunteer digital photographs of children and young people at work and play in our South Gloucestershire schools and settings. These will be used in our online toolkit and so we ask that you obtain permission form parents/carers for this specific use. Many of you will already have fantastic photos of your school children for use on your website. If you are able to help, please email faye.bertham@southglos.gov.uk and we can make arrangements for images to be shared and permission to be formalised. **We are also looking for anonymous quotes from SEND pupils about what helps them to learn and experience success. Please send any quotes to Faye Bertham.**
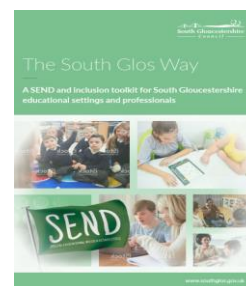
South Glos Preventative Services

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

Attached to this newsletter is an new overview of South Glos Preventative Services.

Structure of Preventative Services
Preventative Services are part of South Gloucestershire Council's Integrated Children's Services (ICS), specifically contribute to the vision and priorities of South Gloucestershire's Early Help Partnership Strategy 2019-24 and include the following:

Teams
- Compass (previously known as the Early Help Partnership Team)
- Families Plus 0-5 (previously known as Children Centre teams)
- Families Plus 5-18 (previously known as FYPS)
- Young Peoples Support (YPS) team (new)
- Youth Offending Team (YOT).

4 ways to re- integrate pupils who have disconnected from school: The potency of making children feel visible on their return from lockdown

by Paul Norris, Head of Dept. Brimsham green School and Big Education

From the Education Continuity Newsletter

Some young people will not have missed school. Regardless of their home environment, they did not like school before lockdown, and they still won't like it afterwards. In fact, they may be even more reluctant to attend school than they were before.

How do we re-engage these young people? My role every day is to do just that, with pupils who have been non-attenders at school due to either illness or exclusion. I am used to persuading young people that education is something with which they need to engage, and the lessons I have learned in this role may be useful to schools in the next few weeks.

So here is how I would approach this re-integration.

1) Understand their challenges and meet them where they are

What type of teacher would you need if, as a child, you had experienced a catastrophic emergency? Our challenge is to be that teacher for the young people we work with.

We need to listen, acknowledge and begin to understand their experience. Then we can talk honestly about the universality of the incredible challenge we have faced but equally talk of resilience, coping and overcoming the next challenge. Shared community stories of overcoming adversity, helping each other and coming together (virtually!) will help to talk with optimism and hope about a shared, collaborative and compassionate future.

2) Focus on nurture

Throw a wide circle around young people with a 'learning space' that is first a 'nurture space'. Avoid deficit talk of 'catching up", "being behind", or "missing work'. Instead, focus on them and their interests, use your expertise to set engaging, exciting and challenging work that connects with young people's meaning, purpose and passion.

3) Celebrate the small wins and see the best part

It is going to take a long time and hundreds of small and maybe hesitant steps to rebuild connections, so notice those small steps young people are taking and celebrate the wins, however small.

Take the opportunity to build a store of school successes to help the young people and the whole school community to see that relationships are being rebuilt and connections remade.

4) Make them feel visible

There are three words that hold so much potential for us to connect with our young people – 'I see you'. Take the opportunity presented by this 'New Non-Normal' to really see them by connecting with them as fellow human beings instead of data sets, behaviour points, groups or progress scores.

Everything I have detailed above is a reminder of values and strategies from teaching wisdom of old – it is what has worked for me to build relationships with young people often dismissed as 'difficult' and what we need to help all our students to connect with learning, school and ultimately themselves in the months to come.

News from 0-25 – the Education Health and care Plan Co-ordination team.

Education Health and are Needs Assessments.

In 2019 we completed 72% all needs assessments within the 20 week time frame. This is well above the national average. Currently our data for 2020 indicates that we have maintained a good level of timeliness with the following showing percentage completion within 20 weeks

- April of 60 %
- May 80%
- June 68%

Despite Covid we remain above the national average. Pleasingly appeals against decisions have also been reducing this year.

Reasonable Endeavours

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the requirement to collate the reasonable endeavours schools, social care and health have made during the Covid period to support young people. We hope to have completed this by the end of term. Your contributions have been followed up by case officers calls to parents.

Frankly what you have all achieved in such adverse circumstances has been remarkable and greatly appreciated.

Statutory Panel

We have really welcomed the contribution of head teachers to our statutory panel this year. This brings an external perspective to the panel's decision making process, ensuring that decisions are transparent and robust. Amanda Evans is currently writing the rota for next year's panel which is likely to continue via Microsoft Teams for the foreseeable future.

Please contact her Amanda.Evans@southglos.gov.uk if you are able to contribute.
We are also seeking ways to involve SENCOs in our processes, more news will be coming shortly.

Annual Reviews

The team have worked extremely hard to tackle the backlog of reviews and, for the most part, have been successful. There will, unfortunately, be a few occasions where we have not managed to complete our processes, please do bear with us.

We would like to emphasise that it is essential that you return your paperwork within two weeks of holding a review. We are required to respond within 4 weeks of the date of the review. Clearly if there is a delay in receiving the paperwork this impacts on the timescales.

Please note that annual reviews must be returned to the annual review in box at EHCPar@southglos.gov.uk and must not be password protected.

We will be issuing new annual review guidance, paperwork and training in September.

Statutory processes training from the 0-25 - Education Health and Care Plan Co-ordination team.

This training is being offered on Microsoft Teams. All sessions are from 4 until 5 pm. To book, please contact CAH business support.

Tuesday 8 September	Needs Assessments
Thursday 10 September	Annual reviews
Tuesday 15 September	Co-production and person centred planning
Thursday 17 September	Needs Assessments
Tuesday 22 September	Annual reviews
Thursday 24 September	Co-production and person centred planning
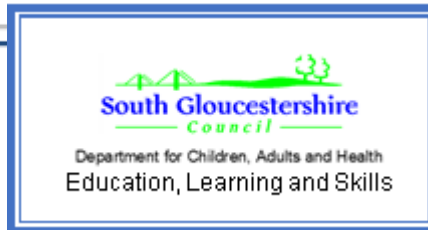
DfE Updates

An overview of the Updated Behaviour and Discipline in Schools guidance

Last week the Department for Education issued updated guidance for behaviour and discipline in schools. The guidance outlines how school leaders and staff can develop a school behaviour policy, and explains the powers members of staff have to discipline pupils. In addition, the guidance now includes a useful checklist to support full school opening following the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and recommendations on getting the simple things right in the classroom. The key points that are highlighted in the guidance have been summarised below.

Key points from the behaviour and discipline in schools guidance:
- Teachers have statutory authority to discipline pupils for misbehaviour which occurs in school and, in some circumstances, outside of school.
- Teachers have the power to confiscate pupils' property and issue detention outside school hours. The Head teacher can decide which members of staff can put pupils in detention.
- The power to discipline applies to all paid staff (unless the head teacher says otherwise) with responsibility for pupils, such as teaching assistants.
- Members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline.
- Schools can adopt a policy which allows disruptive pupils to be placed in an area away from other pupils for a limited period, in what are often referred to as seclusion or isolation rooms. If a school uses these as a disciplinary penalty this should be made clear in their behaviour policy.
- Head teachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions. The document gives advice on developing an effective behaviour policy.
- Governing bodies of maintained schools and academies have a duty requiring them to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are

carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

An overview of the "Getting the simple things right" document

As part of the updated guidance, Charlie Taylor, the Government's Adviser on behaviour in schools put together a short document which summarises key principles for head teachers to help improve school behaviour. This includes a basic behaviour check-list for teachers to follow which refers to the classroom environment, pupils, teaching and parents. This is a useful reminder for all teachers about getting the basics right from the start, and would be of particular use for NQTs who may be commencing their teaching careers in September.

An overview of the checklist for school leaders to support full opening: behaviour and attendance
This valuable checklist has been designed to assist all school leaders and staff in preparing to welcome back all pupils full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. It is a tool for schools to support the re-engagement of pupils and the return to orderly and calm environments in which all pupils can achieve and thrive and is an essential read.
It has been put together to help schools in making appropriate changes to support the reintegration of children bearing in mind that pupils may have been exposed to a range of adverse experiences during lockdown and their usual routines will have been disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
It recommends that school leaders use this advice to develop their own plans for reengaging pupils in a way that works for their pupils' needs and in line with the following key actions:
1. Plan
2. Communicate
3. Be consistent
4. Support
5. Monitor and Improve

The full updated DfE guidance can be accessed here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools

National Statistics on SEND

On 2 July DfE published their annual statistics on special educational needs in England for January 2020 compiled from census information.

The full report can be accessed at https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england

The headline figures are below.

EHC plans/Statements of SEN (percent)
3.3
▶ What is this?

SEN support (percent)
12.1
▶ What is this?

- 3.3% of all pupils in schools in England have an Education, health and care (EHC) plan, a rise from 3.1% in 2019
- A further 12.1% of all pupils have SEN support, without an EHC plan, up from 11.9% in 2019.
- The most common type of need for pupils with an EHC plan is autistic spectrum disorders and for pupils with SEN support is speech, communication and language needs
- SEN is more prevalent in boys than girls, with boys representing 73.1% of all pupils with an EHC plan and 64.6% of pupils with SEN support

The SWAN Model: Well-being approach to support children.

Courtesy of Dr. Pooky Knightsmith.

As schools begin the process of – slowly - moving back towards normal working, Dr. Pooky Knightsmith has proposed a framework to support pupils. She has called this the SWAN Model – Safe, Welcoming, All together and Nurturing. These four elements act as pillars of good practice and each is outlined below. It is likely that, through clusters or at SENCo development meetings, schools may be able to share ideas and approaches for each of the four areas, so strengthening practice.

1. **Safe. (Physical, emotional, social and cognitive).**

Physical safety is currently the key issue. Indeed, physical safety always comes first.
For children **emotional safety** is about being 'heard' by those around them, that it is safe to express themselves in whatever way is appropriate to then, eg. through words or play. Expression may be more challenging for those children who have experienced bereavement, are highly anxious or are from complex home contexts. We, as adults cannot solve everything, fundamentally change the world or make it safe. However, our role now is to hear children, provide coping strategies and build their capacity to better regulate their emotions, thus enabling them to better engage with school and the world around them.

Social safety is about the rules – What are they? Have they been carefully planned? Have they been explained appropriately? Inevitably, these requirements will vary child by child.

Upon return to school many children will not feel **cognitively safe** as they have become unfamiliar with normal way of learning. This is true even for those children who have engaged well with learning at home – it is not the same as learning at school. Others will have done little if any learning at home, so upon return to school, the 'learning playing field' will be very uneven. Skills for learning will need rebuilding once children are back in the classroom. A lack of cognitive safety often presents as either big angry responses or withdrawn behaviour. Adults in school need to be vigilant and have an awareness of the significance of both responses.

Adults in schools may need to be kind to themselves – we have never faced a situation like this before and we will all be muddling through. It will also be necessary to strike a balance between safety and insightful support/understanding versus too much shutting away and protection. The question we will need to consider is, how safe is too safe? There is likely to be a generic answer and also an answer specific to each child.

2. **Welcoming. (Warm, wanted, with my people, within a community)**

This is will probably be more difficult to realise where schools are working in shifts, bubbles and pods. However, 'welcoming' is nevertheless something which can be secured for groups and individuals. As we move back towards normality 'with my people' and 'within a community' will re-emerge more fully.

Some schools are preparing the 'welcome' for returning children with displays of photographs of children working at home and displays of work they have done. Children who still may not be able to return to school are also included in these displays. They are wanted, they are within the community and they will be welcomed back – they are still part of the whole although they may not actually be present.

The challenge for schools is how to create social closeness in spite of continued physical distancing? Clearly the latter is required, but so is social connectedness and closeness. Schools have been creative in finding ways for children and staff to connect during the Covid crisis. It will be interesting to see some of the strategies which emerge, or are adapted from existing approaches, during the period of re-opening.

3. **All together. (Around the child, with the child, child-led, child's language)**

None of us has lived through a pandemic of this magnitude before. Nor have we experienced the extensive communal trauma, distress and worry which has surrounded the country over the last few months.

In our interactions with children we need to take a child-led approach. We need to ask children how they feel and what their perceptions are, not just tokenistically. Children are often disinhibited in their thinking and will offer ideas and solutions which adults may not perceive. When a child or group of children find solutions to problems and offer ideas for ways forward, it fosters a sense of agency, choice and positivity. It allows them to see that they can have a decision-making role in their own lives and a supportive role in the lives of others. Being empowered is a safeguard against mental health difficulties, disengagement and passivity.

There is a particular need to be aware of those children who are 'flying under the radar'. Why might this be the case? Who are the children we cannot bring to mind? These are children with regard to whom we need to be vigilant. Finally, interacting with a child needs to be done in their own language, at their own level. When children do not understand this pushes them into cognitive danger, they feel unsafe and things begin to go awry. During this next phase, as schools and society at large, begins to move towards back towards normality, enabling children to understand this process with clarity and certainty will allow them to make this journey successfully.

4. **Nurturing. (Safe, soothed, secure and seen)**

At the moment everyone needs a bit of nurturing! We all need it, but it is likely that many children will need a bit more care and nurture. Anyone who has taken a knock in life needs nurturing and, regardless of degree, it has impacted on all children. Nurturing actions build a sense of safety. It can be challenging for adults who are time poor, but positive interactions with children satisfies the need to be 'seen'. These interactions are not about quantity, rather they are about quality. We may not be able to change wider circumstances, but we can make ourselves better by doing things which allow us to take charge and be calm. Children can be given a range of such things which they can try out for themselves. These are activities and actions help a child to be soothed. Explaining the physiology of our reactions and how some activities can help to regulate emotions is a big step towards emotional regulation. If safe, soothed and seen are in place, then secure will follow.

Might there also be a fifth S? Special? However, this is rather speculative. Should we be purposefully looking for those things a child is good at and bringing them to the fore? When we see and acknowledge and celebrate those things, so do they. Perhaps this should particularly be the case for SEND children, where there is always the risk of them being viewed through the lens of diagnostic 'stuff', difficulties and challenges.

Finally, how do we generate joy? Currently, the University of reading is doing research into what this might look like at different ages and stages. Dr. Helen Dodd, one of the lead researchers on the programme, posts on Twitter about her research and sometimes suggests useful resources for teachers and families.

PSHE and SEN

As you will all be aware, schools are now required to teach PSHE, including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Many of you will be using Jigsaw which has planning for pupils with SEN. For those who have their own plans or use the PSHE Association Scheme of Work you might find the following publication useful. This document may also support aspects of your recovery curriculum in terms of supporting children with SEND to feel safe in school as they return in September.

This planning for Key stages 1-4 aligns with the main document and covers:

- Managing Feelings
- Changing and Growing
- Healthy Lifestyles
- The World I Live In

As with Jigsaw, this is a spiral curriculum which allows you to tailor teaching to the unique needs and abilities of your pupils, perhaps by drawing on content from an earlier phase. Assessment opportunities are included so you can identify starting points then record and build upon learning.
 Other ideas, which are useful whatever your scheme of work are suggested such as:

- Breaking down the leaning into smaller steps
- Offering both explicit and implicit learning opportunities and experiences
- Re-visiting content through cross-curricular leaning and activities
- Providing opportunities both in and out of school to promote physical, social and emotional understanding as pupils transition from primary to secondary phase
- Exploring all topics within the context of 'online world' and 'off line world'
- Using the learning outcomes to support targets and outcomes in EHCPs and Individual Plans.

This planning is based upon progressive steps starting with 'Encountering' to 'Enhancement' and includes opportunities for pupils, where possible to experience taking and sharing responsibility, reflect upon their experiences, develop daily personal living routines and make real decisions. Many of these aspects are at the heart of special school planning but mainstream school colleagues have often struggled to fit this into the curriculum. This document is very useful when considering how we plan our PSHE curriculum and personalise learning for our SEN pupils in order to ensure they have the relevant skills for their individual development.

Download the framework here.

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. There will not be anyone covering the phone line over the holidays but it will be regularly checked so parents can leave a message or email in their queries. Parents can contact us with their COVOD queries on **SENDCOVIDenquiry@southglos.gov.uk** or 01454 866123.

We have attached the parent newsletter for your information.

Parent Support from Contact

Contact have been adapting their support offer for families including free online workshops so that families can continue to connect with each other and gain useful information and advice. They have also set up new, "Listening Ear" 1-1 confidential phone appointments with our family support advisers for parents who would like to talk to someone for reassurance and practical and emotional support.

Workshops
https://www.contact.org.uk/about-us/family-workshops/
Listening Ear
https://www.contact.org.uk/news-and-blogs/introducing-our-new-1-1-listening-ear-service-(1)/
COVID -19 Information Pages
https://www.contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/

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

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Department for Children, Adults and Health

Update on School Closures and SEN provision from IPSEA (Info accurate as of 30.06.2020)

IPSEA (Independent Provider of Special Education Advice) has updated their list of FAQs on how the COVID-19 measures will affect children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities ("**SEND**").

https://www.ipsea.org.uk/news/ipsea-update-on-covid-19-school-closures-and-sen-provision

Managing Unexpected Endings and Transitions

A practical guide to support pupils and students to manage change during periods of disruption
https://www.annafreud.org/media/11610/managing-unexpected-endings-transitions-may2020.pdf

Transition Back to School for pupils with SLCN

Supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication needs returning to school after the COVID-19 lockdown
http://thinkingtalking.co.uk/transition-back-school/

Mental Health Foundation short guide for returning to school
This short guide from The Mental Health Foundation aims to outline the scale of the challenge that schools are facing and provide practical advice and support
for teachers supporting pupils as they return to school.
https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown

Links for SENCos

Focus on Nurture to help return to learning

A strong focus on pupils' emotional wellbeing is needed to help children and young people recover and reconnect when school buildings reopen, according to the East Lothian Educational Psychology Service.

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/13263/focus_on_nurture_to_help_return_to_learning

How can teachers reconnect with children after the enforced break?

Educationalist Ben Ballin sets out some ideas for meeting pupils' pastoral needs when they return to school.

https://www.teachwire.net/news/how-can-teachers-reconnect-with-children-after-the-enforced-break

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

Our new #SouthGlosConnect website has sections on SEMH, the unique learner and specialist provision through which we can disseminate these ideas to all schools.

Please email your ideas to:

Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk