

Headteachers' Update

The Daily 5 O'Clock Update For Schools

Message from Cllr Wayne Daley, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to schools and settings

I want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for all your hard work over the last few weeks - we are dealing with a challenge like nothing we have faced before and I am very grateful for your outstanding dedication in these very difficult circumstances.

This is a worrying time for all of us, and for our families. We are learning to adjust the way we live our lives, while still working to keep things running during this pandemic.

You were all incredibly quick to adapt to the challenge, reinventing the way education was delivered to our young people - both for those home-schooling and those still attending.

While we do not know when schools will reopen to all children, I am delighted to hear of the numbers of vulnerable children, children of key workers and children with an EHCP who are still attending school. Your selfless ongoing hard work during this uncertainty provides vital support for our NHS colleagues and other key workers, who are crucial in battling this virus.

I know every member of staff in our schools has made personal sacrifices to enable these key workers to do their jobs and ultimately save lives.

A massive heartfelt thank you from me, for your tremendous commitment and dedication. We could not do this without you.

Stay safe.

Wayne

Message from Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Children's and Adult Services

As the first week of the new term draws to an end, I want to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you for your hard work over the last few weeks - including over the Easter 'holiday', when many schools and alternative providers remained open to look after children of key workers or the most vulnerable children.

I was delighted to hear that, on the first day of this new term, 1068 children attended, which included 740 key worker children, 234 that schools have identified as vulnerable, and 94 with an EHCP.

I can't thank you enough for the dedication that you have shown and we are hugely grateful for your continued efforts to get the job done in these very difficult circumstances.

In the last few days we have heard the education secretary, Gavin Williamson, say he cannot give a date for when English schools will reopen.

People are understandably anxious as schools remain closed and the lockdown continues, but your hard work and flexibility is invaluable to us in the support we provide to families. In fact, the pandemic has brought out the very best of people in communities right across Northumberland.

Your selfless dedication and ongoing hard work continues to provide vital support to our NHS colleagues and other key workers, who are crucial in battling this virus. This is not an easy time for anyone but by working together we can make a huge difference.

Thank you once again and stay safe.

We will continue to share information and briefings, please keep yourselves and others safe by following the national guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Cath

Letter to Early Years Settings, Schools and Colleges from the Secretary of State for Education

You should, by now, have received a letter from Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, about supporting the attendance of vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus crisis.

In the extract from the letter in italics, below, the Secretary of States restates the target group of vulnerable pupils that he believes should be in educational settings:

In brief, our expectations on who should attend and how we recommend providers to follow up non-attendance are summarised below:

- **Children and young people who have a social worker** should be encouraged to attend an education setting unless their social worker decides that they are at less risk at home or in their placement. This could be, for example, due to underlying health conditions. Absence should be followed up with the parent or carer, and with the social worker/local authority where appropriate.
- **Children and young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan** – We are asking local authorities to consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, and make a risk assessment, consulting educational settings and parents or carers, to determine whether children and young people with special educational needs will be able to have their needs met at home, and be safer there than attending an educational setting. Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be safer at home, our recommendation is that they stay at home. Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an

EHC plan will be as safe or safer at an education setting, our recommendation is that they attend the education setting. Where pupils are expected to attend settings, we would expect providers to follow up with the parent or carer – and social worker/local authority, where appropriate – to explore reasons for any absence.

- **Children and young people who are otherwise vulnerable** – education settings, including alternative provision, can, together with relevant partners, use their discretion to encourage the attendance of children and young people that they or other local services, such as local authorities (including children's social care services) or the police, feel would be safer by attending an education setting. Any subsequent absence should be followed up with the parent or carer, and with other partners where appropriate.

Working alongside our colleagues in Children's Social Care, we will provide you with as much support as you need to try to ensure that we continue to increase the number of vulnerable children in our settings, following the increases that we have seen this week.

DfE Updates

Get technology support for children and schools during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Guidance for schools and colleges on how to get internet access, digital devices and support to provide remote education during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Local authorities can also get support for care leavers, and children and young people with a social worker.

New details of the offer have been added, including a section on getting help using online education platforms.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Further to the above IT details, the DfE press release can be found here:

Multi-million support for vulnerable children during COVID-19

Extra support to keep children at risk of neglect or abuse safe during the Coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-support-for-vulnerable-children-during-covid-19>.

What parents and carers need to know about schools and education during the coronavirus outbreak.

Information for parents and carers about educational provision for critical workers, school closures, exams, free school meals and home schooling.

This has updated sections on closures, transport, vulnerable children, critical workers and resources. It has also removed the information about the Easter holidays.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for schools and other educational settings

Guidance and advice about coronavirus (COVID-19) in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students.

This has added guidance for children's social care services during the coronavirus outbreak and guidance on managing school premises during the coronavirus outbreak (see below)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings#history>.

Managing school premises, which are partially open, during the coronavirus outbreak

During partial or full closure, educational settings continue to be responsible for a range of health and safety measures and statutory compliance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-school-premises-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/managing-school-premises-which-are-partially-open-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

In addition, see the [health and safety](#) section of good estate management for schools.

Phone calls & emails to schools and parents re: 'free' IT kit

We have been made aware of schools and/or parents being contacted directly by companies with offers of 'free' IT kit for pupils either by phone, email or social media. Parents, in particular, have been targeted. If you hear about any of these offers from your parents, please let me know as I need to report them to the DfE. In general, there isn't any cold-call free kit on offer and parents and schools could be getting themselves into unfortunate agreements. We have just received further details from the DfE regarding kit and connections for Y10 vulnerable children and the link is on this Update. In addition, the North of Tyne Combined Authority is developing a kit and connection offer that will complement the DfE offer.

As I informed you last night, we will be requesting information from you next week to help us to scope out the level of IT need in your pupils' homes. Other than the DfE and the North of Tyne schemes, I know of no other genuine free IT kit and connectivity offers.

Safe to Learn Edition 34

This week's edition of Safe to Learn, which is produced by the Northumberland Virtual School Safeguarding Team is available at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Looked-after/Virtual.aspx>.

Early Career Framework - Online seminars

As you will know the Early Career Framework is due to be rolled out in the north-east from September.

Two of the four providers have online sessions coming up which staff may wish to attend, if you are likely to have NQTs next academic year.

Teach First

<https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/events>

Ambition Institute

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ambition-institute-ecf-info-session-doncaster-north-east-tickets-102696030592>

The DfE were due to hold a face to face meeting with all four providers in March but have not rescheduled this as yet. The Early Career Framework is optional, but we are encouraging all schools to participate.

Message from the Northumbria Healthcare 0-19 Service

The 0-19 team (health visiting and school nursing) would like to reassure you that you and your children's safety is our priority and, with this in mind, we have made the difficult decision to suspend until further notice:

- all group sessions and activities - breastfeeding, baby groups, parentcraft/birth and beyond sessions
- all well baby clinics
- all school drop ins
- all routine school age screening, including the National Child measurement Programme.

We would like to ensure that all of our clients continue to receive the Healthy Child Programme and support. Most routine contacts will be conducted via the telephone rather than face to face.

Your health visiting or school nursing team will contact you in advance if this applies to you.

Health visiting: Please contact your named health visiting team for advice and support or contact the Northumberland Health Visitor Support and Advice line Monday to Friday 9-5 0191 6073838

School nursing: We have a service called ChatHealth which lets you text your school nurse, in confidence, for advice and support. The service deals with all kinds of issues including mental health, bullying, self-harm, alcohol and drugs, relationships, healthy eating and smoking. ChatHealth is available for young people aged 11-19.

- Alternatively, you can contact your nearest school nurse team direct on the following numbers: Child Health Centre, Wansbeck Hospital, Ashington – 01670 564048
- Eddie Ferguson House, Blyth – 01670 629670
- Corbridge Health Centre, Hexham – 01434 636939
- Broomhill Health Centre, Amble- 01670 761908

You may be asked to leave a message on an answer machine.