

Headteachers' Update

The Daily 5 O'Clock Update For Schools

Sutton Trust: 'SCHOOL CLOSURES HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE GULFS IN INEQUALITY BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE'

On today's headteacher conference call, one of our headteachers highlighted an article in the [Sutton Trust Newsletter](#) that is both interesting and useful for our schools. The link is below:

<https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Impact-Brief-School-Shutdown.pdf>

Press Release: Music Partnership North Use Technology to Help Children to Keep Learning During Lockdown

Under normal circumstances, Music Partnership North deliver music lessons in Northumberland and Newcastle schools, reaching 6500 pupils every week. Faced with school closures, they have had to find innovative solutions to support children's musical learning during lockdown.

In addition to preparing online resources, music tutors have begun delivering one-to-one music lessons this week using Google Meet video calls. MPN's Lead Officer Jacky Craig and her team had to adapt quickly to change their delivery model.

"We did our best to get some information out to parents before the Easter break, letting them know that we were working on an alternative to their usual lessons." Jacky explained. "Although we knew that the technology existed to do this, we had to work hard to make sure that appropriate safeguarding measures were in place and that the staff involved had the training and support needed to make these lessons a success."

The initial response has been very positive, with tutors, parents and children enthusiastic about this new opportunity. Tutors are also optimistic about the future possibilities of using technology to reach more children.

"I've been amazed by how well this has worked," Deputy Manager David Francis said. "Parents have told me how good it has been for children to keep going with their normal activities and that the children have now been inspired after a few weeks without lessons. Once lockdown is over, we may be able to take advantage of this technology to overcome some of the challenges of rural isolation and make sure that music lessons are more accessible to children across the county."

Transporting children between schools

Wherever possible, school transport has provided support to those children who are currently attending a school that is not their usual school. It has been brought to our attention that in some instances, teachers are transporting children in their own cars.

NCC insurance covers all pupils and/or staff who are attending alternative NCC schools during the shutdown. If schools are arranging other transport, however, the usual checks will need to be made to ensure adequate insurance cover is in place.

The Council Motor Insurance programme now includes 'occasional business use' for staff to ensure transport can run where necessary.

McCull's joins the free school meals national voucher scheme

McCull's has joined the list of supermarkets that will now redeem vouchers secured through the free school meals national voucher scheme. The supermarkets available also include Aldi, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose, M&S, Asda and Morrisons.

The updated guidance on providing free school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>

NNC Youth Service 'Mind of My Own's Mindfulness Project'

We know how important it is to take care of our mental health. We're starting to understand how COVID-19 can have a damaging effect on our wellbeing.

For example, we've looked at recent data and have seen an increase in how often feelings such as 'Lonely', 'Scared', and 'Unsure' are being selected by young people.

To help overcome these challenges, we've been working on a project to teach young people about Mindfulness and to help keep them engaged at home.

You can download our 'Mindfulness Workbook' by clicking the link below and taking a look for yourself.

Share this workbook with your frontline staff and the children and young people using your services. Don't forget to let us know what feedback you receive!

https://mcusercontent.com/82954885c12cc8d861a509c97/files/2f5c455c-170c-498e-8f9b-fb8d36437c43/Mind_Of_My_Own_Mindfulness_Project_.pdf

NSPCC Update

Following the Education Secretary's announcement on 19 April the Government is providing NSPCC with £1.6 million to expand and promote their adult helpline in order to further protect children from harm.

This means more adults will be able to raise concerns and seek advice about the safety and wellbeing of any child that they're worried about, which should take some pressure off LAs and the police as first point of contact during Covid-19 lockdown.

NSPCC are leading on a media launch of the campaign starting on Monday 4th May with a four-week TV, radio and digital advertising campaign, but you may start to see media coverage of the NSPCC campaign from tomorrow onwards.

Smile Through Sport Resource Pack Offer to Special Schools

Cramlington based Charity, Smile Through Sport, who specialise in providing sport & physical activity opportunities for children and adults with disabilities have, through their Northumberland based families fund project, developed a resource pack full of ideas, games and activities appropriate for children with disabilities and their families to remain active at home.

The pack can be provided electronically but we are aware that this may not suit everyone. Northumberland Sport has, therefore, agreed to fund the cost of printing packs for children attending special schools across Northumberland.

If you would like to receive a copy of the activity pack either electronically or printed, could you please contact Rachel Miller, Managing Director of Smile Through Sport indicating which format you would like and, for printed copies, the numbers you require. The intention for printed copies will be to have these delivered to schools for you to distribute to your families.

Rachel can be contacted on rachel@smilethroughsport.com or 07749114807.

Rachel can also provide further information on the services available from Smile Through Sport which may be of interest to your families, including the launch of an equipment lending library across Northumberland.