

Headteachers' Update

The Daily 5 O'Clock Update For Schools

School Reopening Headteacher Planning Groups

As part of our planning for school reopening, whatever that may look like and whenever it may start, we are going to establish six headteacher planning groups to try to establish some broad guidance that will support both schools and the local authority.

We are hoping that there will be a headteacher group for each of first, primary, middle, high, secondary and special schools with between four and eight headteachers on each group. A member of the Education and Skills SMT will chair each group and we will provide a flexible framework to guide the conversations. We know that reopening will look different in every school and the resulting guidance will recognise and respect that whilst, hopefully, providing appropriate support for our schools and academies in what will be unprecedented situation.

We are looking for the groups to meet at least once a week for the foreseeable future in order that the guidance arrived at is both pertinent and current.

If you are interested in joining one of the groups, please contact:

- First schools: David Street (david.street@northumberland.gov.uk)
- Primary Schools: David Street (david.street@northumberland.gov.uk)
- Middle schools: Dean Jackson (dean.jackson@northumberland.gov.uk)
- High Schools: Dave Cookson (dave.cookson@northumberland.gov.uk)
- Secondary schools: Dave Cookson (dave.cookson@northumberland.gov.uk)
- Special schools: Nicola Taylor (nicola.taylor@northumberland.gov.uk)

Reimbursement for Schools Using a Scheme Other than the National FSM Vouchers Scheme

The DfE Regional Schools Commissioner has confirmed that schools will be reimbursed if they use a system other than the national voucher scheme to purchase school meals. See below:

The [School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus \(COVID-19\) for the period March to July 2020 - GOV.UK](#) states that funds will cover:

Support for free school meals (FSM) for eligible children who are not attending school, where those costs are not covered by the FSM [national voucher scheme](#) - this covers:

- costs to schools arising before the introduction of the national voucher scheme
- costs where schools are providing free meals to children for whom the national voucher scheme is inappropriate (for example, because there are no participating supermarkets locally or schools are providing meals directly)

If schools are struggling to use the national voucher (Edenred) system does that count as the voucher scheme being 'inappropriate'?

- Headteachers are best placed to judge what is appropriate and will work best for their parents. Where schools are struggling to use the national voucher scheme, that would count as a scenario where the scheme is inappropriate for their needs, and the school can therefore apply to the fund.

Thinking about Transitioning Back into School: the Northumberland EP Service

It is not yet certain when schools will be returning to 'normal' or what the new 'normal' will look like. It is certain, however, that the staff, pupils and families will have had a range of experiences, both positive and negative, which will impact on how they are able to manage when school restarts.

With this in mind, the Northumberland EP Service are beginning to collate an array of information and activities that might be useful before and after the return to school. Much will depend on how different things are and when the return is, but it would be useful for schools to consider how they will address these interconnected factors for staff and pupils :

- **What school will look like when it re-opens**
- **Endings and New Beginnings - transitions into new classes and settings**
- **Developing a Sense of security**
- **Establishing relationships / belonging / connectedness**
- **Acknowledgment of experiences, thoughts and feelings**
- **Different emotions may be prevalent, 'normalising' emotional responses**
- **Differential experiences and uptake of home learning, Impact on academic attainment**

Many schools will already be thinking about these things. If you are already working on any of these areas and have resources that you would be happy to share, (maybe a social story about why we need 'social distancing' or examples of virtual transition work and how to set it up) please email Katinka.Bryan@northumberland.gov.uk.

The resources will be available on a padlet in the near future, and details will be made available via the 5 O'Clock briefing.

DfE Updates

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

Updated guidance for local authorities, academy trusts and schools 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.

The guidance has been updated to reflect policy and process development.

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

Induction for newly qualified teachers during the coronavirus outbreak

Updated guidance has been provided about changes to newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to reflect the new regulations.

Absences related to the coronavirus outbreak will not trigger an automatic extension of the induction.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers>

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

The information for parents and carers about educational provision for critical workers, school closures, exams, free school meals and home schooling has added information about the May bank holiday, a link to the admissions appeals and updates to the support that is available to parents to help them educate their children at home.

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19): cancellation of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2020

This updated guidance aims to answer common questions in relation to the cancellation of GCSEs, AS and A levels due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in 2020 to reflect the Ofqual consultation closing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

Cyber Security - North East School Survey

Northumbria Police's North East Regional Special Operations Unit (NERSOU) has requested that all schools in Northumberland complete their North-East Schools Cyber Security Survey. The local authority supports this request given the high levels of concern that exist at the moment re: cyber security both nationally and internationally. The request in full is below:

As background, this survey is part of a wider strategy to raise awareness of cybersecurity issues in schools, to identify what issues are of concern and what training needs there might be.

At a national level, small businesses and organisations like schools are seen as increasingly vulnerable to direct criminal activity (hacking, ransomware etc.), or fallout from a wider cyberattack on critical UK infrastructure (similar to the NHS experience with WannaCry, only much worse).

Colleagues from NERSOU are keen to proactively assist schools in ensuring they are aware of the risks and adequately protected.

Whilst schools are disrupted at the moment, and the timing of the questionnaire is not ideal, there is a sense of urgency in engaging with schools for all the reasons outlined above.

The survey can be found at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/northeastschools>

The survey will be open between **1st May 2020 and closing midnight on 1st June 2020**. The survey should be completed using the link provided above.

There are 81 questions in the survey, but not everyone will require an answer; for example, there are a significant number of questions which will automatically be skipped if you have not been a victim of a cyber-attack or incident in the last 12 months. The survey should not take any longer than 15 minutes to complete; however, it will help to shape a regional police response to preparing for and responding to cyber attacks.

Cyber-crime is a growing threat across the world to all organisations including school. A successful cyber-attack on a school can have significant impacts including the loss of work by students and teachers and has previously forced a school to close due to the loss of IT systems.

In November 2019, a pilot cyber exercise was run some schools in the Northumberland area. One of the learning outcomes was that Cyber PROTECT Officers from the North East Regional Special Operations Unit (NERSOU) and three North East police forces (Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria) was to better understand the actual and perceived cyber-threat, specifically to schools in the North East and their ability to respond to a cyber incident.

The results of the survey will be used to produce a report, highlighting areas of threat and potential areas for development. These findings will be used to create future cyber exercises which can be used for schools in the North East and additional material.

If you have any questions about the above, please contact:

Jonathan Green, Regional Cyber Protect Officer,
North East Regional Special Operations Unit
Mob No: 07970 845103 Tel No: 0191 375 2917
jonathan.green@durham.pnn.police.uk

NSPCC launches nationwide campaign today, 4th May, to help children exposed to harm under the lockdown

As mentioned last week, the NSPCC has today launched a government-funded campaign to protect children during the lockdown. See the press release below:

With growing concern for the safety of some children during the coronavirus crisis, the NSPCC wants more people to know how to get advice and support and where to raise concerns about a child's wellbeing.

The charity is launching a new TV and advertising campaign today (May 4) across the UK to promote its free and confidential helpline for adults.

The film, which will run on national television and across social media, depicts a helpline expert taking a call from someone concerned for the wellbeing of a neighbour's child.

The Government has provided £1.6m in funding so that the NSPCC can expand its helpline by employing more staff across two sites and raise public awareness of it.

The work comes as the charity publishes the latest data from its helpline which shows that the crisis has exacerbated existing risks for children and created new ones:

- In the month since lockdown there have been a total of 5,237 contacts to the helpline from across the UK from adults concerned about the wellbeing and safety of a child
- Of these, 817 contacts were from adults with worries about parents and carers misusing alcohol and other substances, a 22% increase on the four weeks prior to March 23rd
- Other issues where there has been a double-digit percentage increase in contacts include domestic abuse (10%) and emotional abuse (50%)
- From April 13th to 19th the NSPCC helpline received 1580 contacts, the highest number in a single week in 2020.

I have put all the resources provided, including the video, on the Northumberland Education website at: <http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/nspcc/>

Sex Education Forum: Relationships, Sex and Health Education

The Sex Education Forum has published a new guide to support schools in navigating definitions for Relationships and Sex Education. Schools need to be able to identify sex education in order to implement the parental right to request their child is excused from sex education.

The guide includes: a table exploring what may constitute sex education and where this content might be placed in the curriculum, 10 principles for how to approach definitions and a set of sample definitions. The guide is free for Sex Education Forum members. It is available to purchase by non-members for £5.99.

A pack of Parent engagement questions is also available to support schools with their policy development and can be adapted for primary or secondary phase and to suit the school. These can be used in an online survey - enabling schools to listen to parents now and progress their parental consultation activities during school closure. Available at £5.99 individually or free to members.

The latest blogs available from the [Sex Education Forum](https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/) website provide further links and ideas:

RSE definitions, blog from Lucy Emmerson
<https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/news/news/rse-definitions>

RSE implementation during school closure, blog from Yoan Reed
<https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/news/news/rse-implementation-during-school-closure>

RSE and social distancing - blog from Rachael Baker looking at the what younger, older learners and SEND learners need from RSE that addresses their experiences during the coronavirus pandemic
<https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/news/news/rse-and-social-distancing>

Special Schools - Get Ready for statutory RSE - SEND / special schools REMOTE course
<https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/training/calendar/get-ready-statutory-rse-send-special-schools-remote-course>