

Headteachers' Update

The Daily 5 O'Clock Update For Schools

Northumberland Director of Public Health Conference, Thursday 18th June, 2.30pm

Our Director of Public Health, Liz Morgan, and Karen Herne, our Senior Public Health Manager, will be hosting a public health video conference for headteachers this coming Thursday, 18th June, 2.30 – 3.30pm.

Liz and Karen will update headteachers on the current situation and will take any questions that you may have. The joining instructions are below. I hope that as many headteachers as possible will participate.

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZmYyZmZiMmYtZTkxOC00NzM2LTkyNTgtNDk3MTcwNjkyMWZj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22bb13a9de-8290-42f0-a980-dc3bdfef70f40%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22940c1b3a-21a4-4c5b-9886-1eeb58dd66f1%22%7d

Weekly HR Drop-In for Headteachers, Friday 19th June 9.30-10.30pm

This week's HR Drop In Call with Christina Ponting and her Schools HR Team will be on Friday 19th June 2020 at 9.30 to 10.30 am. This is the link to join the call - [HR Drop In Call](#)

Inviting Back to School 'Other' Age Groups

The DfE has today updated its guidance on inviting 'other' age groups back into school and, in particular, Year 8 pupils into middle schools. The full guidance is in the DfE Updates section below but, as a lot of schools have been waiting for this guidance, I have copied it below. We have checked this afternoon and our insurers have said that, *'there are no issues from an insurance perspective with schools following this guidance'*:

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Para 4. Inviting back additional pupils, where there is capacity

We know that in some schools, there will be capacity to welcome more children back, in group sizes of no more than 15, before the summer holidays. This may be because take-up amongst eligible children is lower than expected, or because there is additional space still available within the school and available staff to teach and supervise. There is no expectation on primary schools to welcome back additional children where they do not have capacity to do so.

Primary schools should only welcome back additional children where:

- they have already made provision available for children of critical workers, vulnerable children, and children in nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6 and have ensured as many as possible are able to attend (especially for those who would particularly benefit from being in school because of other disadvantage)
- they can accommodate more children while still following the approaches set out in the protective measures guidance and their own risk assessment
- they do not require additional funding, staff or classrooms to do so. If schools have access to space on other school sites (for example, local secondary schools, if that is feasible alongside the secondary offer) they may use this, taking care to ensure children stay in allocated groups. However, other community buildings (such as village halls) should not be used to expand capacity this term, while they remain closed in line with the government's roadmap

Where schools have capacity, they may choose to welcome back additional pupils. It is up to schools to decide which pupils to prioritise, based on their knowledge of their children and communities. They may choose to welcome back pupils in another year group. Where middle schools choose to invite year 8 pupils back, they should be confident they can manage this within the strict measures we have asked primary schools to adopt (including no more than 15 in a class, and consistency of these groups).

We would encourage middle schools to ensure that the use of public transport to travel to and from school is minimised as far as possible, and where it is totally necessary, this should not be during peak times. They should also consider the potential risks inherent in broader social mixing outside school and communicate with pupils about not socialising with each other in groups outside school. They may also want to consider staggered starts and finishes.

When deciding how to welcome additional pupils back before the summer, schools should consider how they will communicate to parents, including those with children in reception, year 1 or 6 who have not yet taken up their offer of a place. Schools should ascertain if those parents want to take up the offer, making it clear that if they indicate that they do not, or do not respond, schools may offer this capacity to another pupil in which case they won't subsequently be able to take up a place this term. They should ensure they are still able to accommodate vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

We know that many primary schools are keen to invite in pupils who are not returning to school at this time for face-to-face meetings, before the end of term. This time can be used to check-in on pupils, and ensure they are supported before a planned return to school from September. Where this happens, this contact needs to be in line with the current guidance on protective measures.

DfE IT Kit Update

The first devices (for children open to social work) have been delivered, and further deliveries are due over the next few weeks. The Year 10 disadvantaged devices have not yet been ordered as the portal has not been opened. Schools will be contacted directly to arrange delivery.

For further details please see the document at: <http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/DfE-IT-Kit-Letter-for-Heads.pdf>

DfE Updates

Primary schools to be given flexibility to bring back more pupils

PRESS RELEASE: This press release states that headteachers are being encouraged to invite back more primary pupils before the summer, where they have capacity to do so

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/primary-schools-to-be-given-flexibility-to-bring-back-more-pupils>

Preparing for the wider opening of schools from 1 June

Planning guides for school leaders are available to help them prepare to open their schools for more pupils during the coronavirus outbreak.

UPDATED GUIDANCE: Information has been added to the 'Planning guide for primary schools' on how primary schools can use flexibility to welcome back additional pupils this term.

Information has also been added to the 'Guidance for secondary school provision from 15 June 2020' about how secondary schools can now welcome year 10 and year 12 pupils in for some face-to-face support and where possible, invite pupils in other year groups in for a meeting this term.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june>

Awarding qualifications in summer 2020

Information is available for schools, students and parents on how GCSE, AS, A level, vocational and technical qualifications will be graded and awarded in summer 2020.

UPDATED GUIDANCE: The guidance now includes a letter to Heads of Centre regarding general qualifications and the Summer 2020 arrangements.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020?utm_source=4e55f633-2a36-462c-95a7-b7abd711787e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

Information: Keeping Children Safe in Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The DfE has announced that it, '... wants schools and colleges to be able to focus their efforts on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, the 2020 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) consultation which was suspended on 31 March 2020 has been withdrawn.'

The majority of the revisions have been withdrawn to be reconsidered for future updates in a full public consultation, the timing of which will be confirmed later this year.

There are a small number of revisions that will still be made. These fall into three categories:

- those that reflect legislative changes and as such are essential to ensure the guidance remains accurate
- those that provide additional helpful support and information, such as on mental health and children in need
- important clarifications which will help the sector better understand and/or follow our guidance

The DfE plan to publish revised KCSIE guidance for information in June 2020, to come into force on 1 September 2020.

The DfE will continue to support schools and colleges to keep their children safe during this pandemic. To help do this, the DfE has issued non-statutory interim guidance [coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#).

School Fruit & Vegetables Scheme

Following a query raised at last Thursday's Locality Headteacher Conference regarding the free fruit and Veg scheme, I can confirm that the scheme has been suspended for the summer term.

Coronavirus Oral History Children's Book Project

You may recall that, a few weeks ago, I provided a link to a diary of the coronavirus / school closure that one of our pupils, Sophie Moan from Blyth Croftway Academy, has been keeping throughout the school closure period.

A publishing company is now looking to work with Sophie and her family to develop and, eventually, publish her diary.

The publishing company would like to widen the project and include contributions from many other children across Northumberland of all ages. They would like to create an oral history of the period as seen through the eyes of the children living it. They have also nominated a potential author to work with Northumberland schools to produce the book. Their letter to me included points such as:

- our children are living in an unprecedented time in human history where something has quite literally stopped the world
- this period should be recorded for future generations to understand what happened and how it changed the way we live
- we need to give children the opportunity to capture their place in history
- It would be a 'not for profit' project where the profit from sales will be ring-fenced for key worker charities and managed by children and young people
- The approach would be non-academic and non-threatening allowing individuals and groups of children to express their coronavirus journey through any creative means.

I think that it is an interesting idea and I talked about it at the Headteacher meeting last week. I have also now spoken to both the potential author and the publishers before writing this.

If you are interested in your school being involved, please let me know this week. It will not commit you to anything and, at this stage, I will not pass any school details on to the publishing company.