

Headteachers' Update

The 5 O'Clock Update For Schools

DfE Updates

[Teaching a broad and balanced curriculum for education recovery](#)

Page summary: Optional guidance for school leaders and staff in reception, and key stages 1 to 3, who are responsible for the curriculum and its teaching.

Change made: First published.

Oak National Academy

The DfE has confirmed that the Oak National Academy will continue to be funded until at least Easter 2022, meaning that its content will remain free to access for pupils, parents and schools over the summer and into the new academic year.

Updated Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance

The DfE has today (6 July), updated its [Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance](#) (KCSIE). The changes will come into force from September 2021.

The key changes have been developed in response to the recent consultation on KCSIE and the Ofsted review into sexual harassment and abuse.

The most notable changes are on victim support, peer-on-peer abuse (including online) and the availability of reporting channels. The update makes clear that abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment may be happening outside of school or college premises and online. In addition, it's clear that there should be a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and that schools should take a "it can happen here" attitude, being clear that abuse could be happening even where it is not being reported.

A summary of the key changes and links to the relevant documents, are available [here](#).

Mental health updates

The DfE has set up a new senior lead [gov.uk](#) page and updated it with the [learning outcomes for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges](#). The department has also set out a number of '[actions school and college leaders can take now](#)' to help prepare for the training, including doing an audit of training needs against the learning outcomes published. This audit is intended to help mental health leads to consider the type of course they would like to book, and select from the quality assured list from September.

Resources and support to get you ready for changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The DfE has developed resources and practical support for childminders, nursery leaders and pre-school practitioners. The [help for early years providers](#) service, developed with sector experts and extensively tested with private, voluntary and independent staff and childminders, features information and resources all in one place to support you to understand and implement the changes to the EYFS, including a summary of the changes, links to key documents, and ideas for activities.

Each of the seven areas of learning have been broken down into three sections with bite-sized information, engaging videos and ideas for activities to support your understanding of the educational programmes.

In response to sector feedback, additional support on curriculum planning, reducing paperwork, oral health, working in partnership with parents and carers, and English as an additional language is also available.

Local Authority Public Health Update

Thank you for all the work you are doing at this time to support the health of your pupils, staff and communities. You will all recognise to increase in covid cases this month but those numbers are lower than they would have been without your constant application of the control measures and swift action when a case is identified to you.

We recognise the need for education staff to seek second opinions on guidance but can reiterate that the current guidance remains accurate, until the end of the term and beyond that to 16th August with regard to self-isolation rules.

Can we also share the following updates/reminders:

- The reason close contacts have been advised to seek a PCR test DURING the self-isolation period is so covid types can be accurately confirmed. This is to act as a surveillance tool for PHE only and for no other reason. There has been some misunderstanding that the PCR test is being advised to release asymptomatic close contacts from isolation and a mandatory requirement before children are allowed back in to school. This is not the case and as stated in previous correspondence that any close contacts who have a negative PCR at any time during their self-isolation period and have no symptoms should still not be allowed to return to school until they have completed their isolation period. Is it also worth noting anyone who had a previous positive PCR test within 90 days should NOT have a further test as likely to produce a false positive.
- The decision to close part/all of a school is not a Public Health decision to make and must be decided on by schools in consultation with Education colleagues at NCC based on sizes of bubbles, year groups affected and the size of school.
- Some members of the Public Health Team have now been redirected to other community transmission priorities 7 days a week so whilst there is support Monday-Friday there is no additional cover over weekends to answer enquiries which will be picked up on Monday mornings.

- We have been inundated with enquires of similar themes so it may be helpful for you to view the graphic regarding household isolation periods when subsequent family members test positive - [see attached](#).

Any schools with residential enquiries should contact NCC Health and Safety Team (Nigel Chopping) if they have concerns about risk assessments.

Thank you again for your support and best of luck in managing so very difficult scenarios in the remainder of the term

Health and Safety Briefing

Latest briefing from the Health and Safety Team - [Locality Meeting- 8 July Briefing Note.docx](#)

New duty for Virtual School Headteachers to promote the education of children with a social worker

From September 2021, the role of the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) will be extended to promote the education of children with a social worker.

This new duty aims to use the experience and expertise of VSHs, giving them strategic leadership responsibility. VSHs are not being asked to provide support to individual children and their families.

The government's Children in Need review in 2019 found that children with a social worker do worse than their peers at every stage of their education and poor outcomes persist, even after social worker involvement ends. Experiences of adversity and trauma can create barriers to education that affect attendance, learning, behaviour and wellbeing. However, with the right support in place, children can overcome these barriers to reach their potential.

Virtual School Heads, who have statutory responsibilities for looked-after and previously looked-after children, are well positioned to enhance partnerships between agencies and raise aspirations for this cohort of children. The impact should be the closing of the attainment gap so that children can achieve their potential.

In Northumberland we have a strong starting point, with support services for school attendance, children missing education and schools' safeguarding already working together in the Virtual School. Planning is underway so that we can begin implementation of the duty from September, and professionals will receive further information in due course. The planning will focus on the training and resources needed to:

- enhance partnerships between education settings and the local authority so agencies can work together
- identify the needs of the cohort and address barriers to poor educational outcomes and ensure pupils make educational progress
- offer advice and support to key professionals to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence in using evidence-based interventions
- promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm.

DfE research into improving educational outcomes for children with a social worker will continue, and all VSHs will contribute to this as they fulfil their new duty from September.

This new duty is explained in more detail in DfE guidance Promoting the education of children with a social worker (June 2021).

Northumberland's Virtual School Headteacher is Jane Walker, 01670 622734, <mailto:Jane.Walker@northumberland.gov.uk>