

COVID19 DAILY BULLETIN – 24th March 2020

Update from the Director of Education and Skills

In the context of a rapidly changing situation and clarification of advice the direct link to information from the DfE is below:

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

Today's key messages

Vulnerable Children – updated guidance

The guidance about children supported by social care, with an education health and care (EHC) plan or in alternative provision (AP) was amended yesterday and can be found in full at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Managing Risk

Children Looked After

The Virtual School will ascertain the school/provider's educational offer for all Lancashire looked after children wherever they are placed. If parents or carers wish to keep children at home rather than access education on site of a school, this must be agreed by the Social Worker. Social Workers will monitor the safety and well-being of looked after children through regular keep in touch (KIT) contact.

Children with Child Protection Plans or designated CIN will be risk assessed and monitored by social workers.

Children and young people with an EHC plan

These children and young people **should be risk-assessed by their school or college in consultation with the local authority (LA) and parents**, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a place in education to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Education providers and local authorities in discussion, with health partners, need to make a risk assessment for each child or young person, considering a number of risks including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This must be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required;
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting;
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered.

Those **children with an EHCP and an allocated social worker attending specialist provision** will be contacted by a social worker to discuss and make arrangements. These children must remain in school at least until a risk assessment has taken place. The social worker must be informed if these children do not attend school.

Those **children with an EHCP and an allocated social worker attending a mainstream school** will be contacted by a social worker over the next few days to undertake a risk assessment. These children must remain in school at least until a risk assessment has taken place. The social worker must be informed if these children do not attend school.

The school or college should contact the named health worker identified on the EHCP to discuss continued intervention or any concerns.

If you are struggling to get a response, then you can contact the DCO service for your locality:

North - Lancaster, Wyre and Fylde:

Kathleen Freear Tel: 01253 956

168 Email: bfwh.ehcp.blackpool@nhs.net

East - Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale

Carole Kay Tel: 01254 612 722 Email: lcn-tr.dcopennine@nhs.net

South - Preston, South Ribble, Chorley and West Lancashire

Anne Hardman Tel: 01254 612 723 Email: lcn-tr.dcosouth@nhs.net

As part of the government's emergency powers statutory duties on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans will be modified, to expect educational settings and local authorities to use their reasonable endeavours to support children and their families.

School provision across Lancashire

As the DfE site for collating information about schools that are open and numbers attending is not operating, we are doing this manually today and going forward through the School Improvement Service. This will enable us to reduce number of schools open and use our resources more effectively, whilst still providing support for the most vulnerable and the children of key workers. We expect to have a clear picture tomorrow which we will share with you.

School attendance registers

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Schools should, however, ensure they have a process in place to **check on the welfare of any child in need** who does not attend on any day.

The DfE is introducing a record keeping system through a daily web form for children of key workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This record is for safeguarding purposes and to provide accurate, up-to-date data on the number of children attending.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): attendance recording for educational settings](#)

For administrative purposes Code # (planned whole or partial closure) should be used; each school is expected to send in a daily spreadsheet

at 12 noon via the [short daily return](#), reporting whether they are open and how many children and staff are in school.

Children and young people should remain in uniform so that they are clearly identifiable.

School Meals

We know there have been some challenges in relation to the number and collection of meals for children. We are working on this and will provide an update tomorrow. In the meantime there are already a number of scams beginning to emerge with parents being asked to provide bank details to retain a free school meal entitlement. We will alert parents to this in our message boards later today.

Governors Meetings

In view of the announcement yesterday regarding the new measures in place as of today governors are reminded that they must not be visiting school(s) as this contravenes government advice.

Governing Body meetings should not be convened (including virtual meetings) unless it is an emergency. There is already significant pressure on school staff and governors who are experiencing other pressures. Any emergency meetings should be held 'virtually'. Please contact your Governor Services Adviser with any queries.

Concerns about use of school places in non-emergency situations

Some schools have raised concern about the potential to use school places other than in an emergency situation. If you feel this is the case at your school, you may wish to print the **attached** poster/leaflet to display and/or share with parents.