**Appendix: COVID-19 Additional Information for SEND Information Report**

**School Name: Hexthorpe Primary**

**Date: 1.5.2020**

**1. Context, Legislation and Guidance**

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend and for children who have a social worker or who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Schools and all childcare providers were also asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

The original SEND Information Report is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

* Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools’ responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities; and
* The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools’ responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEND Information Report

The Coronavirus Act 2020 Modification of Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (England) Notice 2020 provides the following modification in relation to the duty to secure educational and health care provision in accordance with the requirements of the Education, Health and Care Plan:

* The absolute duty to make the provision in an EHC plan (section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014) can be temporarily amended to a ‘reasonable endeavours’ duty. This means that during the specified period the Local Authority (LA) needs to do whatever it reasonably can to put provision in place, but if they cannot do so they would not necessarily be breaching the law.

This change is applicable from 1 May to 31 May 2020 inclusive and the guidance is to be kept under review. Full details of the modification and associated guidance is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-guidance-on-temporary-legislative-changes-relating-to-coronavirus-covid-19).

In addition to the changes to the law about securing or arranging provision in EHC plans, from 1 May to 25 September 2020 inclusive, the Regulations which provide statutory timescales for the EHC needs assessments and plans processes will be modified, such that timings will be ‘as sons as is reasonably practicable’.

This appendix of Hexthorpe Primary’s SEN Information Report should be read alongside the school’s Annex 5 of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

This appendix contains further details of our arrangements for pupils with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities in line with revised procedures from the government, in the following areas:

1. Context, legislation, guidance and key contacts
2. Vulnerable children
3. Risk assessments of children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
4. Supporting children’s mental health
5. Supporting vulnerable children in school and/or at home
6. Statutory assessments, annual reviews and reviews for pupils at SEN Support
7. Alternative arrangements as ‘Reasonable Endeavours’
8. Personal budgets
9. Transport for children with existing arrangements
10. Transition
11. Support from Astrea Academy Trust
12. Annex: Suggested EHCP Risk Assessment Template

**Key Contacts**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Role | Name | Contact number | Email |
| SENCO |  | 01302852245 | Ruth.veal@astreahexthorpe.org |
| Principal |  | head@astreahexthorpe.org |
| SEND Officer | Caroline Embery | 07387108846 | caroline.embery@astreaacademytrust.org |
| Specialist Leader of Behaviour and SEND | Naomi Reed | 07552995410 | naomi.reed@astreaacademytrust.org |
| National Leader of Inclusion | Jenni Machin | 07900401418 | jenni.machin@astreaacademytrust.org |
| Executive Director of Education, Inclusion and Safeguarding | Nicola Crossley | 07393237674 | nicola.crossley@astreaacademytrust.org |

During the current COVID-19 school closures, it will not always be possible to have the SENCO on site, however, the SENCO will be available to be contacted via phone (contact school office to arrange a call) or email. A senior leader will also always be available on site.

**2. Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with an EHCP. Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the LA. 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 (Child in Need).

Children and young people with an EHCP will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents (see section 3), to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, external agencies and professionals already involved. Many children and young people with EHCPs can safely remain at home.

The majority of children with SEN, who receive SEN Support at school but do not have an EHCP, would be expected to stay home unless they have a social worker or a parent/carer who is a key worker. Senior leaders know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support.

However, there is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk.

In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child or young person is considered vulnerable, the Hexthorpe Primary (or the social worker where appropriate) will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent/carer.

Where parent / carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Hexthorpe Primary (or the social worker where appropriate) will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Hexthorpe Primary will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

**3. Risk Assessments of Children with an EHCP**

Hexthorpe Primary is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

On 24 March 2020, the Minister for Children and Families, Vicky Ford, wrote an open letter to children and young people with SEN, their parents/carers and families, and all others who support them. The full letter can be found [here.](https://www.ipsea.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d9b07905-742a-4017-9689-7f9e3b931409)  In this letter, the Minister makes clear that:

*“[…] nurseries, schools, special schools, colleges and other training providers should undertake a risk assessment to establish the individual needs of each child or young person with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This assessment should incorporate the views of the child or young person and their parents. This will inform the decision about whether they should continue in school or college, or whether their needs can be met at home safely.*

*If needs are best met at schools or colleges, we will support their school or college to meet their needs, wherever possible. For those on SEN support, schools, colleges and local authorities have discretion to use the same risk judgement to decide whether home or school is the safest setting for these children. It is, however, important that as many children as possible remain at home during this time in order to help reduce transmission rates.”*

Updated government guidance found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance) states that pupils with an EHCP should be risk-assessed by LAs in consultation with educational settings, parents and pupils, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home.

Local authorities and education settings should decide together who is best placed to undertake the risk assessments (Where schools complete these, please see section 11 for a suggested template).

In the completion of a child's risk assessment, the individual needs of each child or young person will be considered. The risks across home and school contexts need to be balanced with the protective factors of supporting a child or young person to remain at home. The risk assessment will focus on the best interests of the individual, with the primary focus being on their safety at this time. The risk assessment will take into account:

* Potential physical/emotional health risks to the individual/family from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This will be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required;
* the risk to the child / young person if some or all elements of their EHCP cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting;
* the ability of the parent/carers to ensure health and care needs can be met safely;
* Potential impact to wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered;
* Potential risks in travelling to/from school, including the safety of other children, young people and adults;
* Risks to the setting, including the safety of other children, young people and adults.

Where possible, children should remain at home as outlined in updated Government Guidance.

**4. Supporting Children’s Mental Health**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home.

Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services. Further information in relation to supporting mental health and wellbeing can be found in the Astrea Home Learning brochures which can be found [here.](https://astreaacademytrust.org/home-learning/)

The government has also issued guidance and advice for parents and carers on looking after the mental health and wellbeing of children or young people during the COVID-19 outbreak. This can be found [here.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

If parents / carers have any specific concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of children which they would like to discuss further, they can also contact the school SENCO (Ruth Veal) or Designated Safeguarding Lead (Kelly Garbutt)via telephoning the school directly or by emailing [safeguarding@astreahexthorpe.org](mailto:safeguarding@astreahexthorpe.org)

**5. Supporting Vulnerable Children in School and/or at Home**

Hexthorpe Primary will refer to the [Government guidance for education and childcare settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings) on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19 when pupils are on site.

Hexthorpe Primary will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

In relation to home learning, the government has issued guidance for parents and carers in relation to supporting the continued education of pupils with SEND. This includes information about educational resources as well as other useful information to support home learning. The guidance can be found [here.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

Additionally, the Astrea Home Learning brochures ([found here](https://astreaacademytrust.org/home-learning/)) also contain useful links to support home learning for both primary and secondary aged pupils.

Hexthorpe Primary will share learning resources with all families to support home learning. To specifically support the home learning of pupils with SEND Hexthorpe Primary will:

* *Update school blog on a daily basis with learning activities accessible for all children*
* *Encourage use of specific interventions such as IDL and Language Legends at Home for SEND children to continue to access their intervention*
* *Teachers will phone SEND children on a bi-weekly basis to support with mental health and accessing learning activities through the blog*
* *Additional welfare calls will be made by BOSS and ASCETS where appropriate for children*
* *Teachers will respond to posts on the blog on a regular basis*
* *Verbal feedback will be given to pupils during the bi-weekly phone call with pupils*
* *More vulnerable children will be called on a weekly basis*

For further guidance, the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) is also adding key information and resources to their COVID-19 Support and Guidance webpage, which can be found [here.](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/covid-19-support-and-guidance)

**6. Statutory Assessments, Annual Reviews and Reviews for Pupils at SEN Support**

As part of the graduated approach to support pupils with SEND, wherever possible, Support Plan reviews and annual reviews of EHCPs will take place, but with modified timescales. On the 30th April 2020, the Secretary of State made such an order whereby the timeframes in which assessments and annual reviews are carried out has been temporarily modified (effective from 1st May – 25th September 2020). For example, LA’s are encouraged to complete statutory assessments using *‘reasonable endeavours’* (however, this may not be within the 20-week time limits).

Where possible, the school SENCO will continue to liaise with pupils, parent/carers, appropriate key professionals and external agencies for children and young people with SEND – this will ensure effective co-production. However, these processes may take place remotely as the school adheres to government guidance on social distancing.

Applications for statutory assessments / high needs funding will continue to be submitted to the LA; however, timescales for response may be delayed. The school will continue to respond to consultation requests (in relation to the naming of settings in EHCP plans) with the 15-day timescale.

Further information about the LA’s approach towards statutory assessments for children with SEND as well as their guidance for processes during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found on the relevant Local Offer pages

* Doncaster Local Offer - [click here](https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-send)
* Doncaster Additional COVID-19 Information – [click here](https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-covid-19)

**7. Alternative Arrangements as ‘Reasonable Endeavours’**

The 20th April temporary modifications to legislation also means that LA’s should make *‘reasonable endeavours’* to ensure the provision outlined in an EHCP is delivered, whilst acknowledging that this may temporarily need to be different.

The following examples of alternative arrangements are based on existing good practice. This list is intended to be illustrative and is not a comprehensive list of possible arrangements:

* Alterations to the frequency and timing of the delivery of provision in schools, for example, moving to a part-time timetable
* A temporary placement in another school – mainstream or special. This will need to be with the agreement of the parent or young person and full account should be taken of the needs of the child or young person
* Attendance at a local hub
* Adjustments to home-to-school transport arrangements to support a modified school attendance timetable
* Class sizes being significantly reduced to ensure social distancing can be applied in classrooms
* Video class sessions for children to keep in touch with classmates and teaching staff
* A home learning reading programme, provided by a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and reviewed weekly
* Provision of printed exercise or worksheets
* Weekly phone or video contact from school staff to monitor home learning programmes, to provide feedback, and to make adjustments as necessary
* A school or college delivering direct education or support in the home where a young person is not able to attend school or college (subject to risk assessment and appropriate health protection measures)
* Educational psychologists providing brief therapy interventions
* Specialist SEN teachers providing advice and support to parents in relation to autism, visual or hearing impairment or literacy programmes
* Enlarged materials being provided in the home where a child or young person has a visual impairment
* A speech and language therapist delivering sessions via video link
* A health visitor or school nurse providing health advice or development reviews via teleconferencing
* The parent and child travelling to receive the therapy at suitable premises, where this can be done in ways consistent with guidance on reducing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)
* An occupational therapist or a physiotherapist video linking to a child’s home and modelling exercises that the parents could do with their child
* Occupational therapists providing webinars for school staff on topics such as sensory strategies or pre-writing skills, or a teletherapy service
* Sending home accessible hard copy therapy programmes with additional phone support for parents and young persons to help them work through
* Where an EHC plan already includes a personal budget or a direct payment, widening its use to enable the purchase of equipment or other relevant material to support home learning
* Exercise sessions by video
* Provision of alternatives to short breaks by providing online resources and activities for young people
* Loaning parents school equipment, such as specialist support equipment (seating equipment, IT equipment used at school etc) to be used at home to support learning
* Counselling, or cognitive behaviour therapy, delivered over the phone once a week for 6 weeks by a mental health worker.

If parent/carers feel there is an urgent need to amend the outlined pupil needs, provision or placement in an EHCP, they should speak to the SENCO to see what additional review mechanisms could be put in place. Where different provision is required, this should be explored with pupils, parent/carers and settings.

**8. Personal Budgets**

In law, parents / carers can request a personal budget and seek direct payments for special educational provision during the Education Health and Care needs statutory assessment process or during an annual review. However, using *‘reasonable endeavours’* to secure the special educational provision in a plan using a personal budget may require creative thinking and should be discussed with the LA and in consideration of the examples provided above.

**9. Transport for SEND Pupils with Existing Arrangements**

Local authorities should continue to provide transport for children and young people with EHCPs who are continuing to attend their usual educational setting. If children and young people with EHCPs are accessing an educational setting that is not their usual setting, the LA should review transport arrangements and endeavour to make appropriate provision for children to reach their educational setting safely. Click [here](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#transport) for the relevant government guidance.

**10. Transition**

During the COVID-19, key school staff will continue to complete and plan for transition arrangements to support vulnerable pupils. As the COVID-19 situation evolves, key staff in school will liaise with the Trust, LA, pupils, any relevant external agencies and parents / carers to ensure that any planned transitions are supported as best as they can. LAs will complete EHCP transfer reviews within normal statutory timeframes (e.g. for pupils transferring between phases of education into/between schools such as a transfer from primary to secondary school).

**11. Support from Astrea Academy Trust**

Astrea central team continues to be available to provide support and guidance to colleagues as appropriate. Members of the Astrea Education and Inclusion team continue to be available to all SENCOs and Principal’s in order to carry out their role effectively and can be contacted as per page 2.

**12. Suggested EHCP COVID-19 Risk Assessment Template (for non-attendance at school)**

Please see Section 3 of the ‘Appendix – COVID 19 Additional Information for SEND Information Report’ for further information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Academy / School: Hexthorpe Primary** | **Date of assessment:** |
| **Assessed by:** | **Job title:** |
| **Other people involved in assessment:** |  |
| **Name of child / young person:** |  |
| 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 EHCP cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting. |  |
| The ability of the individual’s parents/carers or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely. |  |
| The potential impact to the individual’s wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered. |  |
| The potential risks in travelling to/from school, including the safety of other children, young people and adults. |  |
| The potential risks to the home setting, including the safety of other children, young people and adults if the individual **did not** **attend** school. |  |
| The potential risks to the school setting, including the safety of other children, young people and adults if the individual **did attend** school. |  |
| What can be done by the school or setting to control any risks? |  |
| What is the level of risk after all controls possible have been put in place? (HIGH/MED/LOW) |  |
| What support is the setting or school providing to parents if the child or young person is not able to attend? |  |
| Is this a safeguarding risk – if so, please describe |  |
| Who else /what other agencies need to be informed if child does not attend? |  |

*Document to be stored confidentially*