



SEND POLICY COVID 19 ADDENDUM

PHASE	JUNIOR & SECONDARY
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DATE OF APPROVAL BY TRUSTEES	22nd JUNE 2020
FREQUENCY DATE	EMERGENCY ADDENDUM

SEND POLICY COVID 19 ADDENDUM

CONTEXT

From 20th March 2020, parents/carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for academies and schools to continue to provide care for a limited number of children: those who are vulnerable, children whose parents/carers are critical to the COVID-19 response, who absolutely need to attend, and who cannot be safely cared for at home. 'Vulnerable children' includes those supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs (including those on child protection and child in need plans), children who are 'looked after', and those with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. This addendum of the SEND Policy contains details of our individual arrangements and changes to our usual mode of working in the following areas:

- vulnerable children and eligibility
- safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing
- arrangements for consulting parents/carers of, and young people with, SEND
- arrangements for assessing and reviewing children's progress
- arrangements for supporting children in moving between phases of education
- transition periods within each academy
- the approach to teaching children with SEND
- support for emotional and social development
- working alongside other professionals.

Please note: This addendum should be read in tandem with the ACET COVID-19 Safeguarding Policy addendum.

PURPOSE

This is an addendum to the SEND Policy (inclusive of the SEN Information Report), setting out the arrangements in place to support our children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during the COVID-19 related partial academy and school closure starting from 20th March 2020.

Vulnerable children include those children and young people up to the age of 25 with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Those with an EHC plan will be risk assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents/carers, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

These risk assessments will consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This will be on an individual basis and 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 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 availability of appropriately trained staff (the academy will liaise with the local authority if a place is needed for an eligible child, but the academy is unable to provide the specialist staffing for it).

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans, with local authorities needing instead to apply 'reasonable endeavours' to support these children and their families.

Safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing continues to be high priority during this period of general academy closure. Where children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in the academy, academy staff will continue to ensure a safe space for these children to attend and flourish. The Principal will work alongside the SENDCo to ensure that appropriate staff, facilities and provision are available to secure a safe, appropriate and positive placement for those children. The support appropriate to each child in this circumstance will be recorded and reviewed on an individual basis. Any updates to a child's situation will be updated on their risk assessments which are then shared with the Local Authority. ACET have produced a comprehensive academy risk assessment that refers to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and will continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19. Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day to day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Having worked with parents/carers and other professionals to decide whether children with EHC plans will be attending the academy, academy staff will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not attend on the first day of absence. Where children with EHC plans do not take up a place in the academy and are cared for at home, an individual risk assessment will be completed. This will be recorded on risk assessments for each pupil/student which are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Authority. The risk assessment will include; remote contact, phone contact, virtual visits. Other individualised contact methods will be considered and recorded in line with Government recommendations.

The Principal, the DSL and SENDCo will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any risk assessment for children with EHC plans. This plan will be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the Principal, DSL and SENDCo will consider any referrals as appropriate. For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, who have not been offered a place in the academy, contact details for key staff will always be available on the academy website. This will ensure that parents/carers of children with SEND will always have a way of contacting and communicating with academy staff where needed.

Arrangements for consulting parents/carers of, and children with, SEND

Working in partnership with children with SEND and their parents/carers continues to be central to ACET policies and practice. The views of parents/carers and children will be considered in determining whether children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in the academy, as detailed in this addendum. For children with EHC plans who are being cared for at home, their individual risk assessments will include plans to ensure that regular contact is maintained with key academy staff. These communications may include: individual expectations for home

learning, discussions around appropriate learning activities, adaptations to learning resources/activities and discussions of strategies for supporting children at home. For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, signposts will be included on the academy website to support them in accessing appropriate learning activities. Academy staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when setting accessible home learning for children with SEND. The academy website will include contact details so that, should parents/carers of children with SEND need to contact a member of academy staff for additional support or guidance for home learning, they can do so. Where statutory processes relating to SEND are in action, the academy will continue to maintain communication with parents/carers of, and children with, SEND so that their views are actively sought, considered and promoted.

Arrangements for assessing and reviewing children's progress

ACET recognises that assessments and reviews of children's progress will continue to be necessary for some purposes during this period of academy and school closure, mainly for the purpose of statutory assessment and review for new or existing EHC plans and for other assessments being completed by external professionals, for example community paediatricians. Where this is needed, key academy staff will maintain communication with parents/carers and relevant professionals to share, with necessary consents, the most current assessment information and professional observations that the academy holds. Where children's EHC plans are due for review within the period of academy and school closure, the academy will discuss arrangements with parents/carers, children, the Local Authority and professionals involved in the plan to decide whether arrangements for a 'remote review' should be made, or whether reviews should be postponed until it is possible to meet with all parties involved in the plan. The SENDCo will make the necessary arrangements following this decision.

Arrangements for supporting children in moving between phases of education

For children due to move between phases of education at the end of this academic year, academy staff will continue to make contact with the new settings to share necessary information to make children's transitions as smooth as possible. The SENDCo will make contact with SENDCos in the new settings to share information on SEND needs. Where children with SEND would benefit from additional transition visits, every effort will be made to facilitate these where possible within DfE, PHE and government guidance.

Transitions within each academy

For children transferring between classes the SENDCo will continue to inform the new class teacher of the pupil's needs using electronic folders and meetings where appropriate. Additional transition work will be used where necessary to relieve any worries and doubt. New class social stories may be sent home to support with the changes where possible. Any consultations that the academy receives during this time will be responded to within the designated timescales unless illness prevents this.

The approach to teaching children with SEND

ACET recognises that children with SEND need access to home learning resources and activities which take account of their strengths and needs. For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, signposts will be included on the website to support them in accessing appropriate learning activities. Academy staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when

setting accessible home learning for children with SEND. In addition to electronic home learning programmes, families can request paper copies of resources to support the change of timetable and routine, sensory activities and key websites personalised to the needs of each child. The academy website will include contact details so that, should parents/carers of children with SEND need to contact a member of academy staff for additional support or guidance for home learning, they can do so.

Support for social and emotional development

ACET understands that children's social and emotional development is particularly at risk within the current national climate and period of academy and school closure. Individual risk assessments for children with EHC plans will consider children's social and emotional development and will ensure that plans are in place to enable regular review. Regular contact between academy staff and parents/carers and children will be central to identifying when additional support may be needed. Where concerns are raised or are apparent within these communications, the child's risk assessment will be reviewed by key academy staff and appropriate action and onward referrals considered. For all parents/carers, key contact details are available on the academy's website so that they are always able to reach academy staff for support if needed.

Staff will signpost parents/carers to other professionals who may be able to support them and their children at this time, particularly the Educational Psychology Service. The academy will also share parent/carer and child friendly information with links to mental health and wellbeing support strategies and agencies.

Working alongside other professionals

ACET will continue to maintain contact with other professionals during this period of academy and school closure. This will particularly include liaison with ACET commissioned services including the Educational Psychology Service, Learning Support Service and Autism Communication Team within the Local Authorities our children reside in. These services will be sharing resources which may be of use to parents/carers and professionals during this time, and we will be adding links to these to our academy website.

The SENDCo for each academy holds contact details for external professionals already working with children with SEND including health and social care staff and will maintain both planned contacts and referrals of arising need. Contact details for the SENDCo and key academy staff are available via the academy website should professionals need to make contact. ACET academies will signpost parents/carers to appropriate external professionals as needed and will continue to fulfil authorised requests for information for assessment or review purposes.

Review

This addendum to the information report will be reviewed in light of new government guidance as and when it is published.