

Ealing Council
Perceval House
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10th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Children with an EHCP Plan returning to school

I hope you and your families are keeping well.

This letter is in addition to communication that I have sent to all families with children and young people at school, as we understand that there are some additional questions that parents and carers of children and young people with EHCPs may have.

The purpose of this letter is to explain the thought and preparation that is going into returning children with an EHCP to school. As some children have been away from school for a long time - they may be very anxious about returning and will need as much support as possible. We recognise children will need to adapt not only to returning to school but also to a new style of school day (with the adjustments that have been made to keep children as safe as possible in relation to COVID-19).

Our main priority is to do everything possible to ensure your child has a smooth and happy return to full-time school. One way to achieve this for children is to have a staggered and well thought out reintegration back to school.

Your child's needs may have changed since they were last in school; this is to be expected and we encourage you to share your observations with the school.

What should I expect from my child's school?

- Your child's school will be in touch with you to arrange a time to discuss your child's transition plan and assess any potential risks to your child and how best to manage these.

- Some children will find following new rules such as social distancing difficult. Rest assured, the school will make every effort to relay these rules in the gentlest and most effective way possible such as the use of pictures, fun demonstrations of social distancing and where appropriate, videos suited to the child's age and understanding. Some children will not be able to follow these new social rules consistently and alternative arrangements will be put in place to keep them safe.
- The school will also work with you (through good communication) to adapt the education offer in a manageable way for your child. The idea is to have most children back to full-time school within a few weeks.
- Your school has been providing home learning support and this will continue in September so that you have access to learning for any time your child may be at home.

Who do I talk to if I have any concerns?

- The first step is to speak to your school SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). You may already have their contact details, or you can find them on the school website or by contacting the school office; who may also be able to arrange for you to speak to your child's form teacher.
- If your query is not resolved or you are unable to speak to the SENCO, let your EHCCO (Education Health Care Co-ordinator) know. They will contact the school on your behalf and work with the school to resolve your concerns with them. The school will be given further guidance to support them to develop a transition plan if needed.
- You can also get help and advice by contacting the organisation ISAID (Impartial Support, Advice and Information on Disability) on 020 8280 2251 or by emailing isaidealing@family-action.org.uk who can act as mediators, helping you to better communicate with your child's school.

Will my child have access to their therapy sessions?

Yes, your child will have their face-to-face therapy sessions as before. Measures will be put in place to reduce the risk of infection including following all government advice and guidance). In some cases, there may have to be adjustments to how the therapies are delivered and this will be discussed with you first.

How will my child be kept safe from Covid-19?

Based on the updated government guidance children are better off in school except in very exceptional circumstances. Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August 2020, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Every school is following the government guidance and producing their own risk assessments which are signed off by the schools' governing body. Schools will be

putting a range of measures in place to reduce risks and create a safer environment, such as staggering start times, breaks and lunchtimes.

If your child has a medical condition, the school will follow the *Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy* which may involve working with the nursing team and your child's medical professionals, to ensure your child can be kept as safe as possible.

What if my child is unable to come to school?

The guidance states that: *'Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and / or public health advice, absence will not be penalised'*.

Schools are working hard to review their teaching and learning models and develop a recovery curriculum to meet the needs of all children. If your child is feeling anxious, please speak to the school to work together on the best next steps to follow.

Travelling to school

You can walk, use bicycles or drive children to school. Where children / young people need to travel to school by public transport, they must wear a protective face covering and dispose of it or store it safely as soon as they arrive at school. The use of hand sanitiser is also advisable, although the school will integrate regular hand washing into the school day.

Schools may organise staggered start times to maintain social distancing. It is therefore important to arrive at the time specified for your child by the school so that overcrowding can be avoided at the school gates and children can be brought into the school and move around the site safely.

If the Local Authority provides travel assistance for your child, arrangements will be confirmed over the summer. You can also contact the transport team by email at sent-transport@ealing.gov.uk. If you have not applied for travel assistance but believe you may be eligible details can be found on the local offer under 'Travel Assistance'. You must apply as soon as possible as timing of applications is crucial.

What help and support can I access over the summer holiday?

You can visit Ealing's Local Offer website which gives information, advice and guidance about many different subjects, issues and services for children with additional needs and / or a disability living in the London Borough of Ealing including childcare, short breaks, specialist services, clubs, organisations, activities and much more. Visit www.ealinglocaloffer.org.uk

You can get in touch with ISAID (Impartial Support, Advice and Information on Disability) who welcome all enquiries and can offer independent, impartial advice and support.

Impartial Support Advice and Information on Disability (ISAID)

020 8280 2251

isaidealing@family-action.org.uk

www.family.action.org.uk/ISAID

You can contact Ealing's Family Information Service who offer information, advice and guidance to support all families in the borough and have on their team a dedicated SEND Information Officer.

Ealing Family Information Service

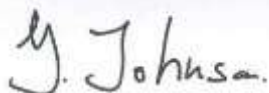
020 8825 558

children@ealing.gov.uk

And visit www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk for a comprehensive directory of information about family support services, childcare, short breaks, money and benefits and much more.

We hope you have found this letter informative and reassuring and we very much look forward to welcoming all children back to school in September.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Yvonne Johnson
Deputy Leader and
Portfolio Holder Children's Services



Judith Finlay
Exec Director Children, Adults and Public Health