



**Addendum to The SEND Information Report Special
Arrangements for School Closures in relation to Covid-19
January 2021**



What are the entitlements of children and young people with SEND when schools are closed due to Coronavirus?

All schools have been ordered to close to the vast majority of children on Tuesday 5th January 2021. The school remain open for to provide education for the children of key workers, and ‘vulnerable children.’

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). The majority of children with SEND, who receive SEND 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.

In order to ensure that our pupils with EHCPs are supported; we have consulted families with regards to whether or not their child needs to attend school. We have ensured that the expectations for work being done at home are understood and that pupils can access the work being set by school staff. As a school we are undertaking weekly check-ins to ensure that pupils’ outcomes are kept at the forefront and that their emotional needs are being met. The school staff (including teachers, SENCO and HSLW) is contacting parent /carers of all children within the school.

Do I have to send my child to school?

Despite schools staying open for some children, the guidance is quite clear:

‘If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.’

If you feel it would be too high risk to send your child to school because they, or someone else in your family, is at particularly high risk, there is of course no requirement to send your child in.

Under the Coronavirus Act, the criminal penalty for parents failing to send their children to school is to be temporarily halted.

If my child has an EHCP, doesn’t the local authority have a legal duty to deliver provision?

From a legal perspective this remains the case. However, given the likely significant disruption to staffing, it may be very difficult for schools or local authorities to deliver precisely the provision in the EHCP, particularly over the next few weeks.

The Government have just passed the Coronavirus Act 2020 which gives temporary emergency powers to the Government to issue a notice (a month at a time) that would modify the legal requirements on Local Authorities in relation to EHCPs. If this notice is issued it would be in relation to two key areas:

The absolute duty to make the provision in an EHC plan (section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014) is to be temporarily amended to a ‘reasonable endeavours’ duty. This means that during the specified period the 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. Disapplying the duty to undertake annual reviews of EHC plans.

Again, if there could be a risk to the child or young person's health, wellbeing or safety if they do not receive a particular provision or intervention, raise this with your school and Local Authority without delay.

What is the advice from the Secretary of State for Children?

On 24th March 2020, the Secretary of State for Children, Vicky Ford, issued an open letter to children and young people with SEND), their parents/carers and families, and all others who support them.

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 SEND 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.'

My child was due to have an annual review. What will happen now?

Under the Coronavirus Act, the requirement to carry out annual reviews may be postponed where this is considered to be *'appropriate and proportionate.'* However, Queen Eleanor's C of E Junior School will continue to hold annual reviews if possible. This will of course need to be carried out remotely and your school should speak to you first about how this will be managed to ensure that the contribution of parents and children/young people are at the heart of the process.

If you feel there is an urgent need to amend the provision or placement in the child or young person's EHC plan, speak to the school and the Local Authority about this to see what review mechanisms could be put in place.

An EHCP was applied for for my child before schools closed. What will happen now?

SEND panels are still sitting to complete the EHCP application process. The school SENCO and families will be notified if an assessment has been agreed to take place. Some assessments for EHCPs can take place remotely (via video link or phone). This will be dependent on the case and how the family wish to proceed. Assessments can be placed on hold until school returns if this is deemed the most appropriate action.

My child has been granted an EHCP during school closures. What should I do?

If your child is granted an EHCP during school closures the child your child now falls under the category of a child which an EHCP and therefore in the 'vulnerable' category. Queen Eleanor's C of E Junior will consult with the families to determine if the risk of not attending school is greater than remaining at home. A decision will then be made if the child remains at home or attends school.

My child is still attending school. How will my child's learning be supported at school?

It is important to note the school will not be providing a full curriculum as usually delivered at Queen Eleanor's C of E Junior School, they will be providing care for the children and incorporating education

provision and a range of activities, but this will NOT be fully in line with their EHCP provision. Adult support will be in place where possible but this will not be the child's 'usual' adult support. For example, they may be supported by a different Teaching Assistant each day or taught by a different teacher. The staff at school have contact with the school's SENCO to ensure all staff are aware of your child's individual needs.

How can I support my child's learning at home?

If a child has an identified SEND (EHCP or SEN Support), the class teacher will take account of their needs when planning for and providing work to be completed at home. This may include:

- suggesting different ways in which children can present their work;
- giving more detailed instructions;
- providing parents with suggestions to make tasks more practical in nature;
- providing alternative work which is targeted at their level of need where they may not ordinarily access curriculum subjects at age expected levels.

What about transition to secondary school?

We are aware that the transition period for our pupils with SEND has been greatly affected by the current situation and we continue to work alongside our secondary and Infant school colleagues to ensure that the information needed is shared. The SENCo will produce comprehensive transition documents for the secondary schools so that your child's needs will be made known to the relevant staff in time for the new term. As the summer term progresses, we will begin to send out transition style material via our Year 6 staff that will endeavour to support all our pupils at this transitional time if other transition processes are not possible. This may change dependent on when school will be able to return and in what capacity.

How can I help my child cope with the changes?

We understand that this is a significant change for many families. Please give yourself time to adjust to a new routine and above all, do not place too much pressure on yourself or your child to complete schoolwork. Maintaining positive mental health and emotional wellbeing is very important. The mental health charity: MIND has provided some initial information which we are happy to share. We have also provided some helpful resources which have been sent out via email and will also be uploaded to our website.

[Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#)

[How can I cope with changes to school / college?](#)

There are also links to resources and websites for supporting children with SEND on the school website - <https://www.queen-eleanors.surrey.sch.uk/page/?title=SEND&pid=17>

Who can I contact?

We realise that these are difficult times for everyone. If you have any concerns or queries, please contact: Naomi Strickland (SENCO) - senco@queen-eleanors.surrey.sch.uk