 

Covid-19:

Promoting positive transition for

SEND pupils

during and after

the crisis.

Guidance for schools and settings

**SEN and SEYIS**

**May 2020**

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2. **Introduction**

Research suggests that many children and young people can find the transition between schools unsettling and stressful. Following the current public health crisis (Covid-19) it is likely that many children and young people, especially those who are vulnerable, have special educational needs, or are moving to a new school, will experience similar feelings once social isolation ends.

The purpose of this guidance is, therefore, to provide advice on how schools can support their children and young people with SEND in managing this transition.

**You will appreciate that it cannot, and will not, contain all the answers and all the solutions. We are in a different climate with advice changing on a daily basis. However, we hope you find this document useful and thought-provoking.**

**Please read this guidance in conjunction with the Good Practice Guides for Transition produced by SEYIS.**

**Definition of Transition**

For the purpose of this document transition has two meanings:

1. Moving back into school following the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown. In order to respond to the emerging needs of individuals, cohorts and groups, a dynamic and phased programme which recognises the context and the logistics of returning ALL children and young people to school, will need to be planned and implemented.
2. The transfer of children and young people from one setting or educational phase to another. This type of transition concerns:
* age related transfers where year groups are in the process of moving across educational thresholds and, often to new settings
* the transfer of individual children or young people from one setting to another due to personal circumstances (also known as in year transfers).

It is important that we support our children and young people to experience successful transitions back to school, recognising that there will be a range of phases within this transition window which will consider the context such as staffing, buildings and premises and health and safety concerns.

We know that an individual’s experiences during this time can have a powerful and long-lasting effect on academic outcomes, as well as impacting on their self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

During a period of transition children and young people can experience:

* A loss of attachment to familiar people, friends, the environment and objects within that environment
* Role and identity uncertainty
* Entry into an environment that is less predictable
* A perceived loss of control
* A feeling of being de-skilled and less valued
* Uncertainty about the future

In addition, we must acknowledge the ongoing thoughts and worries about health and safety at these times.

**Context**

We all acknowledge that school is much more than a place of learning – it is a social forum where friends meet, self-esteem is enhanced through a peer group, where friendships grow and thrive and where children feel safe and valued. It is a huge part of children’s lives which was ripped away from them at a moment’s notice.

This loss of friendship groups may trigger a feeling of bereavement.

The loss of structure of the school day may also have had a sharp impact which can lead to anxiety and stress. Parents will have tried to keep some structure to the day but to lose this structure can feel like a loss of control and there may be an anxiety response which can impact on a child or young person’s mental health.

1. **Key principles of effective transition**

The key principles of successful transitions still apply to the present situations (whether children are returning to the same class / setting before the end of the academic year or entering into a new class / setting) although the means of executing transition processes may need to look different. It is worth noting that, although the children and young people moving settings are clearly ‘new’ that, in many ways, every pupil is a ‘new’ pupil because of the impact of isolation on their emotional as well as their academic profile. We must not assume that the childrenwho went into lockdown will be the same children who return.

Effective transitions are supported by:

* Advance planning and preparation
* Effective communication
* Consideration of relationships

**Advance Planning** **and Preparation**

* Careful selection of groupings must take account of the needs of pupils with SEN.
* Identify the range of information to be shared with pupils and families prior to return – for example, what class they are going to, which staff they will be with, which pupils they will be with and what the routines will be~~?~~ It may be useful to provide a video/virtual meeting/letter from the class teacher explaining what will happen on the first day. You may want to consider whether each child in the group should be invited to send in a message to be shared with the group. Be sure to explain how things will have changed when they come back and ensure they all know the names of the children in their group.
* If your school operates an ARP, it may be helpful, as a starting point, to consider one session in the morning for one half of the group and one session in the afternoon for the remaining half. Again, this may need to be heavily resourced such as 3 members of staff with 4 pupils to begin with and moving forward from there
* Ensure there are adequate resources available with perhaps, flexibility in staffing, rotas etc.
* Consider the reactions there may be from children returning to school– ensure planning considers that staffing ratios are ensuring effective support for all children within the context of exhibiting possible new behaviours for the first few weeks as they adjust to being back to the ‘new normal’.
* Plan activities / projects that can support the transition process back into school – with the support of the parents. Ensure these are accessible to all pupils.
* Make sure parents are aware of both your risk assessment and provision plan for the individual children
* Be aware that behaviours may have changed. Extreme anxiety may cause the flight, fight or freeze responses and there will be the need to be understanding as we know that behaviour can be a response/communication to the situation. There will be a need to seek to identify the cause and offer support. Hopefully, any scenarios of difficult behaviour will be regarded as an emotional response and will not result in any exclusions.
* Identify the pupils who will need a more enhanced and individualised transition plan.

**Effective communication**

Knowing what is happening or what to expect, relieves stress and intolerance of situations for all of us.

* Work with parents / carers to enable them to support their child(ren) and prepare them for a successful return to school.
* Acknowledge how the parents are feeling and perhaps have a “handover” discussion with the parent(s) to ensure that any new triggers or behavioural nuances can be discussed and therefore expected and managed. This communication will help build parent’s confidence in the school.
* Acknowledge and address any concerns.
* Provide clear and transparent information about what the day will look like and what changes there may be to the “normal” provision offered.
* Communicate with pupils in a mode which they can access
* Plan how there could be a “check-in” process when the children return to school
* As stress can be easily communicated, try and control your own stress so you don’t pass this on. This may need to be a whole school focus.

**Consideration of relationships**

We are all aware that relationships provide a solid foundation for schools among the pupils, staff, parents and community.

**Build relationships and reconnections with key adults:**

For some children and young people, it may be beneficial to assign a specific staff member to support their transition. This aims to establish trust and rapport and promotes a feeling of safety and being supported through the transitional period. Ensure that staff who are supporting the most vulnerable children and young people in school are emotionally stable and resilient.

*“Teaching is a relationship-based profession. That has been clearly demonstrated in the response of the teaching profession, supporting children through online teaching during the crisis, and also caring for the children of key workers by keeping schools open and offering an activities programme. This was not without its inherent risk.” (Barry Carpenter)*

**Resilience is influenced by the relationships and connections between staff** at all levels within the organisation. *“The educational environment is one of hope when it moves from being reactive to being responsive”* (McKnight, 2020)

**3. A ‘Recovery Curriculum:**

**Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic.’**

**(**Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University, UK
Matthew Carpenter, Principal, Baxter College, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, UK)

*“In response to the weight of loss our young people will have experienced, what are our levers of recovery? Many of us will focus on the recovery of lost knowledge, but this does not recognize the scale of impact. If we consider the definition of a relevant curriculum as the ‘daily lived experience’ we must plan for experiences that provide the space for recovery. Already Headteachers are saying “The children will be so far behind academically when they return.”*

*Such statements are incompatible with the process of recovery from loss, trauma, anxiety and grief. It is more about the results culture so many Headteachers are steeped in. Now is the time to return to more humane approaches concerned with the fundamental wellbeing, and secure positive development of the child.*

 *Without this there will be no results that have true meaning and deep personal value to the child in terms of their preparation for adulthood.”*

**The Recovery Curriculum**

*“The Recovery Curriculum is an essential construct for our thinking and our planning. Each school must fill it with the content they believe is best for the children of their school community, informed by your inherent understanding of your children in your community. What were the aims and values of your school before this pandemic? Use them now to guide your judgements, to build a personalised response to the child who has experienced loss.*

 *No Government can give you the guidelines for that. It is down to you, as that skilled, intuitive teacher, who can lift the mask of fear and disenfranchisement from the child. You can engage that child as a learner once more, for engagement is the liberation of intrinsic motivation.” (Carpenter et al, 2015).*

Carpenter suggests that the Recovery Curriculum is built on the 5 Levers, as a systematic, relationships-based approach to reigniting the flame of learning in each child.

The following are his identified levers:

**Lever 1: Relationships** – we can’t expect our students to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.

**Lever 2: Community** – We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our school community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

**Lever 3: Transparent Curriculum** – all of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.

**Lever 4: Metacognition** – in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

**Lever 5: Space – to be, to rediscover self, and to find their voice on learning in this issue**. It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged against their peers, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations.

**Suggested guidance for a start**

* Although there will be some learning lost, do not get straight into formal work/assessment.
* Think about activities that build on relationships, feeling safe, repetition of routines and structures. This can involve Circle Time, games, welcome back assembly (re-establishing school community) to celebrate any missed birthdays, show appreciation for key workers, reinforce that everyone is safe and coming back together.
* It is recommended that staff do not directly question children on what work they may, or may not, have completed at home.
* Children who have completed home working should be praised privately.
* Opportunities to talk about feelings/emotions should be embedded throughout the curriculum.
* There should be a careful balance of prioritising wellbeing and also ensuring boundaries are in place, as these are safe, i.e. (it’s OK to feel scared about being at school but it’s not OK to hit staff).
* There should be a gradual approach to reintroducing academic demands. Children and young people have to be emotionally ready before they can learn.
* Small group work, specifically targeting area of need, such as specific work around emotions, emotional regulation and bereavement.

You may decide to take a COVID-19 theme for the children/young people in the first instance – the intention of this would be to provide closure and a moving on experience from home to school. (**This is just an idea and not binding**.) Obviously, this will need to be differentiated and personalised depending on need;

* A bridge between home and school activities: Use of photos or bringing in a recipe from home you helped with, growing a plant at home or games you played….
* Gathering experience: Interview parents, talk to each other about their experience, write a report, draw a picture
* PSHE – how did we keep ourselves safe? Keep alert posters – continuing to keep safe, NHS

This theme can be linked into all subjects, Maths, History, Geography, PE…and then move on to a new timetable, always keeping the children prepared for what is coming the next week

**4.Specific SEN Needs**

Children with ASD/communication and interaction needs will need additional opportunities to process their transition back to a school or other educational setting both before they come back to school and after they return. The following strategies are recommended:

* **Make use of a Social Story or other visual supports and share these regularly with the child or young person**
* **Share virtual tours, photographs or maps of the school or setting** and allow children to access these repeatedly
* **Allow time for the pupil to readjust to the physical and sensory environment.** Be aware that children and young people with ASD are likely to experience additional anxieties around returning to their school or setting after the COVID-19 pandemic. There will have been many rapid changes to their routine and everyday life. Even if they have been attending, this will have been a very different experience from usual including changes in their physical and sensory environments. Allow time to learn what their new threshold for overload is post lockdown and use this knowledge for planning purposes.
* **Ensure children feel safe.** Some children and young people with ASD may also have health-related anxiety and this will have been heightened by the current situation
* **Consider different ways that timetables can be displayed for individuals.** Does the pupil need information displayed in a different format?
* **Create daily checklists** so that children and young people can make sure they have the correct equipment for the day and this will help to promote their independence

**Supporting children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs**

A study by Young Minds (2020) sought the views of young people with identified mental health needs to explore the impact of COVID-19 on their emotional wellbeing. The study identified that:

* For some children the COVID-19 situation meant that they did not have access to their usual support networks and strategies. **Support networks will need to be rebuilt for pupils and it will take time for them to be effective again**
* 83 per cent of young people who already had mental health needs said the Coronavirus had made their mental health condition worse in varying degrees. **Children returning to school may need more support than they did before, and children who were previously coping may now be having difficulties**
* Some young people experienced anxiety, panic attacks, problems with sleep, and urges to self-harm, especially those who had previously self-harmed. **It is important to be aware of these anxiety related issues and the risks of self-harm when the pupil returns**
* COVID-19 appears to have had a big impact on those already suffering with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in terms of their focus on hygiene and handwashing rituals. **Children and young people displaying OCD behaviours will need understanding and additional support**
* Many young people were anxious about family members being ill or themselves passing COVID-19 onto more vulnerable family members. **The return to a school or setting may well heighten concerns about becoming ill or infecting others and this will need to be carefully managed**

**Specific groups for a phase transfer**

In addition to considering the processes in place to support all children and young people returning to school, there are some specific groups that may require additional planning. These children and young people include nursery to reception children, Year 6-Year 7 (Secondary transfer) and Post 16 pupils.

The information that follows is intended to be a guide to some of the strategies that may support groups where specific plans for transition are required and take into account some areas of concern highlighted by SENCOs in Enfield.

**5.Transition from nursery to school**

The transition from nursery to full time school can be a particularly anxious time for parents/carers and children as they begin their formal education. Due to the current pandemic, typical events may not have happened to support transition. It is important to think about transition as a process rather than an event, as it will take time for both children and parents/carers to settle into the new structure. Below are some possible ideas that could be helpful.

* Help the child tobecome familiar with your setting which under current circumstances could be by providing virtual photo books and/or video tours of key features of the school/classroom e.g. entrance, toilets, pegs, break out area, playground, a selection of toys/equipment available by providing these on your website.
* Relaxed/staggered starts under the current situation will be evermore important to allow the child and their parent/carer to take their time separating and to choose what the child is ready to engage in. However, parental agreement must be sought, and their needs considered such as returning to work or other commitments before finalising plans for staggered or relaxed transitions.
* Adopt anindividualised approach to separation; be watchful and flexible to respond to the variable needs of individual children and families. These are likely to be accentuated after the pandemic. Observe attachment behaviours. Young children who are securely attached need to continue to experience an optimum level of support and nurturing care with their key adults. Children who are showing insecure or avoidant attachment behaviours need help building relationships.
* Transitional objects:understanding and appreciating the role that comforters play helps us to respond sensitively to their presence.
* Hellos and goodbyes: the time when parents/carers will need to feel most connected with and supported by practitioners, especially at this challenging time will be at the beginning and end of sessions. What parents and children will need at handover transition times is the soothing presence of a sensitive practitioner who understands and empathises with them.
* Predictability and routineswill be important, especially during the settling in phase without too many interruptions to sustained play or too many breaks for adult-driven tasks, such as snack times, assemblies and whole-class discussions.
* Listening to children - ask gentle questions, provide opportunity for children to voice concerns. Incorporate ideas and feelings about change and transition into their play, through story and drama, role play and in their ‘small world’ play.

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| **Nursery to Primary Transfer** |
|  | **Challenges identified for transfer from Nursery to School** | **Suggested strategies** |
| 1 | Identifying the needs of children with potential SEND before the end of the summer term |
| a | **PVIs may not be in a position to pass****on as much information as they would wish** Schools work with many PVIs.PVIs will not have seen (most) children since February.PVIs may be entirely closed or working with substantially reduced numbers of staff and may not be in a position to manage complex paperwork.  | Some PVIs may be able to provide the information- schools can ask.Some PVIs may have other documentation (such as an entry point All About Me) that they may be able to share.Make the best use of any written PVI transition information before contacting either PVI or parents.A central transition form has been drafted and is in the pilot stage. This may help to create a more standardised and comprehensive form of information sharing BUT is unlikely to be in use this academic year. |
| b | **Professionals information sharing may be possible before the end of the summer term.**Where EYFS professionals have had contact with the child, information may be shared with the school before the end of the academic year. SALT often make reports available in time for new year planning.Speech and Language run ASD sessions for child and parents may not take place this summer. | Seek parental permission to secure reports or more informal involvement information from professionals working with nursery age children before contacting the professionals. |
| c | **Obtaining information from parents without real contact**Parents may need support to complete written documentation to provide information about needs and abilities. | Virtual meetings and phone conversations will have to establish key information, open communication and introduce the school to the child and family.Phone or video meetings will be needed to help parents complete essential paperwork.Prompts and examples can be sent with forms to help scaffold parent responses without unduly leading. |
| d | **Obtaining first hand impressions about a child’s needs, abilities and aspirations first hand**Opportunities for first hand observation of the child will be limited Home visits will be impossible.Stay and play sessions will be impossible | Observations of the child within the home are very valuable- there is no direct substitute but videoed meetings with home can be useful.Engage in a face to face conversation with the child.Ask the parent to set up a simple activity for the child to do that can be watched live or recorded. An example, ‘Show me something form your house that you like best and tell me all about it’. That could be followed up by the SENCO / class teacher showing the child something from the school that is exciting – and talk to the child about it (a book, play area, art activity etc). |
| 2 |  Establishing positive relationships and lines of communication with the children and their families. |
| a | Ensuring children (and families) are familiar and comfortable with all elements of the transition into school (I e becoming aware of key structures, routines and systems as well as staffing and expectations). | All About Me projects (samples exist in some schools. Contact Lynne) All About Us booklets to explain the school structures, systems, geography etc. Photographs, pictures etc should be included.Virtual tours of the school- can be uploaded to web site or sent out for the personal touch.Video ‘getting to know you’ calls. |
| b | Supporting parents to complete documents designed to give the school information about the child. | See above |
| c | Supporting parents to prepare children for transition into school. | Encourage parents to ‘prepare for school eg* Walk past school during daily exercise and chat about how great it will be.
* Practice dressing and undressing for PE, putting coat and shoes on etc.
* Practice eating lunch out of a lunch box (if appropriate)
 |

When talking with parents it may be helpful to follow a careful route that recognises that not all parents will accept that their child has needs. A suggested protocol:

1. Check discreetly, with professionals and the PVI whether a child has been flagged. Obtain as much information from these sources as possible and use this information to personalise evidence and include in the conversation with the parent.
2. Allow the class teacher to make the first contact as the involvement of the SENCO may send signals that the parent is not ready for.
3. Initiate a conversation with parents using phrases like, ‘Do you have any concerns?’ to establish the parental attitude towards their child’s needs and provision.
4. Obtain the parent’s consent for any deeper probing. This can be done over the telephone.
5. Seek professionals’ reports where they exist.
6. Set up activities for the child to do that provide extra evidence (e.g. ask the child to talk about a favourite toy to demonstrate speech and language or to draw a picture if fine motor skills may be an issue)
7. **Primary -Secondary Transfer / new school transfer**

Moving to a new school at this time is another difficult transition for the pupils, parents and staff. Hopefully there will have been an opportunity for some “closure” with the familiar primary school, friends and staff in order for this move to be embraced. The young people and their parents will have additional concerns around this transition given the uncertainty of the current situation. Some suggestions to facilitate this transition are:

* Create a virtual tour of the school which can be posted on the school’s website. This could even be done by children who are attending school (with parental permission).
* A visual resource with photos of key people/places in school. This can be sent directly to children who are have SEND or are considered vulnerable. Again, this can be posted on school’s website for all to access.
* Provide other visual resources regarding the rules and routines of the day such as pictures of the uniform, how many lessons a day, timing of lunch time and break
* If class teacher/form tutor is identified, that member of staff should give parents a call and dependent upon age/appropriateness speak to child/young person.
* Consideration of whether class teacher/form tutor should send the child/young person a letter to let them know they are keeping them in mind.
* School to provide a Q&A sheet for parents with key questions and answers that often are asked.
* Schools to try and gain as much information as they can about the child/young person from parents, the child, the previous school or any agencies that are currently involved with the child
* Consideration of sending home some activities that children can complete about themselves offering a range of media for them to respond. This will help adults to find out their thoughts. This could be a simple ‘All about me’ page containing photos of the child.

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| **Transfer from Primary to Secondary** |
|  | **Challenges identified from Primary to Secondary** | **Suggested strategies** |
| 1 | **Sharing information between schools so that secondaries have what they need to receive children with SEND.** |
|  | **Communication between key individuals across the schools**Where before SENCos, year heads and phase leaders may have met to exchange information this cannot happen. | Telephone and email conversations can still happen.Video meetings can be set up.Some socially distanced meetings are possible.All SENCos have exchanged email addresses with all other SENCOs across the phases and schools so use this list of contacts for support*.* |
|  | Exchange of documents and evidence of ability and needs across schools.Distribution of information and requests for information to parents | Primary schools will ensure that parents receive appropriate Secondary school requests for information.Transition packs containing information and activities will also be distributed to parents via primary schools if secondaries request this. (NB secondaries must be aware of the need to avoid making documents lengthy because of email limitations.)  |

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| 2 | **Preparing children with SEND and all other children and families for the transition from primary to secondary school experience.** |
|  | Supporting parents to take an active role in the preparation of their sons/daughters for the new school experience. | Primaries and secondaries can, when communicating with parents encourage them to take an active role by:* As part of daily exercise, take the child to visit the exterior of the school, to explore the route and to share positive thoughts about the school building grounds etc.
* To visit the school web-site and look for key people, curriculum, extracurricular activities etc. Schools could provide a prompt list of things to find- eg. a web-site Treasure Hunt
* Secondaries could post a virtual tour of the school on their web site.
* Parents to be encouraged to support their children in exploring the LA Transition activity booklet.
* Social stories and information in readiness for school such as pictures of adults, pictures of classroom, what will my day be like etc

Secondaries and primaries working together to produce a guide for their schools.It might include * Web site navigation activities
* A Virtual school tour
* Key personnel (with photos) and their roles
* Difference between primary and secondary school life
* Timetables
* Lunch and break arrangements
* Welcome messages from children/young people
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| a | Ensuring that the materials produced and shared (by primary and secondary transition focussed colleagues) send the right messages. | * SENCOs to quality assure materials being sent out to SEND children to ensure the key messages are reassuring and positive to avoid undue anxiety and concern.
 |
| b | Secondaries building relationships with families.Building trust is more important than ever so secondaries will have to be especially creative and primaries especially supportive.  | * Finding ways to establish positive relationships with children and families can be done by:
* Video calls with single families where key persons chat to the child about things the child enjoys, is proud of/ hopes to achieve. It is important that these calls don’t feel like interviews. Video-calling is at the discretion of the HT and must abide by safeguarding guidelines. Video calls should not be recorded.
* Children and parents could be invited to socially distanced tours of the exterior of the building/ outdoor activities.
* Groups of parents might be happy to join virtual group chats to allow children to meet potential friends.
* Regular telephone calls from primary SENCOs / key workers where transition hopes, and fears are discussed can be helpful.
 |
| c | Virtual transition days | * Video linked activities that children would do in real time alongside a teacher- drawing, reading, talking, game playing. Perhaps 20 mins- to an hour over a number of days.

Activities might include:* A quiz (suggest using Google Forum, Sharepoint forms or A Kahoots)
* Google classroom activities (fun ones only)
* Question and answer sessions
* Opportunities for children to meet each other online (safeguarding rules apply)
* Making stories with pictures/ captions or photos
* Making collages or other art work.
 |
|  | Providing opportunities for peer to peer relationships to blossom  | * Virtual group discussions and activates
* Socially distanced outdoor activities
 |
|  | Addressing SEMH issues – anxiety behaviour etc that are the result of the current situation. This will apply to many children but SEND children such as those with ASD or SEMH may suffer more than most.  | * Refer to the EPS critical incident and bereavement training and support materials. Take advantage of the training sessions currently on offer

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|  | Preparing children to say goodbye to their primary school lives. | * Although this will happen in earnest after half term and children in year 6 may be back in school be aware that some vulnerable children will not be returning.
* All the usual rites of passage may be possible but social distancing will require a degree of emotional restraint not usual at this turning pout in their lives. Plan for that.
* Reunions and celebrations may work better in September.
 |
| 3 | **Preparing adults and children of all abilities for a new school culture** |
|  | Designing a recovery curriculum (in all primary and secondary stages) | * Make use of the help of professionals (EPS SWERRL etc)
* Collaborate across schools.
* Focus on emotional wellbeing and mindfulness
* Use stories to broach difficult issues and address anxieties.
* Use curriculum time outside English or PSHE.
* Explore ways to encourage reflection and healing e.g. time capsule projects.
 |
|  | Supporting and working with adults struggling with their own anxiety, grief and professional challenges | * See advice above about using professionals support
 |
|  | Training children to function in a socially distanced and cautious learning environment | * Recognise how alien the new rules will be for all children and plan to train them gently to adhere to these expectations
 |
|  | Creating a culture of emotional support, kindness and mindfulness | * This will be an ongoing project over the academic year and beyond.
 |

1. **Key Stage 4 - Post 16 Transfer**

**Post 16 Transition Activities for schools to complete before end of June**

* Annual Review with Transition Addendum - [Usually Year 9 and 10]
* Check young people have completed application for college/sixth form place - [Note: all should be done by February but see website for closing dates in some setting]
* If application submitted - check if they have heard back. [Note: if the application is to CONEL they should have booked an interview as part of the application]
* Check young person has had an interview - [these are happening so once you know the dates you can follow up to check they have attended etc]
* Ensure SEN services are aware of where the young person is applying and that this has been names on their plan

**Transition Post 16 Key Information**

**Preparation for Interview**

This is a key role for staff in supporting our young people onto the next stage. Students will need support with:

* Coping strategies when technical issues arise such as ‘turn it off and on again’ and ‘get help’
* Stress management strategies that will work for them
* What to do if the call comes in and it is not a good time ie something going on with other siblings at home. Help them to say so professionally and book another time.

**College Assessments**

Be aware that colleges may be carrying out assessments on line to support students accessing a place. SENCOs should check in with teachers and staff supporting these young people. It may be helpful to offer TA support with the assessments, provided staff are able to follow college guidelines for such support.

**Careers Support**

Support is available from the LDD Careers advisors through Elizabeth Betts and her team. This is targeted support for those young people that school have completed the steps in the chart above and where placements have not been able to meet need. In this case a rethink is necessary about the long-term career aspirations and how else to secure the pathway the young person wants. They may also be able to support with those students who are unable to make a choice and are finding it difficult to identify a future pathway.

**Apprenticeships**

Bear in mind that apprenticeships are always difficult to find, and young people make, on average 20 applications before securing a place. Make sure your young person is aware of this if they are suitable for an apprenticeship and would like one. Prepare them to be determined and to also have an interim plan while they seek an apprenticeship as this could take some time.

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| **Transfer - Key Stage 4 to Post 16 The SENCO View** |
| **Challenges identified from KS4-Post 16** | **Suggested strategies** |
| 1. **Sharing information between schools and colleges to ensure college SENCOs have accurate understanding of need**
 |
|  | Communication between key individuals across the schools (parents, children, therapists and schools) | * Contact with colleges may have already happened- college SENCOs have previously visited some schools.
* Request LA to seek and share college SENCO contact details to facilitate ready communication.
* Keep in contact with the careers and POST 16 SEND team who may be able to broker key communications.
 |
| 1. **Supporting student application and enrolment**
 |
|  | Many young people with SEND benefit from close support in completing applications and regular monitoring to check the progress of the application  | * Video, email and telephone support will need to be provided to plug this gap.
* Regular phoning home to identify the progress of applications is necessary (and is happening)
* LDD Career Advisers’ are in the process of a virtual tour of schools to discuss cases with SENCOs.
* LDD career advisors are in regular contact with students. They are targeting and giving guidance remotely to yearr11 students in general who, for whatever reason, have not applied for any post 16 education training.  The school, SENCO’s and TA’s should as normal be supporting young people with the application processes as part of the normal transition process.
 |
| a | Some young people need support to avoid ‘fip flopping’ between courses, ambitions and actions. | * Advice is to ensure all have a plan A, a plan B and if possible, a plan C.
* Plan A should be some form of educational study- at college or school.
* Young people can apply for more than one course at different levels to ensure they have a safety net.
* Colleges will usually transfer students to lower level courses if they fail to achieve entry requirement grades.
* Apprenticeships have collapsed and current recruits will need to be accommodated when and if programmes resume so current school leavers are unlikely to be able to access apprenticeships or work- related study. For this reason, college or school placements are to be strongly advised.
 |
| b | College entry offers may be conditional or unconditional | * Colleges are usually keen to fill places so will in most cases take students on their original choice or an alternative. Students should be reassured that colleges are unlikely to turn them away come September.
* Students applying for EHCPs on tailored courses will be fully assessed in September when the placement is confirmed.
 |
|  | College confirmation of places for EHCP students | * It would be helpful for colleges to confirm they can meet need when provided with EHC plans within the statutory 15 days, so that they can be named on the plan. This would reduce anxiety considerably.
 |
| 1. **School- College Managing young people’s anxiety about the transition process**
 |
|  | Managing anxiety  | * Schools are reminded that the EPS are offering support materials and training on critical incidence, bereavement. These resources are supportive of adults as well as young people.
* Training sessions are currently running.
 |
|  | Students anxiety levels are exacerbated because of a lack of opportunity to familiarise themselves with college environments, personnel and programmes of study. |  Colleges could consider offering:* Virtual tours
* Meet and greet sessions
* Virtual course taster opportunities
* Bridging learning projects.
* Telephone or video contact

Some colleges have committed to offering a range of familiarisation opportunities. SENCOs should look for uploads to college web sites after half term so they can direct students and parents to resources. |
| 1. **Ensuring young people returning to school sixth forms as well as those going to college are prepared for post 16 study in September**
 |
|  | Schools to provide learning opportunities for students (staying or leaving) to re-establish learning habits and to prepare them for post 16 study  | Schools are running/ planning to run a range of ‘transition’ projects to help young people prepare for the next phase. These include:* Weekly assemblies
* Parents evenings to explain post 16 study arrangements, expectations and possibilities.
* Regular contact through Show My Homework
* Google classroom taster sessions of sixth form courses
* Learning projects related to anticipated courses
* Projects that focus on learning and organisational behaviours
* Projects and activities that invoke work experience

Colleagues agree that students need fair warning that they will be expected to engage with these activities through virtual learning platforms or on paper. |
| 1. **Goodbye rituals to support transition.**
 |
|  | Planning for end of KS celebrations and meaningful goodbyes | * Schools are advised to plan carefully how year 11s will transition out of KS 4 to ensure emotional support and appropriate rituals are in place.
 |

1. **Schools/settings and parents**

Undoubtedly, parents, like children and young people will have serious concerns about re-entering education and currently the decision to put their children back to school remains their choice. Therefore, the school/setting will need to build up the confidence of the parents who will need to be sure that all precautions are being made by the school.

**Many parents are facing a very difficult dilemma where they don’t feel it is safe to send their children back but equally have strong concerns about the impact of keeping their children at home. This is understandable and therefore it may be beneficial to consider options for these parents and alert them to what is available.**

Social distancing at all times, will be a concern and, as we know, this is very difficult at times for young children and those with SEN - depending on their ability to understand, and remember this rule.

**How to implement social distancing**

To help ensure that the risk of virus spread for both staff and children is as low as possible, education and childcare settings that remain open should:

* Tell children, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to visit the education or childcare setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
* Consider how children arrive at the education or childcare setting and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport
* Ensure class sizes reflect the numbers of teaching staff available and are kept as small as possible
* Stagger lunch times, break times and the movement of pupils around the school to reduce large groups of children gathering
* Discourage parents from gathering at school gates
* Try to follow the [social distancing guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults)
* Consider part time attendance, spacing in the classroom, time for hygiene
* Plan, communicate in advance, reinforce expectations consistently
* Communicate openly with families what measures are in place before children return so they know what to expect.
* Film the classrooms and make available online so children and young people can see the environmental changes before they return.
* Reinforce and explain that the measures are in place to keep everyone safe.

Social distancing within education and childcare settings with very young children will be harder to maintain. Staff should implement the above measures as far as they are able, whilst ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for within their settings.

**What parents can do**

* Talk to their children about coronavirus (COVID-19), social distancing and hand washing.
* Follow [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).
* Do not gather at entrances or in playgrounds, and model social distancing so that their children learn good practice.

It is important that schools and professionals appreciate the thoughts and worries of parents and carers and pro-actively seek to reduce anxieties which may transfer to the individual child. We should reassure parents that any feelings of worry are understandable and normal in the current circumstances.

**Recommendations for all parents and carers**

* Ensure that there is effective and enhanced communication in place the lead up to any return to school. This should include contact from the pupil’s new class teacher (if this has changed) and key workers (if relevant). This will enable the sharing of information on both sides and offer parents an opportunity to share information that may impact on the pupil’s return to school (for example, have they experienced bereavement and loss as a result of Covid 19? Have there been any changes within the family? Are parents key workers? etc.).
* Make parents aware of all plans that are being implemented for transitions and the enhanced arrangements on offer. Explain what is different about the process of transition this year.
* If social distancing and safety measures remain in place at the point of the return to school, make sure that parents know how these are being implemented in school.
* Parents may appreciate information being shared with them about changes that they can prepare their son or daughter for: new staff, classroom, routines, any changes that have occurred in school.
* Offer a key point of contact for questions and concerns. Parents may have more queries than would typically be expected at a transition point.
* Once children return to school, parents may continue to need an enhanced level of contact, and the space and opportunity to talk to staff about the settling in process more frequently than might typically be planned.
* Share information with parents about the emotional support and provisions that will be in place for all children in the weeks (and months if necessary).
* Make parents aware of how any impact on learning will be addressed over the coming months.

**Parents/carers of children entering Reception or Year 1**

For the parents of children formally entering school for the first time, the current situation may result in increased worries and the possibility of separation anxiety occurring.

* Schools may consider replacing the typical ‘home visits’ that support transition, with virtual meetings and video calls where this is possible.
* Parents are likely to find the use of virtual video tours of the setting, including points of entrance, cloakrooms etc useful. Virtual tours of dropping off and collecting children may also be helpful
* Consider how you can enhance home-school communication in the initial weeks.
* Parents may need greater sensitivity and flexibility in how they separate from their child at the start of the day. Work with parents to make this an emotionally supportive process for them, as well as their child.
* Staff should ensure they are available to talk to parents at the start and end of day. Parents may need more contact, and over a longer period of time than is typically expected. This may mean that an extra member of staff is required to support classroom routines at that time in order to make key staff available.
* Resources such as ‘The Invisible String’ can also help parents to feel connected to their son or daughter when they are separated.

**Parents/carers of pupils leaving the setting/moving to a new school (eg Secondary transfer/moving to Post 16)**

* Schools should consider how they can say ‘goodbye’ to parents, as well as the pupils, even if this is done retrospectively.
* Let parents know what information has been shared with the new school, so that they feel assured that information has been handled effectively.
* Ensure that parents are given adequate and enhanced opportunity to share their views and information about their son / daughter in advance of transition.
* Personal contact (by telephone call or email) from the form tutor / head of year/ college representative will likely be appreciated by most parents.
* Make sure parents are aware of the contact that there has been with the primary school (or previous school) so that they feel assured that information has been effectively shared.
* Share information about routines and what the first few weeks will look like.
* Make sure that parents know who the key points of contact are and assure them of their readiness and availability to answer questions and talk to them.
* All of the above points may need to offer at a further enhanced level of those children with identified needs and known vulnerabilities. Make sure parents understand and know about the support and provisions that are being put in place (as appropriate).
* Ensure that there is effective and enhanced communication in place during the lead up to any return to school. This should include contact from the pupil’s new class teacher (if this has changed) and key workers (if relevant). This will enable the sharing of information on both sides and offer parents an opportunity to share information that may impact on the pupil’s return to school (for example, have they experienced bereavement and loss as a result of Covid 19, have there been any changes within the family, are parents key workers? ).
* Make parents aware of all plans that are being implemented for transitions and the enhanced arrangements on offer. Explain what is different about the process of transition this year.
* If social distancing and safety measures remain in place at the point of the return to school, make sure that parents know how these are being implemented in school.
* Parents may appreciate information being shared with them about changes that they can prepare their son or daughter for: new staff, classroom, routines, any changes that have occurred in school.
* Offer a key point of contact for questions and concerns. Parents may have more queries than would typically be expected at a transition point.
* Once children return to school/college, parents may continue to need an enhanced level of contact, and the space and opportunity to talk to staff about the settling in process more frequently than might typically be planned.
* Share information with parents about the emotional support and provisions that will be in place for all children and young people.
* Make parents aware of how any impact on learning will be addressed over the coming months.

**9.Frequently asked questions from parents concerning Transition for Year 11 and Year 6 pupils**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Children who are transitioning from Year 11 and have no setting named on their EHCP for September 2020 - when will they receive this information? | Subject to the young person having applied to a placement and SEN being directly informed of the young person’s wishes (usually this is done by the school, but the parent can also contact SEN directly) parents will receive this information when the college returns their consultation forms to SEN accepting or declining the placement.  Colleges will need to consider if they can meet the young person’s needs as outlined in their Educational Health Care Plan. Parents will receive this information when the college returns their consultation forms to SEN accepting or declining the place. |
| How can parents get information about college courses available - who can they contact for information and advice? Many parents are unable to access virtual open days etc. on college websites and need guidance and support | Parents can look on the Local Offer or can also contact the school that the young person is leaving. With an EHCP, hopefully this pathway will have been explored in line with the young person’s interests and aspirations at the Annual Review. It is the statutory duty of each school to provide independent Careers Advice and have an embedded careers programme to meet the need of every young person.All young people should be encouraged to explore local college websites to discover what courses are available. If a young person is interested in a school sixth form other than their own, they must look online on the specific school website for admission details. *NB. most school sixth form application deadlines are in November/December of the previous entry year.*  |
| Young people who are waiting for their GCSE results and want to apply to other schools and colleges to register for courses - how to go about this? | Young people can apply in the same way as previous ~~y~~ears. They can apply directly to another school or college through the normal admission process. Please note this refers to local FE colleges and does not include specialist out-of-borough settings/placements – the type of educational setting will be stipulated within the EHCP. The only exception is the LLDD Centre at Barnet & Southgate College where the SEN Service must make a direct referral. Young people will need to meet course entry grade requirements to study specific courses at sixth form provisions and colleges. If a young person has an EHCP the current school/ or parent should notify SEN services of the young person’s intention of where to study so that they consult on behalf of the young person to see if the proposed destination can meet the young person’s needs as outlined in their personal Educational Health Care Plan |
| Young people who have been told they cannot join 6th form due to behaviour record and other difficulties - who will advise parents so that families don't have to spend summer months worrying about this? |

|  |
| --- |
| It is the responsibility of the setting to advise the parent/ young person if they are unable to make an offer and it should be noted, it is standard practice that every young person should apply for a Plan A and Plan B post 16 option. A lack of offer can be a standard reply as a result of the young person not being predicted to achieve the grades required to study specific courses, the young person’s current attitude to learning, their general behaviour in school, attendance and punctuality.If a child has an EHCP and the lack of offer is directly due to the provision not being able to meet the young person’s needs, as specified in their EHCP, SEN Service will notify the parent and young person on receipt of a response to a consultation.  |

 |
| Will parents be able to contact the Careers Service by phone and e-mail during the summer months? | Parents should, in the first instance, be speaking to their current school now for guidance as schools have the statutory duty to provide an embedded careers programme and independent career guidance to all learners. Every school has a Careers Leader and there should be access to a Career Adviser. We would not expect young people to wait until the summer period to make an application, in many cases courses will be full. Enfield Careers Service and their LDD Careers Advisers normally provide support at EHCP Review meetings on invitation from the young person’s school. However, if young people are unable to gain direct career guidance and support from their school, parents/young people are encouraged to email the Careers Service directly requesting ‘LDD Career Adviser’ guidance careerservice@enfield.gov.uk  |
| **Year 6 Transition** |  |
| How will transition to secondary school be managed? | Secondary schools have been offered a range of strategies to help support them in their transition of pupils, but it will be up to the individual school on how they develop this process |
| Children with SEN/ASD who need to visit secondary school before they attend full time - will this happen in summer term or during the summer holidays? | Again, this is a matter for the individual school and dependent on the child’s individual needs. If the child is not able to visit the school prior to the holidays, it may be possible to have a visit when the school opens fully |
|  If primary/secondary school staff are not available during summer term, who will co-ordinate meetings between primary and secondary school key members of staff, to discuss needs and provision for child? | Schools will have a number of key staff, who will be contacting prospective parents. This will be up to the individual school. Your current school will have arrangements in place to ensure that information is shared with the receiving school/setting. |
| Will parents be able to contact secondary schools during the summer months - in particular, parents who think it is unsafe to send children to school in June/July? | The Secondary Schools should give you details of who, when and how to contact them over the next few months.  |

**10.Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

At the time of writing the current advice regarding PPE is contained in:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

Over time, this advice may be subject to change. However, the current guidance indicates that the majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres distance from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

* Children, young people and students whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way
* If a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home.

 A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn

All Special schools in Enfield have been provided with PPE and all mainstream schools are being provided with a PPE parcel which will contain:

* Fluid resistant type 2R face masks
* Re-usable face shields
* Latex Gloves
* Plastic Aprons

*Please note that all items meet British safety standards.*

**Transport**

At this current time, it is the school’s responsibility to advise the Transport Service which children/young people will be attending school from the 1st June and onwards. Of course, the earlier this information is offered, then the Transport Service can begin to plan.

Further communications regarding transport will be sent to schools and parents from the Transport Service.

**11.Acknowledgements and references:**

* We would like to extend sincere thanks to all the SENCOs and Headteachers who contributed to this booklet through the virtual meetings
* Also, many thanks to Our Voice and SENDIASS for their support and up-dates from parents
* “A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic.” Barry and Matthew Carpenter
* “Transitioning Back to Schools and Settings as Lockdown lifts” Enfield Educational Psychology Service and Schools Emotional Wellbeing Service (May 2020)

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