

Coventry position Statement Coronavirus (COVID-19) - SEND risk assessment for children and young people who attend mainstream, special schools, specialist colleges and other specialist settings.

1. Introduction:

Government advice published on 19th April 2020, on the provision of education and care for children and young people within a specialist setting makes clear that:

- **All educational settings remain safe places for children and young people (CYP).**
- Schools, specialist colleges and settings must make provision for a **limited number of children and young people.**
- A risk assessment must be undertaken as determined by the LA in full collaboration with providers, partners and families; to identify locally, who requires a school place at a point in time.
- The current legislative framework makes provision for parents/carers or a young person to decide whether the CYP should continue to attend school or college, subject to the above.

See: [Coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance](#)

Categories include:

- Those who following a risk assessment are identified as vulnerable and
- Those whose parents or carers are critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response (Key workers)

Local Definitions:

- i. **'A limited number of CYP'**: will be dependent upon the size and nature of the particular school and the availability of competent staff; but is expected to be no more than (*to be agreed with the LA e.g. 20% capacity*), on site for staff and pupils to remain safe. This threshold will be published on the LA and school's website, with the supporting rationale and will be subject to constant (weekly) review.
- ii. **A CYP is recognised as vulnerable if:**
 - They are subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan and attend a specialist school/setting (including those attending mainstream school ERPs) or receive band 6 funding and/or are receiving enhanced provision e.g. 1:1 support funded by the LA.
 - They have been identified as having complex social, emotional mental health difficulties (SEMH), that have led to an exclusion from school or are at risk of exclusion and consequently attend a specialist setting.
 - They have been identified as 'at risk' under child protection criteria: including LAC, CIN and those identified at risk of abuse, exploitation, gang affiliation etc. This includes all CYP with an allocated social worker or those who are receiving an early help offer.
 - They have an EHC Plan and are unable to have their basic additional needs met within their home because of the complexity of required intervention and resources, family resilience and/or environment
- iii. **Definition of Key workers**

A key worker includes all frontline service operatives working in the NHS, social care (adults and children), education, logistics operations, e.g. food warehouse workers, delivery drivers and supermarket operatives. The offer must as a minimum match the key worker's shift pattern commitment. If a parent is working from home, they do not fall into the definition of critical key

worker, otherwise if a parent/carer evidences that they meet this definition, they should be offered a place.

2. Current position:

Following lockdown on 23rd March 2020, all specialist settings across the City conducted risk assessments to identify those CYP who required a school placement based on the Government's initial advice. However, it is recognised that family situations are constantly changing as the lockdown extends, pressure on families may increase and the mental health and well-being of CYP may change. A process of ongoing review of risk assessments is therefore required, that reflects any changes in circumstance or further change to national guidance as the situation eases and schools move to securing full attendance. Consequently, current risk assessments must be reviewed in preparation for the commencement of the summer term on 27th April 2020. It is advised that the review should follow a common process to ensure consistency of decision making.

2.1 Assessing risks

Coventry LA is required to arrange a risk assessment of all CYP with an EHC plan, in consultation with settings, parents and the individual CYP, to determine **whether they would be safer at home than in a school setting**. The LA deems it appropriate for schools, colleges and the PRU (CELC) to continue to conduct the risk assessment, because they know each CYP well and have the closest relationship with the family, using the criteria set out in this document.

- **If the risk assessment concludes that a CYP with an EHC Plan would be safer at home, then the child should stay at home.**
- **If the risk assessment concludes that a CYP with an EHC plan will be as safe or safer at an education setting, then they should attend the education setting.**

2.2 Risk assessment template:

The LA advises that a common template should be used to arrive at a decision. The risk assessment can be completed using a single Excel spreadsheet. The assessment must cover the working environment, including maintenance of good hygiene, effective cleaning and the appropriate use of PPE. The risk assessment is aimed at determining if a CYP with SEND (including those with an EHC Plan) may benefit more from remaining at school or college than at home.

The risk assessment must cover the whole school population on an individual level, by checking (✓) against the following risks, which are presented in question format:

Key Questions:

1. Is there an enhanced potential health risk to the CYP from coronavirus (COVID-19), because of underlying health conditions?

Test: is there medical evidence/advice to support this conclusion e.g. confirmed by the school nurse/Paediatrician or other health specialist or documented in the EHC Plan.

2. Are there any provisions within the EHCP which cannot be delivered temporarily at home, that may cause harm to the child if not provided?

Test: What provisions are pivotal to a CYP's emotional health and physical well-being. Can with the agreement of the parent/carers, this provision be delivered differently to mitigate the risk.

3. Does the family have sufficient resilience and support, to ensure the CYP's health and care needs can be met safely all week-round, for multiple weeks?

Test: it is or is not sustainable for parents or carers to meet their child's needs full-time, for an extended period (e.g. parents can meet the CYP's personal care, mobility or other needs in evenings and weekends, but are unable to sustain this full-time).

- What are the concerns?
- What is the evidence?
- Can these concerns be mitigated?

4. Can you predict that there will be a significant potential impact to the CYP's emotional wellbeing, as a consequence of changes to the CYP's routine, which cannot be mitigated?

Test: the CYP is experiencing/demonstrating high levels of anxiety or stress. The CYP is articulating that they need to be in school and it is evident that they are unable to manage that emotion because of the nature of their disability. Incidences of self-harm, withdrawal, changes in sleep patterns, eating or 'meltdowns' should be included as indicators

5. Is there a predictable risk that the CYP will become involved in dangerous behaviour that may cause harm to their self and others?

Test: predicted outcomes of prolonged absence from school/college, include:

- Challenging or unsafe behaviours that are likely to trigger a required intervention from a social worker and/or the police;
- A significant risk of family or foster care placement breakdown;
- An inability to follow social distancing and good hygiene practices outside of the routine of the school/college setting, which puts the child or others at avoidable risk;
- Where the nature of a CYP's disability prevents or inhibits self-regulation and whose behaviours cannot be supported or managed by parents or carers at home, resulting in a risk to other siblings or family members

In these circumstances, the risk assessment might determine that the benefits to the child or young person from continuing to attend their educational setting are greater than being at home.

In summary, a risk assessment is likely to conclude that a CYP can **safely** be supported at home if:

- they do not need essential care or health provision that cannot be delivered at home
- the service/s they need can be transferred from their educational setting into their home
- it is evident that parents can meet their needs full-time
- they are able to follow hygiene and social distancing practices, when outside of their household
- because of their health vulnerabilities, they are safer in the household where stringent social distancing, protects/shields them from the external environment

In considering mitigating risk, the following should be considered:

Can services including equipment where appropriate be transferred to a CYP's home?

This might include:

- physiotherapy equipment
- sensory equipment
- online sessions with different types of therapists
- phone support for parents in delivering interventions
- in-person services, where necessary and safe

Ensuring the safety of teachers, support staff and other practitioners within an educational setting

Environmental risk assessment.

Adherence to the following environmental factors will significantly negate any risk to exposure and transmission of Covid 19 within an educational setting.

- Reducing the number of people in the building and keeping class or group sizes small, to enable safe working practices that observe social distancing wherever possible: [Implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings](#). This guidance covers advice on which staff members should and should not remain at work.
- Ensuring that anyone reporting Covid19 symptoms are not in attendance. See Public Health England [guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).
- Referring anyone that self-isolates because a household member is symptomatic for Covid19 testing, having secured the consent of household members to undertake the test and share the result
- Following Public Health England guidance on [Cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#) when working with children who are unable to observe social distancing including those with challenging behaviours e.g. uncontrollable spitting and require hands-on contact

Appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Overview: The scientific advice indicates that **educational staff (and broader childcare staff) do not require PPE**. This is needed by medical and care professionals providing specific close contact care, or procedures that create airborne risk, such as suctioning and physiotherapy, to people with [a possible or confirmed case of coronavirus COVID-19](#), taking into account that it can sometimes be difficult to identify before going into someone's home if they may be symptomatic.

PPE is only one element of safe and effective infection control, and appropriate environmental controls, hand and respiratory hygiene, the management of pupils and the information and training for staff are equally as important.

Recommendations:

- Strict hygiene procedures should be followed between interactions with different children or young people.
- It is recommended that all educational settings follow the Public Health England guidance on [cleaning for non-healthcare settings](#).
- Pupils and students in day education settings should not attend their education setting if they develop symptoms: they should isolate at home, as per the Public Health England [guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).
- Maintain high vigilance for any COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, in both pupils and staff. If someone develops symptoms of COVID-19 in an educational setting, follow specific guidance [here](#).
- Toys and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected regularly, using normal household detergents. **Soft or cuddly toys should not be shared between pupils or students.**
- All children, young people and staff should wash hands on arrival at their educational setting, and more regularly throughout the day.
- PPE in the form of hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes should be used when access to soap and water and general cleaning products is impractical

- Protective aprons and gloves should be worn as general protection against common infection in accordance with existing common hygiene practice, when implementing personal care procedures including for example: soiling, tube feeding, vomiting etc.
- Face masks are not generally required when delivering personal care but may be appropriate under specific circumstances where body fluids could come into contact with the face. If usual risk assessment for activities doesn't require a face mask, then they would not be needed at this time. The use of facemasks is only effective if fitted correctly. Please see the following for advice on fitting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GncQ_ed-9w&feature=youtu.be
- A very small supply of masks gloves and aprons will be provided to special schools to be used should a child become unwell with Covid 19 symptoms whilst on school premises