



ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL
BATH
G D S T

SEND – SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS RE COVID-19 [SIOBHAN SMILLIE] 2021-22

This policy is being kept in place in case the school must shut down because of an outbreak of Covid-19.

From September, the government announced plans for all students to return to school on a full-time basis.

The guidelines provided by the government can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

In relation to SEND provision it's important to note that, whilst schools/colleges have had to make changes to the way they deliver education to ensure the education environment is as safe as possible from the risk of coronavirus, our statutory duties for students and young people with SEND remain the same. This means using our 'best endeavours' to secure the special educational provision called for by the student's special educational need. We must have due regard of the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015.

Our school will be providing the following:

Students will be taught in 'bubbles' linked to their year or key stage, for example:

Nursery and Reception

Separate Year Group designated zones

Students with SEND will have access to the Learning Support department area and break out spaces within each year group zone. Interventions will be delivered following standard operating procedures, social distancing guidelines and relevant enhanced hygiene practices as outlined by the government and detailed in our risk assessment. Teachers and support staff will adhere closely to the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on safety in schools. This will include:

- Maintaining a distance of two metres from students at all times, as far as is possible given the needs of individual students with SEND
- Adopting ways of working that minimise face to face contact
- Ensuring that working spaces are well ventilated and cleaned regularly
- The option of wearing PPE such as a face mask or visor

In deploying TAs, the school will refer closely to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) resources to guide practice and ensure that information about students and lesson objectives is passed on to relevant staff to ensure they can work effectively.

Parents of students with SEND may continue to require our support at this time. Other professionals from external agencies may need to visit students with SEND face to face and this can be arranged but it is preferred to have virtual meetings wherever possible on Teams and Mrs Smillie is happy to arrange appointments and telephone calls as necessary.

What are the entitlements of students and young people with SEND when schools are closed due to a local lockdown to contain Coronavirus?

The expectation is that even where there are local restrictions, education and childcare will usually remain fully open to all (Tier 1) following the “CONTAIN” advice for managing COVID-19 outbreaks. However, where further restrictions are required (from local or national authorities) then implementation will be based on this system of tiers. Tier 2 demands the senior schools to adopt a rota system to limit on-site attendance, whilst the Prep School remains fully open. Tier 3 would require the Senior School to limit on-site attendance to just vulnerable children and young people, the children of critical workers and selected year groups, other settings remain fully open. Tier 4 goes further to limit attendance to just vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers at all settings. Any students classified as vulnerable children and young people will be allowed to access school in all these Tiers and we will take particular care so that students with SEND are allowed to attend as appropriate following consultation with the Learning Support Coordinator and Deputy Head (Academic). Where students cannot access lessons in school, continuity of education will occur through the provision of live lessons on Microsoft Teams (Guided Home Learning), including Learning Support Lessons. All students have access to a suitable device as part of our BYOD policy and support from our IT Support as required. If students need to self-isolate while the rest of their bubble continues to receive lessons in school, they will receive Mixed Model Learning, where they are invited to a Teams Session that will allow them to access the lessons taking place in school. For students with SEND the Learning Support department can offer additional support to children with SEND as we appreciate some students can struggle to work remotely.

The duty to secure the provision in the EHC plan under s.42 Children & Families Act 2014 continues under the tier system.

Do I have to send my child to school?

The guidance confirms that:

‘School and college attendance will again be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. For parents and carers of students of compulsory school age, this means that the legal duty on you as a parent to send your child to school regularly will apply.’

Parents’ duties under s.7 Education Act 1996 apply and this means that if your child is on the roll of a school, regular attendance is expected.

Guidance on school reopening states:

“Since shielding advice has paused nationally, except in a very few areas where the implementation of local restrictions is ongoing, all previously affected students should be able to return to school except where individual clinical advice not to do so has been provided.

Where a student is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity as set out in the action for all schools and local authorities section.

Where students are not able to attend school as parents and carers are following clinical or public health advice, for example, self-isolation or family isolation, the absence will not be penalised.”

However, it’s really important that parents do not make these decisions without support from their doctors – because the expectation is that even clinically extremely vulnerable students will be back at school.

The government revised its shielding guidance in August. It states that: *“The latest evidence indicates that the risk of serious illness for most students and young people is low. In the future, we expect fewer students and young people will be included on the shielded patient list”*. The expectation is that doctors will have discussed whether or not a child or young person should remain on the shielded list over the summer.

If you are concerned about your child attending school because of their or a member of their household’s health, we advise you to speak with your doctor and the setting to discuss whether or not it is clinically advisable for your child or young person to attend. If the clinical opinion is that they should not, we suggest you share written confirmation

from your doctor with the setting and request that they authorise the absence and provide home-learning until attendance can begin again.

If there is a local lockdown (which you will be able to check through your local authority's website and through the [government website](#)) then clinically extremely vulnerable people may be advised to shield. If this does happen, then a child or young person is on the shielded list should receive education at home through the school or college's programme. However, please note that not all local lockdowns require this – so you should check with the specific rules in your area.

Remember that, post 16, parents, carers and young people cannot be prosecuted for non-attendance but failure to regularly attend without agreement may mean that the young person does not receive home-schooling and it may affect their ability to stay on the course.

You can find information about when a setting should authorise absence as 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus' under new regulations [here](#).

Where a child or young person has an EHC plan, schools/colleges will not be under an obligation to secure the provision in the plan at home if the child or young person is not attending without authorisation (e.g., because their clinician says they cannot attend).

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

On 24th March 2020, the Secretary of State for Students, Vicky Ford, issued an open letter to students and young people with SEN), 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 SEN 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 students. It is, however, important that as many students as possible remain at home during this time in order to help reduce transmission rates.'

From 1 May to 25 September 2020 (inclusive) the Regulations which provide most of the statutory timescales for the EHC needs assessments and plans processes will be modified. This means that timescales in relation to processes for EHC assessments and plans are amended so that where it has not been reasonably practicable to meet a time limit, due to the circumstances arising because of COVID-19, the process can instead be completed 'as soon as is practicable thereafter'. These temporary changes to the law only affect various statutory timescales for processes, all of the other requirements of the EHC needs assessments and plan processes remain unchanged.

Despite these temporary changes, the Government advice still emphasises the ongoing importance of co-production with students and young people with SEND and their parents and the need for effective communication between local authorities and families. The guidance has been updated to reflect the fact that **from 25 September 2020** the relaxations cease to apply and "any case that is in progress after that date to which the coronavirus exception has previously been applied will become subject to the usual statutory timescales (such as 6 weeks for needs assessments, 6 weeks for the provision of advice or information and 20 weeks for issue of a final plan)".

In order to ensure that our vulnerable students are supported, we have consulted families with regards to whether their child needs to attend school. We have ensured that the expectations for work being done at home is understood and that students can access the work being set by school staff. As a school we are undertaking weekly check ins to ensure that students' outcomes are kept at the forefront and that their emotional needs are being met. Work set by

class/subject teachers takes in to account the needs of the students in their classes and is open-ended in nature to allow students to engage with and further their own learning.

We are offering 'blended learning' for students with SEND who are unable to attend school due to medical or mental health concerns as well as those students where restrictions for travel from certain countries are in place and other limitations due to COVID 19 precautions.

What about face coverings?

A change of policy with regards to face coverings in school was recently announced.

In summary, this applies to students in Y7 or above. The guidance states that face coverings are not recommended within the classroom. However, the guidance is clear that *"No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering"*.

There are exemptions from wearing a face covering. The guidance uses the example of students who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability, or if staff are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate.

Our policy about face coverings has been developed in accordance with the setting's duties under Equality Act 2010.

Please note that while students in primary school do not need to wear a face covering, we ask staff/visitors to wear them in indoor areas where social distancing is not possible (excluding classrooms).

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

If a student has an identified SEND and has been receiving learning support, the class/subject 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 students 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.

The school has several resources available on Firefly to help you support your child at home during this period.

How can I help my child cope with the changes?

We understand that this is situation with the Coronavirus has meant 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.

[Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#)

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

We are aware that the transition period for our students with SEND has been greatly affected by the current situation and we continue to work alongside our Prep and secondary colleagues to ensure that the information needed is shared. We understand that re-integration back into school and/or transition to a new class or school is going to be made even more challenging following the current situation. Furthermore, we know that children's reactions to returning to school will vary greatly and some children will need much more additional support.

As such, our aim is to plan carefully for transition and reintegration and work closely with you as parents/carers to help prepare your child and guide them through these transitions carefully.

Who can I contact?

We realize that these are difficult times for everyone. If you have any concerns or queries, please contact Siobhan Smillie (SENDSCO) on s.smillie@rhsb.gdst.net

Where can I find more information?

The Council for Disabled Students (CDC) has launched two new email inboxes aimed to answer questions, collate resources, and share information on COVID-19 and the impact on students and young people with SEND and disabilities.

Questions can be sent to the 'CDC questions' inbox, CDCquestions@ncb.org.uk. The CDC will collate Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and share them with the Department for Education and Ministers as appropriate, in order to publish an FAQs newsflash each Friday. To receive the FAQs newsflash please sign up to their [mailing list](#), selecting the 'CDC Digest' option.

The 'CDC resources' inbox, CDCresources@ncb.org.uk, is for parents, carers, sector professionals and practitioners to share resources, to support families of students and young people with SEND and practitioners across the disabled students' sector. The CDC will add these resources to their [COVID-19 Support and Guidance webpage](#). The webpage is kept under continuous review.

Additionally, the government has issued:

[advice](#) to help adults with caring responsibilities look after the mental health and wellbeing of students or young people, including those with additional needs and disabilities, during the COVID-19 outbreak. This guidance includes contact details for a number of organisations offering advice and information.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/education-and-childcare>

Other links:

[Open letter from Secretary of State for Students 24.03.2020](#)

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