



ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL BATH

G D S T

Special arrangements in relation to COVID-19 for students with SEND

Following the closure of schools from the 23rd March 2020, government guidelines stated:

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those with an EHC plan should be risk-assessed by their school in consultation with the local authority (LA) and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

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

All schools have been ordered to effectively close, retaining a skeleton staff 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 (EHC plan). The majority of children with SEND, who receive SEND Support at school but do not have an EHC plan, would be expected to stay home unless they have a social worker or a parent/carer who is a key worker.

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 dis-applied.

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 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 children. It is, however, important that as many children as possible remain at home during this time in order to help reduce transmission rates.'

In order to ensure that our vulnerable students 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 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.

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 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.

The school has a number of 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 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 have 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. As the summer term progresses we will begin to send out transition style material that will endeavour to support all our students at this transitional time.

Who can I contact?

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

Other links:

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

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