

Following the government's announcement that the UK is moving into a National Lockdown until mid-February, we will continue to put the needs of the most vulnerable young people in our region at the heart of our response. As such all the headteachers have agreed for a common approach across the authority.

Whilst there continues to be conflicting messages whether special schools and colleges are to remain open or not during the National Lockdown, this is causing great anxiety amongst our learners, their families and our staff; across our schools there are significant numbers of families who do not wish to send their children to school, and against this we also have a large number of our school staff who are unable to work face to face.

As we will not be able to offer full-time face to face learning for all learners we propose to move to a "blended learning" approach, with the majority of young people (as per the government guidance) remaining at home as this is where it is safer to be. This will enable schools to have those learners in school that need to be in, either because their parents are critical workers or they are deemed vulnerable and therefore safer to be in school or college.

This approach will enable each setting to put in place the planning to welcome back to school or college as many learners as possible, **when it is safe to do so**, alongside the preparations in secondary schools and college for rolling out the Coronavirus testing program.

Unlike the first lockdown in the summer term of 2020, schools and colleges are expected to offer learning that is commensurate with that which they would have received face to face, we are fully aware that this is different for our learners due to the specific needs they have, and that our primary focus will always be on supporting their mental health and wellbeing. However, there is a fundamental change in that unlike during the first lockdown, the statutory duty to provide the provision to meet a child's outcomes in their EHCP is still in place and therefore a blended learning approach should include provision and support for meeting our learners' EHCP outcomes. A blended approach supports working with our partner agencies, for example physio / occupational therapists, to ensure individuals continue to receive the support and programmes in EHCPs.

The blended learning offer will be:

- Full time in school / college for:
  - The children and young people who are most vulnerable (those who are not safe at home or a danger to themselves), and
  - Children and young people whose parents' work is critical to the Covid response (as per the latest government guidance)
- Part-time in school / college:
  - For some children and young people to support their access to learning activities
  - To support those children and young people and their families who may become vulnerable
- Full-time at home
  - For the majority of children and young people for whom it is safer to be at home

When teaching children remotely, the government expects schools and colleges to:

- set assignments so that learners have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects – *in our special schools and college our first priority will be meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of our learners, providing activities that are fun and engaging whilst meeting the needs of the child's / young person's EHCP and personal aspirations. For example, this could be activity packs including messy play, painting or a treasure hunt around the house, however this also could mean following online learning activities towards accreditation such as GCSE's*
- set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching learners would receive in school or college - *our learners access learning in different ways to mainstream schools, hence their need for*

*specialist provision and therefore there is a higher level of support required and therefore there will be no expectation for length of learning through the day*

- provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher / tutor or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos - *for those learners who can access learning remotely teaching may be via online resources, however for some; activity packs with clear instructions will be provided. School and college staff will communicate clearly with home in regards to the learning ensuring expectations are appropriate and clear*
- have systems for checking, at least weekly, whether learners are engaging with their work, and inform parents immediately where engagement is a concern - *school and college staff will maintain contact with home to ensure learning is appropriate and engaging to:*
  - gauge how well learners are progressing through the curriculum using questions and other suitable tasks, and provide feedback, at least weekly, using digitally facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate
  - enable staff to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding

