



Briefing for PCF – Friday 24th April 2020

As we enter the sixth week of lockdown, with limited access to schools for many of our children and young people, I'm very aware of how challenging this period is for many of you and your families. I'm very grateful for your patience and understanding while we continue to work with our local area partners to provide services and provisions to meet needs either in the home or, in a small number of cases, in schools.

We are awaiting imminent guidance from the government with regard to a range of processes, issues and challenges, including aspects of the Covid Act that pertain to SEND and we will share this with you as soon as we have any updates.

We are also expecting further detail around the initiative to make ICT equipment such as laptops available for children and young people to be able to access learning through technology, where this is appropriate. We are aware that many families have limited resource available for this purpose, which can be even more of an issue where parents are working from home. The identification of eligible children will be coordinated via the child's named social worker or if the child is in year 10 and is doing GCSEs and doesn't have access to equipment. In most cases this will be coordinated by the child's school.

Those eligible are:

- Children with a social worker
- Care leavers
- Disadvantaged year 10 pupils who are due to sit GCSEs next academic year.

We expect further information to be issued within the next week.

The local authority is in the process of collating information relating to all children and young people with EHCPs during the pandemic, such as where learning is taking place, how often contact is being made and where there may be any additional support required. We will be monitoring this feedback and ensuring that wherever concerns or requests are raised these are followed up promptly.

While we are not yet in a 'recovery phase' we are beginning to plan for this and for the return to our pre-Covid arrangements for learning, bearing in mind also that an imminent return to 'normal' as we knew it, is not either recommended or advisable. We will be working closely with the Parent Carer Forum as we look to the future, to ensure that the views of parents are considered in our planning.

We are fully aware of the importance of regular and thorough hand-washing. The latest guidance and video on hand washing can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

There is also an e-Bug project led by Public Health England and there is a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene. Resources are currently available for children and young people and can be used in various settings including schools and at home:

<https://e-bug.eu/>

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust have also developed a self-care kit for primary school aged children which is aimed at looking after their emotional health and wellbeing during this time. The kit covers lots of topics, including staying healthy, handling emotions, letting go of worries and staying connected, plus some fun things to do while at home. There are breathing exercises, advice on conversation starters, a postcard that can be filled in with a message to a family member or friend they are missing and much more. It can be downloaded from the Health for Kids: Grownups website: <https://www.healthforkids.co.uk/grownups/healthy-minds/download-our-health-for-kids-looking-after-yourself-kit/>

The BBC has also launched an education package across TV and online, featuring celebrities and teachers, helping to keep children learning at home and supporting parents.

BBC Bitesize can be accessed here:

<http://bbc.co.uk/bitesize>