



Dear Parents and Carers,

The following information summarises advice provided by the local authority Special Educational Needs Statutory Assessment Provision (SENSAP) Team on 24th March 2020.

*Following the announcement by Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Education Secretary Gavin Williamson schools will remain open to provide childcare and support for vulnerable groups which **may** include some children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and complex medical needs.*

If your child already has an EHC Plan

You should hear directly from your school regarding what offer of support and care is available to them throughout the school closure period.

We have to remember that if at all possible, children should stay at home. *For those pupils who are attending school during this period, it is important to note that the school are not under a duty to provide the specialist provision set out in the child's EHC plan and can only do what is reasonable at this critical time. Therefore, the school and settings may not be able to deliver what is in a child's EHC plan and they must consider if this also means that it would not be appropriate or safe for the child or young person to attend.*

With regards to Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, the SENSAP Team offer the following advice:

SENSAP, Learning Inclusion and our administrative teams will continue to work from home to support settings and families at this critical time. However, we are facing staff shortages but we will endeavour to respond as quickly as we can.

*In light of the government's social distancing directions, schools and other education providers may be wondering where they stand in relation to holding **Annual Reviews of EHC plans or other related meetings**. We are awaiting further advice from the DfE at this time regarding all statutory EHC processes and will update our guidance accordingly if clear directives are released. In the meantime, we have to deliver services pragmatically in order to meet our statutory obligations. Please use a reasonable endeavour approach whilst taking into account staff shortages. We hope the following guidance is useful when deciding how to proceed.*

Virtual meetings

Both of the annual review requirements can be satisfied by having a discussion via phone or email with your attendees (particularly if it's likely to be a small meeting). You can collate people's opinions, feedback and comments on your normal annual review meeting form and send this in to us as normal by uploading via Synergy Gateway or emailing SENSAP@leeds.gov.uk. Please make it clear on the paperwork that you've used a 'virtual approach' to convene the meeting.

Remote meetings – i.e. holding a meeting using accessibility technology

If you have the necessary facilities, e.g. Skype or Google Hangouts you could ask attendees to log or dial into a conference call meeting and continue as normal. Again, use the normal paperwork and send to us via Synergy Gateway or emailing SENSAP@leeds.gov.uk. Please make it clear on the paperwork that the meeting was convened via conference call.

Postponement – i.e. deferring to a later date

If no other options are available and it's not possible for the parents/carers and young people to access technology or if the parent/carer or young person particularly wishes that they



would like to have a face-to-face meeting then you can consider postponing until the schools and settings reopen. Please ensure that you log and save the parental request to postpone the meeting. Please make it clear on the paperwork that it was postponed due to the covid-19 pandemic and include parents' written request to postpone the meeting.

If your child has an EHC Plan which is due to be reviewed over the coming weeks, you will be contacted by Mrs Russell, SENCo, to discuss the most appropriate option, in line with the advice of Leeds SENSAP Team.

Further information from the SENSAP Team with regards to new EHC needs assessments has been outlined in the following statement.

Requests for new EHC needs assessments

We would urge you not to make a request for a new EHC needs assessment at this time. We would also ask that you have a discussion about your concerns with your SENCO or you can contact the SENSAP team directly on 0113 378 5256 and a Casework Officer will discuss this with you. The quality of any assessment undertaken during this period of enforced social distancing will be severely impacted and unless absolutely vital we would urge you to resubmit your request when schools are open and social distancing directives have been relaxed.

There are some pupil's for who this information will impact on our plans to submit an EHC Needs Assessment. Please be reassured, once school is open and running in its regular capacity, your child's EHC Needs Assessment will be submitted.

If you are awaiting a new, amended EHC Plan following a review

We are aware that there is a backlog of EHC Plans awaiting amendments and are working hard to try and reduce this backlog as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring they are of a good standard and compliant with the relevant legislation.

Should your child be waiting an amended EHC Plan, please be assured the SENSAP Team are working hard to complete the necessary paperwork. Once the amended, finalised plans are ready, a copy should be sent to you from the SENSAP team. School will also receive notification from the SENSAP Team and a final copy will be made accessible to school.

We are aware that the information provided may raise questions. Should you wish to discuss any issues, please feel free to contact Mrs Russell on office@hwood.org.uk. Please include a contact telephone number in your email to assist in providing a response.

Kind Regards,

Mrs Russell