

## ANNEX

### COVID-19 School closure arrangements for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

#### **PURPOSE**

This is an Annex to the SEND Information Report, setting out the arrangements in place to support our children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during the COVID-19 related partial School closure starting from 20th March 2020 and School return September 2020.

Date written	April 2020 and revised as new guidance published
Written by	V Adams
Next review	As required
Summary or changes	New annex, published for Covid 19 crisis

#### **1. Context**

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for Schools to continue to provide care for a limited number of children – those who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response – who absolutely need to attend and who cannot be safely cared for at home. ‘Vulnerable children’ includes those supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs (including those on child in need and child protection plans), ‘looked after’ children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

This addendum of the Cherry Orchard Primary Academy SEND Information Report contains details of our individual arrangements and changes to our usual mode of working in the following areas:

- Vulnerable children and eligibility
- Safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing
- Arrangements for consulting parents of, and young people with, SEND
- Arrangements for assessing and reviewing children’s progress
- Arrangements for supporting children in moving between phases of education
- Transition periods within School
- The approach to teaching children with SEND
- Support for emotional and social development
- Working alongside other professionals

Please note: This annex should be read in tandem with the Cherry Orchard Primary Academy COVID-19 Safeguarding Policy Annex.

#### **2. Key Contacts**

Role	Name	Contact
Principal/DSL	Mrs Julie Forsythe	office@cherryorchardprimary.org.uk
SENCO	Mrs V Adams	SENCO@cherryorchardprimary.org.uk
FLO	Mrs S Williams	office@cherryorchardprimary.org.uk

### **3. Vulnerable children and eligibility**

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

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a School 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.

These risk assessments will consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This will be on an individual basis and with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered
- the availability of appropriately trained staff (School will liaise with the local authority if a place is needed for an eligible child, but the School is unable to provide the specialist staffing for it)

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans, with local authorities needing instead to apply 'reasonable endeavours' to support these children and their families.

### **4. Safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing**

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy continues in its commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its children during this period of general School closure.

Where children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in School, Cherry Orchard Primary Academy will continue to ensure a safe space for these children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher/ Deputy Head will work alongside the SENCO to ensure that appropriate staff, facilities and provision are available to secure a safe, appropriate and positive placement for those children. The support appropriate to each child in this circumstance will be recorded and reviewed on an individual basis. Any updates to a child's situation will be updated on their risk assessments which are then shared with the Local Authority and the Senior Management Team.

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Having worked with parents and other professionals to decide whether children with EHC plans will be attending School, Cherry Orchard Primary Academy will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not attend for two consecutive days.

Where children with EHC plans do not take up a place in School and are cared for at home, an individual risk assessment will be completed and a communication plan will be put in place for the child. This will be recorded on risk assessments for each pupil which are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Authority.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. Cherry Orchard Primary Academy, its Head Teacher (DSL) and SENCO will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan for children with EHC plans.

This plan must be reviewed weekly and where concerns arise, the Head Teacher/DSL and SENCO will consider any referrals as appropriate.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, who have not been offered a place in School, contact details for key staff will always be available on the School website. This will ensure that parents of children with SEND will always have a way of contacting and communicating with School staff where needed.

The School will share safeguarding messages on its website.

## **5. Arrangements for consulting parents of, and children with, SEND**

Working in partnership with children with SEND and their parents continues to be central to Cherry Orchard Primary Academy's policies and practice.

The views of parents and children will be considered in determining whether children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in School, as detailed in Section 2 of this addendum. For children with EHC plans who are being cared for at home, their individual risk assessments will include communication plans to ensure that regular contact is maintained with key School staff. These communications may include: individual expectations for home learning, discussions around appropriate learning activities, adaptations to learning resources/activities and discussions of strategies for supporting children at home. In addition, all families were hand delivered homework packs with several weeks' worth of work along with resources to support the change of timetable and routine, sensory activities and key websites personalised to the needs of each child.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, signposts will be included within year group home learning to support them in accessing appropriate learning activities. School

staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when setting accessible home learning for children with SEND.

The School website will include contact details so that, should parents of children with SEND need to contact a member of School staff for additional support or guidance for home learning, they can do so.

Where statutory processes relating to SEND are in action, the School will continue to maintain communication with parents of, and children with, SEND so that their views are actively sought, considered and promoted.

## **6. Arrangements for assessing and reviewing children's progress**

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy recognises that assessments and reviews of children's progress will continue to be necessary for some purposes during this period of School closure, mainly for the purpose of statutory assessment and review for new or existing EHC plans and for other assessments being completed by external professionals, for example community paediatricians.

Where this is needed, key School staff will maintain communication with parents and relevant professionals to share, with necessary consents, the most current assessment information and professional observations that the School holds.

Where children's EHC plans are due for review within the period of School closure, the School will discuss arrangements with parents, children, the Local Authority and professionals involved in the plan to decide whether arrangements for a 'remote review' should be made, or whether reviews should be postponed until it is possible to meet with all parties involved in the plan. The SENCO will make the necessary arrangements following this decision.

## **7. Arrangements for supporting children in moving between phases of education**

For children due to move between phases of education at the end of this academic year, Cherry Orchard Primary Academy will continue to make contact with the new settings to share necessary information to make children's transitions as smooth as possible. The SENCO will make contact with SENCOs in the new settings to share information on SEND needs. Where children with SEND would benefit from additional transition visits, every effort will be made to facilitate these where possible within DfE, PHE and government guidance.

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy's approach to supporting children with transition will continue to be reviewed in line with all available DfE and government guidance on School closure.

## **8. Transitions within School**

For children transferring between classes the SENCO will continue to inform the new class teacher of pupil's needs using electronic folders and meetings where appropriate. Additional transition work will be used where necessary to relieve any worries and doubt. New class social stories can be sent home to support with the changes where possible.

Any consultations that the School receives in during this time will be responded to within the designated timescales unless illness prevents this.

## **9. The approach to teaching children with SEND**

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy recognises that children with SEND need access to home learning resources and activities which take account of their strengths and needs.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, signposts will be included within year group home learning to support them in accessing appropriate learning activities. School staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when setting accessible home learning for children with SEND.

Communication plans will be in place for any children with EHC plans being cared for at home to ensure that regular contact is maintained for discussion and setting of individual, appropriate learning activities, strategies and resources. In addition, all families were hand delivered homework packs with several weeks' worth of work along with resources to support the change of timetable and routine, sensory activities and key websites personalised to the needs of each child.

The School website will include contact details so that, should parents of children with SEND need to contact a member of School staff for additional support or guidance for home learning, they can do so.

## **10. Support for social and emotional development**

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy School understands that children's social and emotional development is particularly at risk within the current national climate and period of School closure.

Individual risk assessments for children with EHC plans will consider children's social and emotional development and will ensure that communication plans are in place to enable at least fortnightly review. Regular contact between School staff and parents/children will be central to identifying when additional support may be needed. Where concerns are raised or are apparent within these communications, the child's risk assessment will be reviewed by key School staff and appropriate action and onward referrals considered.

For all parents, key contact details are available on the School's website so that they are always able to reach School staff for support if needed.

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy will signpost parents to other professionals who may be able to support them and their children at this time, particularly the LAT Educational Psychology Service. The School will also share parent and child-friendly leaflets with links to mental health and wellbeing support strategies and agencies.

## **11. Working alongside other professionals**

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy will continue to maintain contact with other professionals during this period of School closure. This will particularly include liaison with the Specialist Teaching and Educational Psychology Service within the Local Authority. This service will be sharing resources which may be of use to parents and professionals during this time, and we will be adding links to these to our School website.

The SENCO holds contact details for external professionals already working with children with SEND including health and social care staff and will maintain both planned contacts and referrals of arising need. Contact details for the SENCO and key School staff are available via the School website should professionals need to make contact.

Cherry Orchard Primary Academy will signpost parents to appropriate external professionals as needed and will continue to fulfil authorised requests for information for assessment or review purposes.

## **12. Return to School**

As stated in the government guidance 28.08.2020

‘It is our plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to School full-time from the beginning of the autumn term.’

With this in mind Cherry Orchard Primary Academy have made the following considerations to the advice given in the current setting.

- Appropriate risk assessments have been completed to protect pupils and staff from Coronavirus (Covid19) within the school.
- Measures are in place to ensure prevention and containment.
- Groups: year group bubbles will be in place and children will not join with other year groups. This will be maintained by staggered starts to the day, staggered play and lunchtimes and staggered leaving times. However, *‘where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults. Again, we recognise that this is not likely to be possible with younger children and teachers in primary schools can still work across the groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer.’*
- *‘Some pupils with SEND (whether with educational, health and care plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that this will involve, so teachers and special educational needs coordinators should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories.’* At Cherry Orchard Primary Academy specific support for these children has been sent to parents and children, as well as placed on the academy website.
- *‘Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual.’* Cherry Orchard Primary Academy have considered how this can be planned safely and support/intervention will continue to be delivered within the year group bubbles by both class teachers and teaching assistants working in that bubble. For those children with an EHCP needing to access specialist support from the SRP, they will still be able to work both within their year group bubbles and within the SRP bubble, in order that they can meet their outcomes and provision, as specified on the EHCP. Children will be monitored to ensure prevention measures are maintained.
- Behaviour – Please see the annex to the academy behaviour policy. However, *‘many children and young people will have found lockdown exceptionally difficult socially and emotionally. Settings should consider any challenging behaviours or social or emotional*

*challenges arising as a response to the lockdown (following discussion with the parents or young person) and offer additional support and phased returns where needed, as a reasonable adjustment to support a disable child to return successfully to school.'*

- Catch up support – whilst the government have announced a catch-up programme, schools are still waiting for further confirmation of what this will look like in each setting. Principals will decide how the money is spent but will refer to the Education Endowment Foundation guidance that has been published and to the specialists within their academy.
- A support pack for parents is available on the website to support return to school for all children.

**Review:**

This addendum to the SEND Information Report will be reviewed in light of new government guidance as and when it is published.