



Bolton Parent Carers & Bolton Information Advisory Service

Working together for Bolton's SEND families

Joint Bulletin 10 - 22nd May

What has happened this week?

Its been a 'samey' kind of week with regard to the government guidelines... Not a great deal has changed at all really. But you will no doubt have seen that the media has been alight with differing opinions on schools reopening. Some councils have gone as far as to tell families in their area, that they are **not** following government advice on the 1st June deadline. Bolton Council has its own position on this, as you will see below. As well as that, we have **very important information for all parents, carers and young people who have an EHC plan**. Please read on for that too. As always, we have some other really useful information from the EP service, StartWell, and other agencies and services in Bolton- not forgetting our own offer to you. Whether its sunshine reading, bedtime reading, or dipping in and out reading, there's some really important stuff in this weeks edition. We will be back after the half term break.

Bolton Bolton's position on schools reopening

Council We told you last week, in some detail, what the government were proposing with regard to schools being prepared to reopen from 1st June for more pupils. Although that information hasn't changed, Bolton, like many other councils, have been working on what is right for their own area, and their own residents. All councils across the country are facing the same problems... Parents and carers in a lot of cases, not wanting to send children back yet. Teachers unions concerned about the safety of teaching staff. There has been a lot to be considered about how this is going to work, and most importantly, work safely. Last week, our Director of People, Bernie Brown, wrote to every school in the borough. This letter outlined the position of Bolton Council in relation to schools opening to more pupils. The letter highlighted;

- June 1st is an **indicative date, not a definite date**- this could mean your child's school may open for more children later than 1st June.
- Health and safety, of all on site, should be at the top of the priority list- this means that planning, and robust risk assessments need to take place before the wider opening, and, that when children do return, both staff and children are as safe as possible. The council have outlined to schools the support they will provide to support them to do this.



- The decision when and how to open, will be left to each individual schools head teacher and governing body- this could mean your child's school choose not to open to more children on 1st June, but they should be working towards opening as soon as they safely can.
- That head teachers are in wider discussions with the council, unions, and their governing bodies- meaning any decision your school has taken, is not taken lightly, and is felt to be best for that school and their children.
- If the child lives with someone who is 'shielding', they should not be returning to school yet.
- No parents or carers will be challenged or fined, about non attendance at this time.
- All schools, irrespective of the wider opening decision, will still be expected to take those children already attending, either because they are the children of keyworkers, or they are considered to be 'vulnerable'.

Most importantly for parent carers, schools should be in touch with their parents to discuss the possible reopening for more children on 1st June. They will need to see how many children are looking to take up a place, as well as be communicating their decision to you.

Your first port of call to discuss your child's attendance/ what the plans are for the school, should be with your child's school directly. For any wider issues about this, you can speak to Bolton IAS.

We 'd like to take this time to remind you of last weeks bulletin and our message about respecting each others very personal decisions when deciding whether their children will return to school or not. All our children are different and have very different needs, which we are sure you all understand.

Bolton How Bolton are supporting children who have EHC plans

Council We told you a couple of weeks ago, about the changes to SEND law which came into effect at the start of this month. If you would like to read this again [click here for the bulletin](#). This included the temporary relaxing of the duties, and how LA's are expected to work with parents and carers, as well as young people themselves, about their EHC plan and provision—this is whether they are in school at the current time or not.

The LA are now writing to **all** parents, carers and young people who have an EHC plan, about how their EHC plans are affected by this new 'reasonable endeavours' duty, to secure the educational and health based provision within them.

The letter invites you to discuss the provision being made (or not being made), for your children at this current time, especially if the lack of provision is having a significant impact on them. The SEND assessment team will work with you to address these issues.

It is very important you look out for this letter arriving soon.

The letters will be addressed to the young person directly if they are in year 12 or above, or to 'Parent or Carer', if they are year 11 or below. These will be posted within the next week.

There are contact details on the letter for you to contact the SEND team for a discussion.

Bolton Council Bolton Council Educational Psychology Service Helpline

The Educational Psychology service helpline continues to operate throughout May half term. You can call them to discuss, for example, any concerns or questions you may have about your child and their education, or any matters regarding supporting them, meeting need, helping with emotional health in children..

The helpline numbers for half term are;

Monday 9am until 12.30pm- 07768352728

Wednesday 1pm until 5pm- 07919564919

Friday 9am until 12.30pm- 07766780373

We also have this week's newsletter from Bolton's educational psychology team for you at the end of the bulletin. This week's topic is returning to school.



Other government updates

Everyone in the United Kingdom with symptoms now eligible for coronavirus tests

Everyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms can now get a test.

The government has announced that anyone with symptoms of coronavirus is now eligible to book a test. The expansion in testing eligibility comes after all 4 UK Chief Medical Officers confirmed that anosmia has been added as a symptom of coronavirus (COVID-19). Anosmia is the loss of or a change in your normal sense of smell, and it can also affect your sense of taste.

This means people should self-isolate immediately if they have:

- a new, continuous cough
- a high temperature, or
- a loss of or change in their normal sense of smell or taste

All members of their household must also self-isolate according to current guidelines, unless the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result.

The tests are not suitable for children under 5 years old.

Latest travel advice

The government's latest advice is that you should stay at home as much as possible, work from home if you can, stay local and only travel if it is necessary.

- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Only travel if necessary – work from home and stay local if you can.
- Protect public transport for those with no alternative – do not use it unless you have to.
- If you need to travel, walk, cycle or drive if you can.
- If you have to use public transport wear a face covering, keep your distance from other passengers, clean your hands frequently and use contactless payment.



Reminder on support available to you now



Both the IAS and BPC websites have a wide range of resources and information to keep you up to date and busy throughout this time. You can find us at www.iasbolton.com and www.boltonparents.org.uk

IAS and BPC are holding coffee mornings by Zoom. Each one is usually hosted by Frankie from Bolton Parent Carers. These are every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 11.30am until 12.30pm. For more information visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/join-in

Our IAS 'natter and listen' service is still here for anyone who needs it- whether you just need some adult conversation, need to let off some steam, want some advice or reassurance, or just someone to call a friend to talk about your day, we are here. Simply text 07467943495 and we will arrange a call back for you whenever you want to talk. Cheryl, Nan, Mike and Karen are happy to help wherever we can.

The usual IAS service- although we are all working from home, we can continue to offer telephone and email support, advice and guidance for anything SEND related- whether you've got EHC forms to complete, want to know about anything education, health or social care related, or to chat through your concerns for when the schools go back, get in touch using our 24 hour email address- iasoutofhours@outlook.com and we will call you back.



Your experiences...

Our questionnaire remains open to find out how families are managing, We are very interested to hear your experiences and your concerns going forward. We will use your responses from this questionnaire when we are in discussion with SEND leaders locally. Please do take a few minutes to tell us your views.... [Access the questionnaire by clicking here](#)



GOV.UK WhatsApp Coronavirus Information Service

The WhatsApp Service is an automated 'chatbot' service which allow the British public to get answers to the most common questions about coronavirus direct from government. It can help you navigate all the information that is out there and know which is official.

To use the service, members of the public simply add 07860 064422 to their contacts and send a WhatsApp message saying "Hi." you will then be sent a menu of options to receive info on a variety of topics. This service ensures you can access the most up to date guidance.

Coronavirus advice in other languages

If you require guidance in another language, independent humanitarian movement Doctors of the World has produced advice in 35 different languages. www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/

SEN Support

Is your child starting primary school in September?

Do they have special educational needs, but you don't have an EHC plan?

We are setting dates to hold two **virtual workshops** on the legal framework SEN support, for children starting school without an EHC plan. This could be because your child doesn't require a Plan, but may need extra help, or maybe a plan is still being assessed. There will be a daytime and evening session. As always, they are free to all, and delivered by Cheryl from IAS and Nan from BPC. To register your interest, please visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/sen-support-webinar/ and then we will notify you when we have dates and how to book.



When you join us for a virtual workshop you can watch on a PC, tablet or smartphone. You can see us, hear us and see our presentation—but we can't see or hear you! So you can relax and not worry about being on screen or the kids making noise! You can ask us questions as we go along through a chat function on the webinar.



Resource to support children returning to school. This isn't a SEND resource, but is a nice picture story to help children understand returning to school. Visit www.elsa-support.co.uk/ to download the resource.



Online Coffee Morning

Bolton Parent Carers hosts an online coffee morning every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we are online between 11:30am and 12:30pm. They are hosted by our coordinator Frankie, who is always there to welcome parents! We use Zoom, it's pretty easy once you've tried it once—you can use a phone, tablet or computer to join. Next Monday we'll be taking a break for the Spring bank holiday.

Following feedback, next week we are going to have an afternoon session on Tuesday 26th May, we'll be online between 2pm and 3pm. So why not join us then!

Visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/join-in/ for links and information.

facebook

If you haven't done so, check out the facebook pages for [Ladywood](#), [Greenfold](#), [Rumworth](#) and [Lifebridge](#) they are being regularly updated for families to follow with updates from staff to the children and lots more, including activities.

Bolton Speech & Language staff are signing along to books on the [Bolton AHP's](#) Facebook page too.



The Start Well EY SEND team have worked with a range of partners and collated some resources which might help parents and carers at home during the COVID- 19 pandemic with young children who have SEND. We hope that they can be used to support and offer ideas at this very challenging time. Special thanks to the team at Green Fold Special School (Part of the Orchards Federation) for their contribution to this project.

This weeks topic is Internet Safety

Click on the links for the resources...

Keeping Under 5's Safe online – Childnet have produced some FAQ's to help keep your youngest children safe on the internet. Includes lots of useful links.

Online resources for parents and carers – Childnet International have collated all the best key advice, reviews and tools to help keep your youngest children safe on the internet.

Top Tips for Internet safety – Naomi Passmore is a teacher at Green Fold Special School (Part of The Orchards Federation) these are her 'top tips' for parents of children with SEND. Includes how to use 'Guided Access' on an iPad – preventing a child from swiping away from a selected app'.

Top Tips for iPad – A guide developed by UK safer Internet Centre to help parents to support children to use their iPad/tablet safely.

For more parent support resources including FAQ's, Home Learning, Internet Safety, Physical, Exploring the Senses and Strategies, click here to visit the Start Well website.



Greater Manchester Bereavement Service

If you've been bereaved and need support or advice, you can contact the Greater Manchester Bereavement Service <https://greater-manchester-bereavement-service.org.uk/>



We will be back in touch after the half term break. In the meantime, please do make use of the joint IAS/BPC support package mentioned. All past copies of these bulletins can be found [online](#)

Stay well and look after each other, stay home wherever you can.

Cheryl and the IAS team, and Nan and BPC



Bolton Educational Psychology Service

Council Newsletter – 22nd May 2020

Preparing for a return to school

The transition back to school is important for pupils, staff and parents. We need to be mindful that each adult and child will have had a different experience of lockdown. Children's return to classrooms and the social environment of school is going to be a process that requires careful planning. *Research has identified five important things that help people to recover following a difficult experience such as the Coronavirus pandemic.* This newsletter will focus on each of these areas and share ideas of how you can support children in managing this transition, developing new coping mechanisms and building their levels of resilience.

Going back to school and work

Transitioning back to school or work is not just about the first day we go back, it is about all the other days that follow, until being back becomes very familiar and we feel safe, comfortable and confident about being there. Accepting and managing going back to school can take some people longer than others. During the transition back to school or work, it is normal for people to experience the following: **Feelings of loss** **Anxiety** **Lack of self-esteem and confidence**

Behaviour changes

It is not unusual for an individual's behaviour to change during times of transition. Changes in behaviour might include, feeling anxious, seeking more attention, asking lots of questions, becoming more 'clingy', being more tearful, being overly fussy, easily frustrated or short tempered, being overly giddy or excitable, laughing inappropriately, sleep disturbance, loss of appetite or overeating. Usually, these changes in behaviour will be temporary and behaviour will settle down after a short period.

1. **Feeling safe:** supporting children to feel physically and emotionally safe is important for learning. School needs to feel as predictable as possible after experiencing something that has felt so unpredictable.

How can parents help?

- Help your child to understand how school may look different.
- Discuss and role play with your child how they can keep themselves and others safe, e.g. washing hands, social distancing.
- Talk about any questions or concerns they have, e.g. Will the school be clean? Will I get ill?
- Discuss that they have been ill before, e.g. with a bad cold – and that they got better, talk about what they can do to help keep the school clean, e.g. putting rubbish in the bin.



How can teachers help?

- Share information on your school's website, perhaps videos or photos to show what school may look like.
- Communicate clearly new rules and routines to parents and children.
- The use of warm and welcoming language – "I've missed seeing your smile"; "When I saw... it reminded me of you".
- Ensure pastoral support is available throughout the day and that safe spaces are identified for children to talk about their experiences.
- Avoid directly questioning children on what work they may or may not have completed at home. Children who have completed work at home could be privately praised.

2.

Feeling calm: it is natural for adults and children to sometimes feel worried or anxious, particularly in the current context. Children may well feel anxious about being in the same room as others or confused about why they are no longer allowed to sit on their friend's table.

How can parents help?

- Listen to and validate your child's emotions, e.g. "I know you miss seeing your friends. I would feel sad if I couldn't sit next to my friend too".
- Describe your own feelings and model how you manage them, e.g. "I am feeling frustrated that I can't go to Grandma's house. I am going to do something I enjoy like reading a book".
- Read stories about emotions, discuss emotions of characters in books or films such as Disney's 'Inside Out'.
- One approach for feelings of worry is mindfulness. The ability to be fully present in the moment helps regulate emotions and focus attention. You could take turns with your child to name things they can see, hear, feel, taste and touch. Further information is available [here](#).

How can teachers help?

- Provide opportunities for children to talk about their feelings and emotions throughout the curriculum e.g. circle time or role play.
- Identify designated places for children to engage in relaxation and calming activities.
- Consider scheduling regular sensory resets throughout the day (jumping jacks, skipping, running or wall / chair pushes).
- The use of well-being rating scales and daily emotion 'check ins' where children can place their name on a chart to show how they are feeling.



3.

Feeling in control: it is important that children and adults feel that they have some control over what is happening to them. They need to believe that their actions can make a difference to how things work out and how this can make their lives happy, safe and successful .

How can parents help?

- Let children help prepare for a return to school, e.g. getting uniform ready, choosing each item, preparing their school bag (perhaps with a family picture they feel is special).
- Write lists for menus for packed lunches or discuss what they will choose from the school canteen.
- Together create games they can play with social distancing.
- Make an 'I'm good at...tree', add a leaf every day that shows something they can do (being a good friend, being tidy).
- Talk about changes in bedtime routine – let them have some reasonable choice, e.g. 8.15 or 8.30. Start doing this several days before school starts.

How can teachers help?

- Give children choices where possible – do you want to do this first or second, do you want to do this activity or that.
- Give them small responsibilities, areas they are in charge of (their desk) with task sheets.
- Ask children to contribute to a new set of rules for the classroom and playground.
- Draw posters to remind people about the new rules. Ask children to design a new 'Mr Man or Miss Handwasher', try to find examples of Mr Men books as stimulus.
- Write silly poems as groups to add some fun, ask children to provide the titles.

Bolton Council Bolton Educational Psychology Service

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- 4. Feeling connected:** it is important that adults and children feel they belong and have a social network that can support them. This may be difficult for some children and staff on a return to school as social distancing measures mean that they are likely to be in a smaller group of children with staff, and maybe children, who they are not as familiar with.

How can parents help?

- Complete as many of the activities/as much of the learning provided by school with your child at home as possible.
- A familiar object could help young children struggling with the idea of returning to school to feel connected and held in mind e.g. a photograph, a toy, a key ring or a scented tissue.
- Regular conversations with your child sharing what they have been doing whilst at school and discussing how they feel.
- Communicate and share any difficulties your child may have experienced during lockdown with their school (e.g. emotional, bereavement, illness).

How can teachers help?

- Give priority to re-establishing relationships rather than access to an academic curriculum on return to school.
- Ensure any missed events are recognised and celebrated together e.g. missed birthdays and Easter/Ramadan etc.
- Learn a new skill together. You could focus on skills needed now e.g. handwashing, social distancing..
- Consider a group rather than an individual reward system.
- Talk about acts of daily kindness, show and add each kindness to a 'kindness tree' that will keep growing leaves.
- Consider a 'My family at home' project, use circle times to talk about home, special people, pets, draw pictures, ask parents to send in photos.

- 5. Feeling hopeful:** people talk about 'things going back to normal'. While this may seem difficult at the moment, it is important that adults and children feel that it will get better in the future. Feeling hopeful is something we can work on by being mindful, having a growth mindset and developing resilience.

How can parents help?

- Write or draw a list of 'I am good at', e.g. getting dressed after PE, handwriting, colouring pictures, writing stories.
- The power of the word 'yet', e.g. "You can't tie your shoelaces yet, but you will get there"
- Find old school books, pictures and talk about the skills they can see in the work.
- Write a list of positive things teachers and friends have said about them.



How can teachers help?

- Focus more on emotional well-being, have some fun activities –. group snakes and ladders on the smart board.
- Focus on less academically challenging ways to learn and record work until children are more secure and resilient, focus on individual strengths e.g. drawing, writing, collage work.
- Acknowledge pupil strengths and creativity during the lockdown by asking parents for photos and videos of rainbow paintings, Joe Wicks workouts, etc.

Educational Psychology Service
Schools ICT
Smithills Dean Road
Bolton
BL1 6JT
Telephone: 01204 338060

The Educational Psychology Service can help with additional information, references and suggestions. Please contact our service or speak to your school SENCo.

www.bolton.gov.uk boltoncouncil boltoncouncil

Bolton Council

Our values are who we are...
Accountable, determined, making a difference, honest and respectful. We work together.



I LOVE BOLTON BECAUSE...



Need support?

Our COVID 19 community response line is now open offering vital help to people who need food or essential items

01204 337221

8.30am – 5.30pm Mon – Fri and Sat 9am – 1.30pm