



Bolton Parent Carers & Bolton Information Advisory Service

Working together for Bolton's SEND families

Joint Bulletin 15 - 3rd July 2020

What has happened this week?

Can you believe this is week 15 of doing these bulletins. Three and a half months on and the information and advice continues to change all the time. Some things are clearer than others too!

This week has seen quite a lot of guidance come out, with a significant piece about schools in September. We have tried to digest it all for you and give you the nuts and bolts of what you need to know. We have our usual offering of information, and of course, support available to you if you need it. Enjoy!



Breaking! Government announce plans for returning to school in September

We knew it was due this week, but as always, its come late in the week and hasn't left us much time to go through it in scrutiny as we usually like to. What we have done, is collate the main points below, about the stuff we know you've been wanting to know, and next week, we will bring you a detailed breakdown of all the points. Local Authorities will be putting plans in place for their local areas too, so we expect to be in a better position next week to give you the most accurate and up to date information.

What we do know

Some things are quite apparent from looking at the guidance. These are:

- That **all** educational settings, including special schools and alternative providers, must reopen for all pupils at the start of the Autumn term after summer
- That it will be mandatory to send your child back to school- only very few pupils will be exempt from this rule. As shielding advice is no longer in place for children and adults from 1st August, this will only apply to children who are following public health advice, such as isolating for possible covid infection, and therefore, the overarching message is all children need to be back in school from September.
- School transport, including special school transport, is to be available. Social distancing on transport that is going directly to the school and is **just** for the use of the pupils (meaning it is NOT public transport), wont require social distancing as it is the same groups of children. Children who use public transport to get to school will need to socially distance on vehicles and wear a mask, unless they are unable to for medical or sensory reasons.
- Between Autumn 2020 and summer 2021, there will be a priority on filling in the lost learning gaps for children.



- Children will be assessed by their schools to see what the gaps are and plan for these appropriately. Assessment will include things like quizzes, observing pupils in class, talking to pupils to assess understanding and scrutiny of pupils' work
- Staff across the education sector will be supported to understand the implications covid has had on children's emotional and social needs, and should be planning to meet those needs in their schools come September
- All SEN provision, both at SEN support and EHC level, will be delivered as it normally would. This includes services and professionals needed to deliver that support, being allowed into schools to deliver it
- The government is committed to removing the relaxation on duties around EHC plan provision. These relaxations are currently renewed to cover the month of July, however unless the situation changes duties will return to normal in August.

As we say, there is a lot more detail on curriculum, arrangements in classrooms, starts and finish times, uniform and behaviour, for example, that we will bring you more information on next week.

Shielding advice changes



On 22nd June, Matt Hancock sent a letter to all those who had been previously told to shield, advised that the government is now relaxing these measures over two phases. These phases take place from 6th July, and then 1st August.

From 6th July, people previously told to shield will be able to meet a group of up to 6 people outside whilst still being socially distanced. They do not need to socially distance from members of their own household anymore. They can also form a support bubble with one other household, in line with the guidance on support bubbles previously issued.

However, from 1st August, people who have been shielding will be able to;

Return to work if they are an adult

Return to school if they are a child

Go food shopping, to a place of worship, and go out to exercise

All these things must be done by following very strict social distancing, excellent hygiene, and remain cautious. Further advice is expected for the shielded group prior to the two phase dates mentioned here.



The Ombudsman are taking new cases

On 29th June, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman resumed usual service, accepting new cases and continuing to deal with the ongoing ones. If you had been waiting to submit a complaint to them you can now do so, and even if its over the timescales, they are still accepting if it was due to Covid.

Bolton Council Bolton Council Educational Psychology Service Helpline

The Educational Psychology service helpline continues to operate. 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..

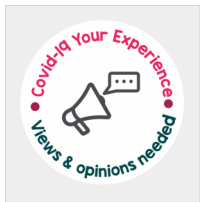
The numbers for the helpline for the next 2 weeks, starting Monday 6th July, are as follows:

Monday 9.00am - 12.30pm – 07766 780373

Wednesday 1.00pm – 5.00pm - 07919 564919

Friday 9.00am – 12.30pm – 07768 352728

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 summer holiday activities.



Your experiences of lockdown and more

Our questionnaire is open until Saturday 4th July at 5pm - we need your voices to ensure that local leaders are kept informed of your experiences during the covid pandemic. We are very aware that as restrictions ease, with schools not opening til

September and restrictions on supported activities and social care still in place, for SEND families little is changing, and we want to make sure that local leaders understand this.

We've added the opportunity too to be in with a chance of winning one of 3 x £30 gift cards - the questionnaire will be open until 5pm on 4th July and after that we will draw at random 3 entrants to win a gift card.

To open the survey visit www.boltonparents.typeform.com/to/hrwq6Ljn



COVID Summer Food Fund

The free school meals vouchers will continue over the summer holidays under a scheme called the 'summer food fund,' for those entitled to benefits related free

school meals. All funding for the holiday period will be via the voucher scheme that most schools have used for free school meals during covid. It is up to your child's school to arrange the vouchers using the Edenred online system. If you have been using this system already you will continue as normal. If your child's school has been managing free school meals in an alternative way, for the summer you will be issued with vouchers using email. Instructions will come out from your child's school. The summer holiday amount will be £90.

If you feel your circumstances have changed during the summer term and you may now qualify for free school meals, check via the Bolton council website <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/free-school-meals-clothing-allowance/free-school-meals-help-school-uniform>



Government advises on the reopening of out of school activities and groups

Guidance published by the government on 1st July 2020 states that over the summer holidays, community activities, holiday clubs, tuition centres, ballet classes, gymnastics, football coaching, scouts guides, and religious settings offering education, for example, will be able to allow children to start attending again. However, this must be done in a way that minimises the risk of transmission of the virus. The recommendations are that these settings operate in most cases, of groups of no more than 15.

Providers have been asked to ensure provision is made available for children with SEND, and that this remains a priority. It may also be the case that parents who usually remain with their children in some of these groups, may not be allowed to stay whilst the reopening's are underway. You will need to talk to the setting you usually use if this is something that affects you.

Other updates



Don't put your child at risk by missing their vaccinations- It's important to keep up to date with your child's injections. If you've had an invitation through the post or a text from your GP in the last two weeks, or if you know their vaccinations are due, phone your GP practice about attending an appointment. The [NHS website](#) has more information on vaccinations.



Parents can register births again after lockdown restrictions lifted- New parents can now register the birth of their child again in Bolton (strictly by appointment only) as [lockdown restrictions due to coronavirus have eased](#). Call 01204 331185 to book an appointment.



Reminder on support available to you

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 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.



Bolton Council

NHS Bolton
NHS Foundation Trust

Easing of lockdown – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Statement on behalf of Bolton Council, NHS Bolton Clinical

Commissioning Group, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust and Bolton CVS

NHS Bolton
Clinical Commissioning Group

Bolton CVS

It's been more than 100 days since lockdown began but from Saturday, pubs and restaurants can reopen so long as they adhere to social distancing guidance.

We'd like to thank you for your support so far. It is because you have followed the guidance that we have come through the peak of the crisis and that we're in the position to allow more businesses to open. So, thank you!

While we appreciate that some of you will relish the idea of a pint in the local, or the chance of a much-needed haircut, we don't want this new-found joy to be short lived.

Our lives have changed so much since March, and we know it can be difficult at times, but please don't forget that the virus is still with us and is still highly contagious.

Whether we face another 100 days of restrictions or another 10 – we cannot stress enough the importance of maintaining social distancing, washing your hands regularly and staying safe from COVID-19.

This week has seen the first 'local lockdown' in the UK. Let's not be next on the list. We are all rebuilding and re-invigorating our lives, but let's do this slowly and safely. We've come too far to let our standards slip, so help us to help you stay safe and well.

The council is still providing support and advice to the most vulnerable, those struggling with money issues and local businesses.

Your GP practice is still operating but you must phone them first if you need help, and more appointments are becoming available at evenings and weekends in the next few weeks.

Your A&E department is still providing emergency treatment for serious injury or life-threatening conditions but because of the measures we are taking to keep the hospital safe and COVID secure, we have limited capacity to deal with high numbers of people.

Patients will be asked to attend on their own – so family and friends must wait outside in the car or go home and we are continuing with social distancing of 2m.

This weekend also marks the 72nd birthday of our NHS and we implore you to continue to protect our health and care workers. So, while we celebrate our health and care heroes on Sunday, we'd also like to say once again 'thank-you' to you all for your patience and sensible approach to the easing of lockdown measures.

Please be careful with this new feeling of freedom, so that we can continue to keep everyone safe.

We will come through this stronger, together.

We will be back next week. In the meantime, please do make use of the joint IAS/BPC support package mentioned. All past copies of our 14 bulletins can be found [online](#)

Stay well and look after each other, Cheryl and the IAS team, and Nan and BPC



Summer Holiday Activities

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

George Bernard Shaw

Why is play important for children? Even if it’s not called ‘play’ as adults, why is having fun still important? Play (and fun):

- builds health and wellbeing** – being active through play helps people physically and emotionally, contributing to health and happiness and helping people to make sense of the world we live in
- builds resilience** – playing boosts confidence, creativity, problem-solving, and perseverance
- helps to develop learning, language and social skills**, such as perspective-taking during role play activities
- promotes the development of concentration and attention**, including when playing alone, when children are learning how to keep themselves occupied
- with **art and craft** helps to develop strength and co-ordination, and the fine motor skills needed for writing.

Effect of 'lock-down' on play

During lock-down, many children’s access to play has been very restricted, especially those without siblings of a similar age or with limited access to outdoor space. Children are likely to have played less frequently and had access to a reduced range of play opportunities. Children need the opportunity to play with peers, and to have physical outdoor play for both their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Over the summer holiday, if restrictions allow, it would be helpful to enable children to return to outdoor play, in the garden or in parks (use of play park equipment will depend on the restrictions in place at the time, which we can’t predict at the time of writing). Encourage children of all ages to return to being active – football/ kickabouts, bike riding, scooters, etc. If outdoor space at home is limited, it may still be possible to play swingball, or score basketball goals. For use in larger gardens or at the park, simple cricket, tennis and badminton sets can be bought at quite low cost.

Play as a Balanced Diet

Try to offer and encourage a range of activities, such as:

- Physically active play** – games, running, jumping, climbing, chasing, skipping, riding bikes, skateboards, scooters
- Making things** – drawing, painting, building things, making models / dens
- Quiet play** – imagining, inventing, day dreaming, chilling
- Reading** – books, magazines, comics, non-fiction
- Messy outdoor play** – playing in mud, rain, puddles, water fights
- Interactive digital play** – online games, computer games, social media, blogs

Ideas Jar

At some point in the summer holiday, children are likely to utter the phrase “I’m bored!” At that point, take an idea out of the Ideas Jar and do the activity. Encourage the family to add to the jar whenever they think of an idea. Fun ones can return to the jar to be done again!

Adults’ and older children’s play

Teenagers and adults engage less in ‘play,’ however adults / older children need opportunities for fun too, maybe through:

- Drawing, colouring, painting.** Experimenting with paints and colour mixing – look online for demonstrations;
- Creative activities** such as baking, cooking, sewing, making models (eg. clay, prepared kits)
- Charades, Whose Line Is It Anyway, Sussed, Pictionary, Play Your Cards Right, chess, draughts, Othello**

Perhaps adults and teenagers in the house could try to do one new or different activity each week of the holiday.

Digital Play / Online Activities

Technology is important for helping us feel connected with family and friends, especially when we are unable to see them. Using technology together can be a good way of starting conversations about its use and limits.

- Tech free time** – make sure there are places and times when technology is not used, such as meal times, bedrooms, an hour or so before bed, and when you go for a walk
- Use **technology in shared areas** (especially younger children). It’s fine to ask children and monitor their use of online activities. Encourage them to talk about what they’re doing, and discuss with them the things they might come across
- Activate **parental controls**, agree about acceptable limits, eg. when, where and how long children can use devices

Play games over a video call with friends/family – games like Noughts & Crosses, chess, pairs etc.

Blogs – with adult supervision for posting online, young people could have a go at writing about what they’re interested in, encouraging others to try a hobby they have or to read their favourite book, writing about places they’ve been, etc.

Here are some ideas to incorporate into your summer holiday fun! We've tried to include as many as possible where you don't need to buy resources, or if they do require equipment, they're items that can be acquired at low cost. You could see if any toy loaning or sharing resources are available in your area and if they have resumed over the summer holiday.

Traditional Games

Below are some examples of traditional games, many of which can be played without equipment, or with equipment that can be made at home. These can often be adapted to be indoor or outdoor games.

Teach children games from your childhood, and ask them to teach you games they know from school or nursery. Are some of the games the same, maybe with different names? Ask grandparents what they used to play and try to make the equipment that was needed (eg. for spinning tops). Try to recall fun games you used to play such as:

- hide and seek
- What's the time, Mr Wolf?
- French skipping / elastics
- treasure hunt (eg. hide five red things to be found, five things beginning with B, etc)
- hopscotch
- Simon Says
- hoop-la
- hula hoops
- noughts & crosses
- skipping individually or in groups ('jump rope')
- blind man's buff
- [Mother] May I?
- Would you rather...?

Word / action games: Head bands ("Hedbanz"), Charades, telling stories using objects pulled out of a bag.

Search online 'classic children's games' or 'traditional playground games' for lots more ideas and instructions how to play!

Outdoor Play

Sports day! Chances are, the children missed their school sports day this summer. See if you can recreate one at home or at the park! Try sack races using old pillow cases, egg & spoon, welly throwing, build a course for an obstacle race, do the 3-legged race or wheelbarrow race.

Skittles / ten pin bowling – be creative for skittles if you don't have any (cardboard tubes; filled drinks bottles).

Wet play – on rainy days, get the wellies on and play!

- **Stepping stones** – can you step through a puddle without touching the water?
- **Float or sink** – see if items float in the puddle or sink
- **Make a whirlpool** – find a stick, put it in the puddle and turn it in circles fast – have you made a whirlpool?
- **Duck baths** – take bath toys outside to play in water
- **Puddle songs** – sing your favourite songs as you dance around/in puddles, eg. hokey cokey, the wheels on the bus
- **Reflections** – what reflections can you see in the puddles?
- **Skim a stone**

Bug hunt – hunt for creepy crawlies in the garden or on a walk. Choose your favourite and find out some facts about it.

Have fun (adults too!) – try to do a handstand or cartwheel, roll down a grassy hill, climb a tree, make a daisy chain.

Indoor Play

Card games – Pairs, Snap, Uno, Ligtetto, Patience. Research new card games to try with a simple pack of cards!

Board games – family favourites! Monopoly (try quick versions like *Ultimate Banking* or *Monopoly Deal* (card game)); Game of Life; quiz games. **Jigsaws** – try funny ones where you have to 'spot the sillies' or pictures that make you laugh

Indoor basketball – used rolled up socks as a ball and something to catch the balls in, such as a clean bucket or basket, or to make them land on, like a t-shirt on the floor. Try placing the target further away / higher up for greater challenge.

Drama time – act a scene from a TV programme or film your family loves, or make up a play to perform. You could dress up, make and 'sell' tickets, set out your chairs for an audience.

Animal fun – climb like a monkey, waddle like a penguin, slither like a snake, stomp like an elephant (if you can, look online and find the words and music for the Animal Boogie). **Pantomime** – act out emotions or actions. Change the "scenery" – eg, imagine how it would change if it was sunny/rainy/a thunderstorm. Mix an action with an emotion, eg. waddle like a frightened duck.

Set up a Strictly Come Dancing, X-Factor or Britain's Got Talent show – have a judging panel and (kindly!) comment on and score each other's performances. **Music** – create your own band with home-made musical instruments. **Dance** – fun for all!

Messy Play can help develop children's senses as they explore the different textures.

Find out how to make: fizzy magic sand, crackle foam, magic mud, silly putty, salt dough painting, papier mâché, edible slime

- **Leaf printing** – gather some leaves, paint them on one side using poster paints, and print onto paper
- **Spaghetti art** – mix 1 tablespoon of glue with 1 tablespoon of paint in a bowl, add 1 cup of cooked spaghetti and stir until covered. Take out spaghetti, one piece at a time, and arrange a design (best on wax paper). When it has dried, which may take a few days, you can mount the design on coloured paper or card.
- **Handprint keepsakes** – mix 1 cup salt and 1 cup plain flour with up to half a cup of water and knead until smooth and stretchy. Roll flat and cut to desired shape, press in hands and/or feet to make prints. Bake in oven on very low heat for 3 hours. These can be painted, and pearlised acrylics or silver/gold work well, or add food colour to the mixing process.

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

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



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

www.bolton.gov.uk



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**Bolton
Council**

Our values are who we are...

Accountable, determined, making a difference, honest and respectful. We work together.



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2030**

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