



Bolton Parent Carers & Bolton Information Advisory Service

Working together for Bolton's SEND families

Joint Bulletin 8 - 11th May 2020

You'll have noticed we are a little late with our bulletin this week- The sun returned (for a short while anyway!), so we spent the weekend basking in the sun, and subsequently turning a little pink over the bank holiday weekend. Whether you had a VE day picnic on the lawn, or stayed inside and had some family time, we hope you all had a safe and relaxing end to the week.

In this week's edition, we have a rundown of the government advice and updates, our educational psychology service with their third instalment of their own bulletin, some useful info from the council and partners, and some reminders of the support, advice, and guidance available to you. Enjoy!

The Prime ministers speech on Sunday



Like us, we are sure most of you settled down for the 7pm speech on Sunday. For those who were hoping for a less restrictive lock down, there was disappointment. In essence, not a great deal has changed. We await the guidance due out today (Monday), that it is suggested will 'fill in the gaps', but until we have had time to read it thoroughly to grasp its implications for children, SEND, schooling etc, all we can be clear on is the following:

The advice to remain at home as much as possible, remains.

- If you absolutely can't work from home, you should be looking to return to work (however there is no immediate change to the school offer, so we are aware this could lead to childcare issues. Boris Johnson has said in PMQ's today that a common sense approach should be taken by employers.)
- Schools should prepare to begin opening for more children from 1 June. The government expects children to be able to return to early years settings, and for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to be back in school in smaller class sizes from this point. The government's ambition is for all primary school children to return to school before the summer for a month *if feasible*.
- Secondary schools and further education colleges should also prepare to begin some face to face contact with Year 10 and 12 pupils who have key exams next year, in support of their continued remote, home learning.
- Daily exercise is now unlimited- with travel to different areas allowed to take this exercise.

The following have been released today:

[Staying alert and Safe \(Social Distancing\)](#) - government guidelines covering who can go where and measures that should be taken.

[Updated FAQ'S What you can and can't do](#) - government guidelines

Once we have reviewed all the guidance, we will do a piece in our next bulletin that looks at this in greater detail and sets out what is likely to happen next for education and children.



Your experiences...

We have put together a questionnaire to find out how families are managing and also if there's anything we could try and add to our joint support package we are offering with Bolton IAS. 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](#)



Bolton Council Educational Psychology Service Helpline

The EP 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. As mentioned previously, the helpline numbers have now changed.

This numbers and days until Friday 15th May are:

Monday morning 07580036439

Wednesday afternoon 07919564919

Friday morning 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 'playing and having fun—at home.'



Reminder- Changes to SEND law

As we discussed last week on receipt of the new SEND temporary legislation, there have been some changes to how Local Authorities are expected to carry out their duties in relation to SEND. This covered two main points-

- The duty to secure special educational provision in EHC plans (in the new guidance)
- The timescales applying to statutory functions (in the new Amendment Regs 2020)

The guidance says that where the Local Authority before had a legal duty to secure the special educational provision in an EHC plan, now, they need to use 'reasonable endeavours' to look at what can be delivered in your individual child's circumstances. IAS, BPC and the Local Authority are discussing how this might work best in Bolton and how to ensure that children are supported as best they can be, in these challenging times. We hope to be able to bring you these plans in the next bulletin.





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.



CALL FOR HELP- Urgent donations for Bolton Response Hub

Bolton's Response Hub, which is providing food, medicine and other supplies to our most vulnerable, urgently needs tinned fruit and puddings. If you are able to help please drop off at Unit 4 Trinity Retail Park Springfield, Bradford Street, BL2 1HY (former Staples Store), or call 01204 385848 or visit [the urban Outreach website](http://theurbanoutreach.org.uk). The council has worked with Urban Outreach, and other key partners, to create the Response Hub which is responding to the humanitarian needs in Bolton that have come about due to the current crisis.

Mobile Covid test centre to return

Are you a Bolton key worker, and worried you may have symptoms of COVID? An army run mobile testing site will return to Bolton for three days from Sunday (May 10). The pop-up facility for key workers and other individuals with symptoms of coronavirus was in operation this week from Monday to Wednesday. The test centre will again operate from Sunday (May 10) until Tuesday (May 12), strictly by appointment only via the [online national booking system](https://www.gov.uk/covid-19/booking-a-test). Appointments are expected to be available in the coming days. The location of the Ministry of Defence site will be provided to individuals when an appointment has been made.



Access library and museum resources at home during lockdown

Public buildings may be closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak but you can still access free eBooks, eAudio books and eMagazines with the [At Home with Bolton Library and Museum Services](#). The service provides themed online activities with art, hope and reading and there's images, videos, quizzes and interactive posts and resources to help with home-schooling, learning new skills and expanding your knowledge or just finding out the latest research and information.

The programme of online activities for this week (Monday 11 May to Sunday 17 May) is now available. Art, reading, quizzes and more are on the menu, visit www.bolton.gov.uk/



Ensuring children stay safe online

While we are all self-isolating and socially distancing due to coronavirus, social media platforms, like Twitter, Snapchat and video calls, are a great way to stay in touch with friends and family, share your thoughts and ideas and connect with like-minded people. Unfortunately, whilst rare, there are negative influencers and online groomers who use the internet, social media and online gaming to spread their extreme ideas, which children or vulnerable adults can be exposed to. More information is [available online](#). If you do have concerns about an individual you can also contact Greater Manchester Police on 101 or email channel.project@gmp.pnn.police.uk



For families receiving HMRC Tax credits

Tax credits customers will continue to receive payments even if working fewer hours or furloughed due to coronavirus (COVID-19). These customers do not need to contact HMRC about this change. HMRC will treat customers as working their normal hours until the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme close, even if they are not using either scheme. For more information visit www.gov.uk/government/news



Are you or a family member (including children and young people), struggling to manage with emotional and mental health?

Beelieve is a campaign to provide mental health support during and after the covid outbreak. Mental health charities across Greater Manchester have teamed up in a new campaign, [Beelieve](#), to support individuals, families and communities affected by Covid-19. Charities are seeing new issues emerge as people try to cope with the social and psychological distress that Covid-19 and isolation can cause. Beelieve will support individuals by providing resources and equipment which will allow them to access emotional and practical help now and into the future.



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.

[FAQs by Parents of young children with SEND](#)

Countdown The countdown is a strategy which can help children to prepare for an activity which might be coming to an end. This can be used at points in the day which are particularly stressful for example if a child dislikes the transition between playing on their tablet, to eating their dinner or finishing a favourite toy, to going to bed.

Now and Next The Now and Next strategy can help to reassure a child that something they like is going to happen after completing a less motivating task. This can help with daily tasks like teeth brushing and getting dressed. Includes a home-made example.

Positive Strategies Some simple but very useful pointers to help everyone stay positive and reduce conflicts when entertaining young children at home.

Star Chart/Reward Chart This is a very basic reward system, when used with simple clear language and a really positive motivator (chosen by the child) this can help children to understand what is expected and give them reason to take part in activities they might not want to do. Includes home-made example and a video demonstration.

Traffic Lights System The traffic light system is used with a child to reduce frustration at such times by making a child more aware of when an activity is coming to an end.

[Click on this link to explore more resources including Corona Support and Home Learning](#)



We will be back in touch on Friday with our next update. If you would prefer not to receive this, please just let us know. 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,,

Cheryl and the IAS team, and Nan and BPC

Playing and having fun whilst staying at home

Play helps children to:

- ◆ Stay physically active
- ◆ Cope with feelings that are difficult or frightening
- ◆ Stay emotionally healthy
- ◆ Relax and forget about worries
- ◆ Make sense of new experiences and changes in the world

From the *International Play Association (IPA): the importance of Play in Crisis (April 2020)*

Making sense of new experiences and coping with difficult feelings

Children may act or play differently because things are very different. They are expected to stay at home much longer than usual. They may act younger or want your attention more. They are responding to the situation and it is a normal response. You could:

- Reassure them that you love them when you aren't able to play with them
- Make daily time and space for play – just 10 minutes is enough if you are short of time
- Tell them you understand their feelings and that it is OK and share how you are feeling
- Provide materials they can tear up, throw away or squash if they need to let anger out
- Allow them to make a mess (in a specified place) and noise (in a specified time – maybe talk to your neighbours about this and check they understand)
- Talk about coronavirus and lockdown in play giving simple age-related information if it comes up – play is a good time to check out their understanding of it.

What about adults' and older children's play?

Teenagers and young people / adults engage less in play with toys and imaginary play. However, adults / older children need time to play too, maybe through:

- Drawing and colouring, making models (e.g. clay, prepared kits)
- Playing with pets, either in the home and/or out on walks with dogs
- Being 'playful' (tickling, joking, making silly faces), rough and tumble play
- 'Structured' play (quizzes, board games, murder mystery, puzzles)
- Any creative activity (e.g. baking, cooking)

Take time for yourself

Children don't need you all the time – they should learn to play by themselves some of the time

It's OK for children to feel bored sometimes.

Wait for your child to invite you to play.

Bolton Educational Psychology Service

Council Newsletter – 11th May 2020

Games to play if you're unable to go out

Count the cars, dogs, people, birds passing by.

Use old boxes to make models and boxes from deliveries to make castles or dens.

Make music with pots and pans and make instruments with old containers and dried food.

Make up silly stories about the things you see out of the window (where is the cat going?)

Watch the sun and the moon and what time the street lights go on and off.

Screen Time and Play – obtaining a balance

Obsessive video gaming can have negative psychological effects. However, research shows when not used to excess it can:

- Provide social contact with friends (especially as children cannot see their friends)
- Help alleviate depression and anxiety
- Link to better thinking skills if it is a new problem-solving game
- Make sure they play games for their age, have a daily limit and avoid it just before bed.

Children learn best through play!

School tasks / learning can be made into games, and this avoids sitting for long periods of time. Children remember more and concentrate better when they are active and having fun. You could try the activities below. We know everyone is busy and it can be overwhelming to read more and more lists of things to do with your children. Just try any you think you have time for and that look fun for your family!

Staying physically active: Outdoor fun

Make an obstacle course – older children can make the course for younger children to follow and if possible, they could draw/write a plan about it first. Add in some counting for younger children, e.g. 6 star jumps



Alphabet scavenger hunt – write down each letter of the alphabet and see if children can find something inside or outside for each letter – the rule is that it has to be something they can actually find/touch



Shadow drawing – find a toy and place it so it forms a shadow on paper. Draw round it and colour it in. (You could do this indoors using a lamp or a torch)



Collect leaves from the garden or a walk, and put them in colour order from lightest to darkest

Nature Photography – take close up photos of garden creatures, leaves, water features, trees, plants, etc. If children enjoy ICT, they could make a photo collage

Move like a minibeast or garden animal – wiggle like a worm, flap arms to flutter like a bee / ladybird, scuttle like a spider, curl up like a hedgehog

Water fun – give children objects, or help them find objects, that can go in water for them to find out which ones float and which sink. Can they work out why? See if they can predict what the next items will do, and check out their predictions



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Motor skills / music & movement

1. Try different designs of paper aeroplanes to see which go the furthest
2. Word jumping – jump onto words written on cardboard
3. Dance – make up a dance routine to a favourite song, teach it to others, do silly dancing, have a dance-off
4. Write or memorise a song or rap about a favourite topic



Creative activities

1. Draw the view from one of your windows
2. Design your dream house– what will it have? Older children could try to draw a plan or build it in Lego
3. Make a bookmark
4. Paint a rock as a pet
5. Create a picture, collage, or model of something from a favourite book



Other ideas

1. Research fun facts about
 - something (e.g. garden birds that you see
 - outside), perform a little presentation or quiz the family
2. Use recycled objects to make a musical instrument
3. Interview members of your family or neighbours (using video calling for people outside your household) and choose a way of recording what they say
4. Make a farm – using animal toys or drawings. Children who are able to write can label the farm
5. Try to say common phrases in reverse order (e.g. the alphabet, days of the week, months of the year) or in alphabetical order (e.g. days of the week, song titles)
6. If you have access to online maps, find relatives' houses and explore their areas/roads using satellite and street view. What do they have in their neighbourhood? What is different to your own neighbourhood?
7. Bingo games – bingo cards can be written, drawn or printed and could contain any of these ideas: tricky words / teen numbers / subject vocabulary / learning a new language, whatever you want to play!



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](https://www.facebook.com/boltoncouncil)  [boltoncouncil](https://twitter.com/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