



Date: 08/07/2020

Dear parent/carers,

As you will know in recent weeks many children have gone back to their Early Years provision following the government's announcement that Early Years settings should be extending their current provision or should be opening their settings from the 1<sup>st</sup> June.

The government has asked Early Years settings to prioritise children with Education Health and Care Plans, if a risk assessment indicates it is safer for them to be in an Early Years setting.

Children who are known to Pre-school forum but are not in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan may also be returning to settings and may be preparing for their transition into school in September.

The Pre-School Forum has continued virtually, and for children in their preschool year, work continues to make recommendations for the support requirements for when children enter reception. If a strength and needs assessment has been requested for your child, the Learning Support Team or the Complex Communication Team will be in contact to discuss this report with you.

When the Pre-School Forum make a recommendation on the level of support on entry into reception, the school will be written to and the information from the forum discussions will be shared with them.

This has been a challenging time for families and Early Years practitioners. There has been a lot of work needed to plan for how children can return safely to settings and a lot of uncertainty for families as they wait to hear what will be available for their child. While some children may really enjoy going back to their Early Years settings, some will feel very anxious and will need support to prepare for this change in their lives.

As a parent/carer of a child with additional needs who has been known to the Pre-School Forum, you may have questions or concerns about the changes that have happened in recent weeks and those that are to come. We would like to reassure you that we are continuing to work closely together with Early Years settings, receiving schools, health, and social care representatives to plan for the changes. Ensuring that our children with additional needs are able to make a successful and safe return to settings or transition into school.

If you have any questions or concerns about how things will be different for your child or how the plans affect them, your first step should be to talk to your child's preschool key person/SENCO, reception teacher or school SENCO. If you still have concerns that your child will not receive the support or provision they need, you might choose to escalate this, and the school will have a complaints policy on

their website which explains to you how to do this. Alternatively, you can contact the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) on the following link:

<http://www.hwsendiass.co.uk/>

If your child has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you can talk to the SEN casework team who will provide you with support and advice and may talk to the school on your behalf if appropriate. You can also speak with advisors at SENDIASS who will be able to help you understand your rights and support you in your conversations with schools. This service is available to all parent/carers of a child with SEND and not just those with an EHCP.

You might also want to look at our SEND Local Offer pages which have lots of information about SEND and Covid-19 (including supporting Emotional Health and Wellbeing) at the following link:

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20780/coronavirus\\_covid-19\\_send\\_local\\_offer](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20780/coronavirus_covid-19_send_local_offer)

Worcestershire's Here 2 Help web pages also contain lots of useful guidance and support which may be of help to families of children and young people with SEND.

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help>

Thank you for your patience at this time. We appreciate there is a lot of uncertainty, but please be assured that we will continue to work together to ensure our children with SEND are safe and receiving an effective education now and in the future.

Yours sincerely



**Gabrielle Stacey**

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