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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

It has been wonderful to hear how quickly the children have settled back into school, and with the Easter holidays fast approaching, I'm sure that we all look forward to a more settled summer term.

On a personal note; I have very much enjoyed being able to connect with the Worcestershire Early Years community for the first time through our update meetings this week. Attendance at the events was fantastic and we hope that many more of you will be able to join us next week too.

With best wishes to you.

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Government updates

Updated 11 March 2021

[Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#) Removed old guidance for before 8 March. Added a new section about asymptomatic testing.

[Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#) Removed old guidance for before 8 March.

[Transport to school and other places of education: 2020 to 2021 academic year \(opens in new window\)](#) Minor amendments to the definition of a close contact and added information about reasonable adjustments to face coverings.

Updated 15 March 2021

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#) Updated to reflect changes in parent and child groups and in the system of controls.

Updated 16 March 2021

[Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#) Added 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak: 23 March 2020 to 11 March 2021'.

[Households and bubbles of pupils, students and staff of schools, nurseries and colleges: get rapid lateral flow tests \(opens in new window\)](#) Removed "Do not order online if you can get a test through other methods. This frees up home delivery for those who need it most." Replaced with "You can order 1 pack of home test kits containing 7 tests for home delivery. Your tests should arrive within 2 days."

[Information for parents and carers: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(opens in new window\)](#) Information and guidance for parents and carers of children attending early years settings, schools and colleges during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

[Changes to the early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) framework \(opens in new window\)](#) The EYFS framework changes in September 2021. Pre-reception early years providers can get the facts about the changes and what they mean here.

The Big Easter Sleepout

Families are being challenged to hold virtual sleepouts in their living rooms or gardens to raise money to support those living with poverty and homelessness. The charity CEO Sleepout UK, which supports organisations such as food bank charity Trussell Trust, hopes to raise £100,000 from virtual events this year.

On 1st April families will swap their warm beds for sleeping out somewhere safe inside or outside their home. They will join fellow participants virtually via video link on the night, with fun activities to keep them motivated and warm.

To sign up for [The Big Easter Sleepout visit our website \(opens in new window\)](#)

Requests for Delayed Entry into schools and Deferred Transition for pupils

Schools and parents may have concerns about gaps in children's learning and socialisation, as a direct result of the Covid pandemic. We are confident that all schools and settings will be able to identify and target those gaps and support children to catch-up with an inclusive, personalised curriculum. Inclusive settings are able to focus on the learning needs and social, emotional wellbeing of individual pupils, targeting support and differentiating curricular provision to ensure appropriate challenge at all levels. In those settings, effective teaching and learning focuses on individual children, their strengths and interests, their needs, and the approaches that engage, motivate, and inspire them. Schools and settings are encouraged to have informed conversations with parents who may have such concerns. Schools will be able to use their Covid catch up funding as well as their Pupil Premium Grant and their SEN notional budget to support children in this. All schools and settings should be confident in being able to provide children with the relevant support to bridge any identified gaps in their learning and socialisation. More information on the local authority expectations of support within schools and settings can be found within the [Worcestershire Graduated Response guidance which can be downloaded from our website \(opens in new window\)](#)

Parents do have a legal right to make delayed entry and transfer requests, the admission authority for each school is responsible for reaching the decision on whether or not to agree the request and this must always be reached in the best interests of the child. Worcestershire Children First supports children being taught within their chronological year group but recognises that consideration must be given to delaying the entry or transfer of a pupil, based on each individual's circumstances, where requested to do so by the parent. It is vitally important that parents understand the longer-term implications for the child as set out in the protocol. The protocol should be used to assess and collate the information on the child's individual circumstances, to inform the decision making and a record of the outcome must be returned to School Admissions using the Children's Services Portal.

The School Admissions Code sets out the legal requirements for considering requests to teach children outside of their chronological age group. Worcestershire Children First have an approved protocol in place to deal with such requests from parents, including delayed and accelerated entry. There is also specific additional guidance on educating children with an EHCP out of year group. [The protocol and guidance documents are on our website \(opens in new window\)](#)

Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Portal update -15th March 2021

As of 15th March 2021 WCF, will have a new pathway for you to submit your request for services and referrals, this includes:

- Level 2 and 3 needs -Targeted Family Support requests
- Concern relating to persons in positions of trust (LADO)
- Professional request For Information
- New fostering enquiries
- Concerns at level 4 need to children's social care.

The link to create an account will went live on 15th March 2021

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20641/are_you_a_professional_and_worried_about_child

To utilise the functions outlined above you will need to register for a new account that requires a 2-step authentication password sent to your registered email inbox. Every time you log in you will need your new 2-step authorisation code that will be sent to your email address each time you log in.

The current Portal will no longer be available after 16:30 on 12th March and all referrals relating to the above will need to go to the new Liquid Logic Portal from Monday 15th March 2021.

In an emergency between 12th March 2021 and 15th March 2021 you can call EDT 01905 768020 for advice and if an urgent referral is required, they will take this over the phone.

Please also note the Children's Team Email will also be closing down on 15th March 2021, therefore if you need to contact the Initial Contact and Referral Team after this date please refer using the portal or call on 01905 822666.

The LADO email address lado@wocscchildrenfirst.org.uk and number 01905 846221 will remain the same, but all referrals and requests should go through the portal.

Early Years Weekly Attendance Data

Thank you for your ongoing data returns. There has been a slight decrease in submissions this week; we are still submitting the data to the DfE on a weekly basis so it is important that we get as many returns as possible. **If you are closed**, we would still appreciate you taking the time to complete the form.

The form for the week commencing [Monday 15th March is now live \(opens in new window\)](#)

Please be aware that you need to use the new link every week – you will **not be able to access the Form** via last week's link.

The form should be submitted by **9am on Tuesday 23rd March**. Please note that schools with nursery provision should also be submitting a return, for the **nursery/pre-school children** only.

Domestic abuse training

Due to the popularity of the domestic abuse training offered to schools, we've organised two bespoke early years sessions. They are suitable for PVI – childminders, nurseries / pre-schools and out of school clubs. For school ran nurseries please access this via the Safeguarding SLA.

The three-hour virtual session delivered by Martin Lakeman will look at:

- Increase awareness of the insidious nature of domestic abuse and the invisibility of coercion and control.
- Highlight the prevalence and statistics of domestic abuse
- Increase confidence to be professionally curious and to ask about domestic abuse in a way that makes it easier and safer for people to disclose.
- Increase understanding of victims' responses to domestic abuse including why they may stay in an abusive relationship
- Explore the links between pregnancy and domestic abuse and the impacts on children both pre-birth and at various stages of development
- Consider the professional responsibility for positively impacting the resilience of children
- Explore the additional impacts on people from marginalised groups including adults with support and care needs, older people and LGBT and minority communities
- Increase knowledge of how to refer to relevant services when appropriate, including referral to local and national specialist services for victims and perpetrators.

Cost: £24 + VAT (£28.80 inc VAT)

- 22 March 2021, 6.30pm to 9.30pm, course code: EY/20/267

Please book via [CPD \(opens in new window\)](#) using your CPD Leader login details and at the point of confirmation you will receive the joining instructions and the power control wheel to use during the training.

SENCo Support Advisor support in North Worcestershire (Wyre Forest, Redditch, and Bromsgrove)

As many of you are aware, SENCo Support Advisor Michelle Tideswell has left the service to work with the Speech and Language Therapy Services. Settings who were providing places for children known to Preschool Forum aged 0-3 will be able to access support from Kelly Molnar whilst we are awaiting the start date of the new SENCo Support Advisor.

Please contact Kelly on Kmolnar@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

She is offering a range of free virtual workshops across a range of subjects for SENCO's on the SENCO Support Advisor caseload.

Early Years Update Meeting

Our Early Years Update Meeting for this term are open to all Childminders and Settings across the county and free to attend. Led by Ian Morris, Sam Barrett, and Sharon Jones each meeting will look at Ofsted Updates, New EYFS, Safeguarding Update, school readiness and national context issues.

- 23 March 2021, 10am to 11.30am, course code: EY/21/080
- 24 March 2021, 6.30pm to 8pm, course code: EY/21/081

Places must be booked via [CPD \(opens in new window\)](#) using your CPD leader login details. Joining instructions will be attached (as a word document) to your confirmation. If you encounter any issues please contact the Training Team on 01905 844 420 or workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Nursery Education Funding – Summer Term Arrangements

Nursery Education Funding for the Summer Term will be paid on a more typical basis; therefore, you should only be claiming for funded hours that are **booked** and are **available** to be taken.

If a child doesn't attend for some/all of their booked hours, you are still able to claim funding for this place. However, you should have evidence of regular conversations with the family to ensure that the place is still required. The parent/carer should be clear that their child's entitlement is being used and they will be unable to access these hours at a later date.

If you are unable to provide the booked hours, you are unable to claim funding **except** in the case of a 'collapsed bubble'; as per previous terms, we will continue to provide funded hours during the Summer Term when you are told to close/reduce places due to a positive Covid-19 case. This will be reviewed regularly and may change alongside any updated guidance. If you close or reduce your offer for any other reason than a confirmed Covid-19 case, you are unable to claim funding for these hours as the place would not be available.

Summer Term Deadlines – Change to those previously advertised

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the dates for submitting your Summer Term Actual Claim have been amended. The Online Provider Portal will not be open for your Actual Claims until after the Easter break; the Portal will open on **Monday 19th April** and remain open until **Friday 7th May**. **Headcount Week** remains the week commencing Monday 19th April and funding claims should be based on the registered attendance at this point.

The Online Provider Portal will open for Adjustment Claims on Monday 5th July and remain open until Friday 13th August.

The change in dates will have no impact on the expected Summer Term payment dates.

Support over the Easter Break

The Finance Operational Services Team (Patrick O’Conner) will be unable to provide NEF support over the Easter break (5th April – 16th April), via telephone or email. Urgent queries can be directed to Nicky Burford, who will be available via telephone on Tuesday 6th and Thursday 15th April.

Summer Term Eligibility

Dates of Birth

Please remember that the Summer Term Funding Period starts on the 1st April; to access a funded place during the Summer Term, the child must have had their 2nd or 3rd birthday on or before 31st March. Children born on the 1st April or later will not be eligible to access their funded hours until September.

30 Hours Childcare

Please ensure that before offering the additional 15 funded hours (30 Hours Childcare) you have used the Eligibility Checker service on the Online Provider Portal. The Eligibility Checker is available all year round and should be used to confirm the validity of a 30 Hours Childcare Code before a child accesses their place. For the Summer Term, a valid 30 Hours Childcare Code must have a start date on or before the 31st March 2021 along with an End Date on or after 1st April. You must also confirm the child’s Date of Birth to ensure that they are eligible for a funded place.

*Please note that the Grace Period **only applies** if the child was accessing their additional 15 hours at your setting during the Spring Term.*

Two-Year-Old Funding

Before offering a child a Two-Year-Old Funded place, please ensure that you have a copy of their Certificate of Eligibility. You must check the Child’s Name, Date of Birth, and the eligibility Start Date to ensure that the child is eligible for funding during the Summer Term. If the eligibility date is after 1st April, funding can only be claimed from that date onwards.

To claim Two-Year-Old Funding for a child, the child must have been issued a Worcestershire Certificate of Eligibility. If you are given confirmation issued by another Local Authority, the family should be signposted to apply in Worcestershire: [Apply for Two Year Old Funding \(opens in new window\)](#). You will not receive funding for children without a valid Worcestershire application.

Key Eligibility Dates

Criteria	Dates
Child’s Date of Birth for Two-Year-Old Funding	01/04/2018 – 31/03/2019
Child’s Date of Birth for 3&4-Year-Old Funding	01/04/2016 – 31/03/2018
30 Hours Childcare Start Date	On or before 31/03/2021
30 Hours Childcare End Date	On or after 01/04/2021

Changing Settings Mid-Term

We are aware that a number of providers continue to limit a child's attendance to one setting only. As we move towards the Summer, it is expected that the number of settings limiting attendance will reduce alongside the relaxing of the national restrictions. Funding for children returning to their 2nd setting **will be moved** without the need for parents to submit an NEF Appeal. Evidence of a child's prior attendance at the 2nd setting may be requested if the child has not previously received funding there. If this change occurs after the Actual Claim has been completed, please ensure that an adjustment claim is completed. Parents/carers should be encouraged to discuss any changes with all of their child's settings; depending on the agreement made with their 1st setting. They may be required to give notice to avoid having to pay a bill.

Once the guidance around limiting the number of attended settings is removed, parents/carers will return to choosing their child's attendance patterns and being able to allocate their child's funded hours to meet the needs of their family.

For any other mid-term funding moves, the family should be referred to their local Family Information Service for support and to complete an NEF Appeal: [Worcestershire FIS Contact Details \(opens in new window\)](#)

Financial Support

Information about the national financial support packages that continue to be available for the Early Years sector are detailed here: [DfE Financial Support Guidance \(opens in new window\)](#). If you are experiencing financial difficulties related directly to Covid-19 that are not supported through the national packages, please contact the Early Years Team to discuss via EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk or NEF@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Best regards,



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