



Sarah Wilkins

Director for Education and Early Help

Email: swilkins@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Tel: 01905 846082

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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you have been having a good week. Some of you will be looking forward to a break next and some of you of course will be continuing to provide care for children.

I would like to thank you very much for the continued commitment, care and energy that you put into providing for our youngest children. We have seen almost all of our settings open and estimate that average attendance is around 75%. We have seen more Covid activity in settings this term compared to last term and after half term we will start to include weekly in this bulletin the number of settings affected. We have seen case rates reduce for the youngest children again this week, as we are seeing across the whole population.

The Community Testing sites continue to be available and roll out for staff to use for asymptomatic testing. We are still continuing to find settings who are not aware of this facility so please share the links and information across your networks. Booking is now live for the mass testing sites in Pershore, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Worcester and Wyre Forest. To book a test please visit: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/LateralFlowTesting>.

Early Years staff can also book test appointments at the University of Worcester via: <https://capublic.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVIDTestBookingPublic/StaffTesting.aspx>

Today's bulletin includes a message from Dr Kathryn Cobain, Director of Public Health for Worcestershire on the South African covid variant alongside guidance, resources and support for children and families.

Best wishes to you for the weekend.

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Government Updates

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#), on 04 February - updated the national lockdown guidance to include information on educational visits, arriving and leaving the setting, face coverings and pregnant staff. Updated 'What to do if a child or adult is displaying symptoms of coronavirus' to include information on charging parents and carers, childminders, and NHS advice on vaccines and fevers.

[Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update \(opens in new window\)](#) updated on 05 February 2021 to remove information about survey for childcare providers as the deadline has now passed.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): financial support for education, early years and children's social care \(opens in new window\)](#) on 03 February 2021, updated the guidance on supply teachers and other contingent workers in state-funded schools.

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges \(opens in new window\)](#) on 03 February 2021, updated sections on attending nursery, school and college, remote education, exams, asymptomatic testing and lateral flow tests, Ofsted inspections, entry tests for selective schools, food, and EHC plans.

[Guidance for full opening: special schools and other specialist settings \(opens in new window\)](#) on 03 February 2021 Updated the guidance on rapid asymptomatic testing to include changes to daily contact testing advice, information on the rollout of testing to primary school staff and further guidance on the different approaches to testing.

[Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#) Updated on 09 February and added 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak: 23 March 2020 to 4 February 2021'.

Update of South African Covid variant

Message on behalf of Dr Kathryn Cobain, Director of Public Health for Worcestershire

I'm sure by now you'll be aware that a small number of cases of the South African Covid variant has been identified here in Worcestershire, in the WR3 area.

I'd like to reassure you all that at the moment, we have no evidence to suggest that this variant is any more severe than others or that the regulated vaccine would not protect against it. You should continue to follow lockdown rules and social distancing guidance at all times. These remain the best ways to reduce the spread of the virus.

The testing of residents over the age of 18, living or working in the WR3 and WR9 postcode areas, is now underway to try to prevent the spread of the virus.

As there do not appear to be any links to travel, this suggests there may be some small amount of spread locally in these areas.

A testing site has been set up at The White Hart Pub in Fernhill Heath and a second site at Sixways Stadium. This is also for residents of the identified postcodes and only for people who have no symptoms and who are over 18 years old.

Testing allows us to identify people who may not even know they have Covid, so that they can quickly self-isolate and keep others safe from the virus. It is fantastic to see so many residents wanting to do this.

I should also add that testing is going to be available for two weeks, so there will be plenty of time to book and be tested over the coming days.

You should be told within 24-72 hours if you have tested positive for Covid-19. If you are positive, please self-isolate immediately for 10 days. Testing for the variant takes 7-10 days after the initial result is received.

If you would like to check if you should get a test, the postcode checker and booking link is available here on our website: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVID19variant>

If you are around the boundary of the affected postcodes and your postcode is not listed as one included in this specific variant testing and are all concerned, you can easily access rapid Covid testing also known as Lateral Flow Testing (LFT), which is available around the county. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVIDtesting

We've produced a set of FAQs about the variant. It might be worth you spending five minutes reading them so click here: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20872/covid-19-variant/2363/covid-19-variant-faqs>

The sites at Sixways and the White Hart at Fernhill Heath can be booked by visiting: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVID19variant>

When emotions explode

[Young Minds have produced a “when emotions explode poster” \(opens in new window\)](#) that can be used to support parents / carers. The poster aims to help parents when their child has angry feelings or outbursts and might help you open up a conversation.

Using an iPad / iPhone to access virtual training

Last week the training team were made aware that if you are using an iPhone or iPad during training then you could encounter issues seeing the presentation that is being shared. We do know that you will be able to hear the trainer, use the chat function and see trainer / delegate faces but not necessarily the presentation the trainer is sharing with the group.

The training team will be looking into why this is occurring to provide further help, however if possible, we do recommend using an alternative device. In addition, we will also explore ways to see how we can issue the training materials during the course to all delegates. If this is not possible then when advised by trainers, we will issue presentations post course.

Early Years Weekly Attendance Data

Thank you for your ongoing data returns.

The form for the week commencing Monday 8th February is [now live to complete \(opens in new window\)](#)

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 16th February**. Please note that schools with nursery provision should also be submitting a return, for the nursery children only.

SENCo Support Advisor

Worcestershire Early Years Inclusion Team are recruiting to the position of SENCo Support Advisor. The full-time position (35 hours p/week) will be responsible for supporting the implementation of high-quality inclusive practice within early years settings predominantly in the North of the county (Wyre Forest, Redditch and Bromsgrove.) It is essential that applicants have an NVQ level 4 qualification and/or significant experience of working with children with SEND aged 0-3 with a range of emerging and complex needs.

The post is responsible for providing advice and guidance to setting SENCOs and childminders within mainstream provisions. Applicants should have experience of modelling best practice and supporting and challenging practice; creating action plans for improvement. The position is required to liaise with a range of specialist agencies as well as the parents of the children they support, advising on all matters of inclusion including transition and signposting to other services. A package of inclusion training is delivered by the post-holder, so experience of developing and delivering training would be beneficial.

Application Closing Date: Tuesday 2nd March 2021

For more information, salary and details on how to apply visit:
<https://www.wmjobs.co.uk/job/88335/senco-support-advisor/>

Early Language Identification Measure (ELIM)

A new toolkit which can identify 94 per cent of young children with early language needs and suggest accompanying intervention is now being rolled out by health visitors as part of the Government's social mobility strategy. The Early Language Intervention Measure (ELIM) replaces the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and will be used for children attending their health visitor reviews at 24 and 30 months of age. It is hoped that the toolkit will create a conversation across all professionals supporting young children and help parents engage with their child's development at an early stage.

- [Early Language Identification Measure and Intervention Guidance Handbook \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Best Start in Speech, Language and Communication Guidance, Supporting Evidence and Case Studies \(opens in new window\)](#)

[Free e-learning on speech, language and communication \(opens in new window\)](#) for all practitioners working with young children and families:

1. Working with families to support speech, language and communication development
2. Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs
3. Early identification of speech, language and communication needs in children and how to support families

Free SEND workshops delivered by Contact

Contact, a charity for families with children with disabilities have a free workshop available to practitioners, working with parents/carers of children with SEND

The accessible and jargon-free course gives practitioners practical ideas about how practitioners can support disabled children and their families. The workshop aims to help professionals:

- Increase understanding of disability, including hidden disability
- Increase awareness of the effect of disability on the family
- Enable more effective communication with parents
- Enable a better start to a working relationship with parents of children with SEND.

To book a place, dates below, please visit the following webpage:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/working-with-parentscarers-of-children-with-send-in-worcestershire-tickets-131327727769>

- Tuesday 9th March 10am to 12.30pm – with priority bookings available to Worcestershire practitioners
- Thursday 11th March 10am to 12.30pm
- Thursday 18th March 10am to 12.30pm
- Thursday 25th Feb 10am to 12.30pm

Ready Steady Worcestershire

Ready Steady Worcestershire provides information about food, activities and support available to families during the school holidays.

We recognise some families find it difficult to feed their children during the school holidays. By clicking the interactive map link, you can find organisations in your local area that can provide families with either food items to cook a meal at home or prepared meals for children during the school holiday period.

We also recognise that when children do not have the structure and routine provided by being in school, keeping children active and entertained can prove difficult. The interactive map shows activities taking place in local communities during the school holidays. The webpage also contains lots of activity ideas which can be done at home, particularly useful if the family is self-isolating.

School holidays can be a demanding time for parents financially, as well as in terms of managing household stress, relationships and mental wellbeing. Included on the website there are lots of help, ideas and support available for families to make the most of the extra time together and to ensure children are ready to go back to school.

For more information visit: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/readysteadyworcs

Here2Help

A reminder that Here2Help is here for families self-isolating and unable to get support from friends, family or neighbours. We are recommending that in the event of families needing to self-isolate that settings and schools provide these contact details for any additional support a family may benefit from.

On the Here2Help website families can find resources to help with staying at home during Coronavirus as well as an online form they can fill out to request the support they need. If the family does not have internet access, they can call 01905 768053 which is open Monday to Thursday, 9am-5pm and Friday 9am-4.30pm.

Here2Help will signpost callers to up to date advice and arrange volunteer support where required to help those who are unable to leave their homes as a result of needing to self-isolate.

The types of support available include:

- Collecting and delivering food and supplies
- Arranging emergency food support
- Help collecting prescriptions
- Help with other commitments such as pet needs
- Support for those who are feeling isolated
- Advice around money, benefits and debt

For more information visit: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help

Best regards,



Sarah Wilkins
Director for Education and Early Help

