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## Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

As we move towards the end of an extremely challenging year it feels like the challenges continue and our schedule is busier than ever.

On a personal note, I have very much enjoyed being able to visit a number of schools and settings across Worcestershire as I begin to develop my role. I have been shown time and again that great Early Years practice can be achieved in a whole range of contexts; it's all about the role of the adult.

The strength of commitment and levels of dedication I have seen during this last year give me cause to be optimistic for the future. Let's try to enjoy these last few weeks of term and prepare for a fresh new beginning in the Autumn.

Best wishes.

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## Contacting the LORT – Saturday 26 June

Due to technical issues the Worcestershire Local Outbreak Response Teams (LORT) usual phone number will not be available on the morning of Saturday 26 June 2021 however the LORT can still be contacted via an alternative number or by email during this time:

Alternative Telephone number: 07596 890 650

Email: [wcchealthprotection@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:wcchealthprotection@worcestershire.gov.uk)

Worcestershire Local Outbreak Response Team

Monday – Friday: 09.00 – 17.00

Saturday – Sunday: 10.00 – 16.00

Out of hours please contact Public Health England: 01384 679031

## Latest COVID-19 Public Health advice

The Delta variant is significantly more transmissible than previous variants. Case numbers are now greatest in the younger cohorts of the population.

The system of COVID-19 controls has not fundamentally changed so **do not alter or weaken** your system of controls, including:

- bubble sizes must not be increased
- (age appropriate) social distancing maintained
- hand and respiratory hygiene continue and
- enhanced cleaning remains in place.

Learning from recent situations where significant numbers of children and other staff have needed to self-isolate, includes:

- Reducing the number of staff moving between bubbles and where this is necessary, ensure the number of bubbles that staff move between is limited.
- Avoid staff moving between bubbles in a limited timeframe (e.g. the same day or two days).
- Avoiding physical contact with children where it is not needed.
- Replace cloth hand towels with paper hand towels.
- Be clear about which groups are bubbled and reduce bubble mixing.

## Transition Days

DfE guidance advises that transition days are “unlikely to be feasible” but does leave the option available for transition days which maintain bubble integrity and control measures. However, based on the geographical spread of the Delta variant and Birmingham now being an Enhanced Response Area the Public Health team advise that all transition days be held virtually. The exceptions being for:

- vulnerable learners,
- SEND pupils,
- pupils transitioning to AP schools
- pupils transitioning to special schools using a phased transition in September.

Headteachers will receive a letter detailing controls to support transition for these pupils.

## Review of the Pre-School Forum

Worcestershire Children First are reviewing the functions and impact of the Pre-School Forum; the process in which the local authority monitors children with SEND during their preschool education. We would appreciate all professionals involved in the forum answering the questions in the survey, to aid our review and identify areas of strengths and areas for development. This includes all health and education specialist workers, school-based SENCOs and Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years practitioners/SENCO's.

[Access the survey for professionals](#)

**A separate survey has been created specifically for parents/carers and we would appreciate professionals disseminating the following link to the survey for any parent carers that have had involvement with the Preschool Forum.**

[Access the survey for parents and carers](#)

Please take this opportunity to let us know how the Pre-School Forum discussions, referrals and decisions impacts or impacted on the children you support.

The responses will be collated, and an action plan issued with a view of implementing any improvements and recommendations in September 2021.

**The closing date for comments is Friday 2 July.**

It takes approximately 6 minutes to complete and we urge all interested parties to contribute their thoughts to the review.

## Application for Summer Holiday Activity and Food funding now open!

The link to information about the programme and the funding application can be found here: [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme in Worcestershire](#)

**Fantastic news!** The DfE has granted funding to Worcestershire for the provision of holiday activities and food (HAF) for free school meal children for summer and Christmas 2021. The DfE recognise:

- School holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs and reduced incomes
- Some children are more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- Some children from lower-income families are less likely to access fun activities
- Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue. They can work best when they provide consistent and easily accessible activities, for more than just breakfast or lunch

Ready, Steady, Worcestershire co-ordinate holiday provision across the county and **would like to ensure a high volume of schools/settings are able to access the HAF funding to support and enhance existing holiday playschemes to include Free School Meal Children or to create new holiday schemes.** Funding is to support programmes which provide healthy food, enriching activities, physical activities and nutritional education. These holiday clubs can be used as a transitions strategy to prepare FSM children for the move to their next school. Schools are also encouraged to link to existing providers to work together collectively. The ideal model of provision is 4 hours a week, for 4 hours a day for 4 weeks of summer and 1 week of Christmas – although there can be some flexibility around this.

If you have any questions please contact Helen Hey at [hhey@worcestershirechildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:hhey@worcestershirechildrenfirst.org.uk) or Louise Butler [lbutler@worcestershirechildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:lbutler@worcestershirechildrenfirst.org.uk)

## Inclusion Team Training

The Inclusion team have created packages of free inclusion training (to be delivered virtually) in the common topics that the SSA would normally support SENCO's with. The workshops are between 30 mins to an hour and will be bitesize events for you to dip into.

These workshops will be considered part of your inclusion package of support available, so please take advantage of the workshops, even as a refresher. They will be aimed at:

- Key person/s
- Room Leader/s
- SENCO/s

Each setting is welcome to attend multiple workshops and can request up to five free places (five separate email addresses) per workshop, allowing all relevant staff to attend.

Each delegate will receive a link to the workshop from me directly, on the morning of delivery. The workshop will be run virtually via Microsoft teams. The delivery of these workshops is part of the core support you will be receiving from your SSA.

Workshops available are:

### **Top tips for promoting positive behaviour**

- Tuesday 6th July 4.30-5.30pm

### **Using the EYFS Early Support tracking**

- Monday 5th July 4.30-5.30pm

### **Applying for challenge funding and how to complete the monitoring forms (Deadline for Autumn term applications is the 1st October)**

- Tuesday 13th July 4-5pm

If you would be interested in attending any of the workshops, please email Kelly Molnar; [KMolnar@worschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:KMolnar@worschildrenfirst.org.uk) with:

- the name of each delegate
- the email address for the delegate
- the preferred workshop and which date for each delegate

## Bereavement Guidance for Early Years

- **Do you provide childcare for families who have experienced a recent bereavement?**
- **Perhaps your setting has experienced loss within your own provision?**
- **Do you know who to signpost parents / carers to? Do you know what to say to the children within your setting?**

Many of us have sadly experienced a bereavement at one time or another. As an early year's service, we are always aware that settings support families with this far too often. We wanted to ensure you had links to support services which you can signpost your families to and seek advice out for yourselves. The following links will offer some guidance around this topic.

### [Winston's Wish - giving hope to grieving children \(winstonswish.org\)](http://winstonswish.org)

Winston's Wish is a national charity which offers advice, guidance and support following a bereavement. Their Freephone National Helpline is free to call on 08088 020 021 and their expert team provide bereavement support for parents, carers and professionals who are looking for childhood bereavement advice and support.

Their website offers a range of support including information on suffering bereavements as a result of coronavirus and age appropriate reading lists to help support siblings or young children. Sharing a story with a familiar and trusted adult in a setting or at home can provide children with a safe, warm and nurturing space to explore difficult emotions and feelings. This can help them to talk about their feelings and give adults an opportunity to sensitively support and help children to normalise feelings of anger, sadness or worry.

If you are looking for some support which is a little closer to home, then why not contact one of the bereavement services within our county. We have a range of district-based hospices which all offer bereavement advice to families who accessed the hospice along with families who have never accessed them.

- [Bereavement Service | Primrose Hospice | Family Support](#) – Redditch and Bromsgrove Bereavement service
- [KEMP Hospice: The Wyre Forest Hospice](#) – Wyre Forest Bereavement Service
- [Bereavement support - St Richard's Hospice \(strichards.org.uk\)](http://strichards.org.uk) – South Worcestershire Bereavement Service

In addition, South Worcester have a Bereavement service which is an extension of St Richards hospice, but support family's county wide.

### [Help for Children, Young People and Families | Bereavement Support South Worcestershire \(bereavementsupportworcestershire.org.uk\)](http://bereavementsupportworcestershire.org.uk)

If you are supporting children in your setting who are experiencing emotional difficulties following a bereavement, please do not hesitate to contact the Inclusion team to discuss additional funding to contribute towards staffing on: 01905 843099 or visit our website for funding information at: [Early Years Inclusion Information - Worcestershire Children First Education Services](#)

## Weekly Attendance Data

Thank you for your returns last week.

The form to complete for the **week commencing Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June** is now available:

<https://forms.office.com/r/SWhzYd09Pj>

It should be completed by **all settings**, including schools, who have Early Years children attending, **excluding** those children attending in Reception. **If you are currently closed**, we still need a return from you; the form will take very little time to complete but will ensure we have an accurate record to submit to the DfE.

Please click on the link, complete the form and submit by **9am on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June**.

If you have any difficulties completing the form, please contact [EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) or [NEF@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:NEF@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk).

## NEF Childminder Registration Briefing

Any childminder who is interested in offering Nursery Education Funding (NEF) is encouraged to attend a free NEF Childminder Registration Briefing. The free virtual session provides information about the Statutory requirements and the Worcestershire processes for funding.

The next briefing is on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 7:30-9pm and can be booked via CPD Online using course code EY/21/098.

## Wraparound and Holiday Provision Survey

To enable us to establish what provision will be available for school aged children during the summer holidays and going forward, we are conducting an online survey. If you are intending to offer holiday provision and/or if you intend to offer wraparound provision from September, please use the following link and complete the questionnaire: <https://forms.office.com/r/b82QYubR1g>

We will use the information provided to update our records about your setting; for those that have given consent to be advertised, this will also update the information given to parents/carers via our website. The data will also be used to inform service planning within the Early Years Team.

## Integrated Two-Year Check

Worcestershire Health visiting Services and Worcestershire Children First have reviewed the effectiveness of the integrated check and are in the process of assessing a pilot project that is in progress within a number of settings in Redditch.

The main changes to the process include:

- An [‘All About Me @ 2’ leaflet](#) which is aimed at parents and can be downloaded from the following link:  
This can be included within your settings parent folders, and also passed to parents when you arrange their child’s two-year check. It provides information on the check from both the health visitors and the Early Years settings
- The Health visiting service now have an account with the Worcestershire Secure Children’s Portal
- Early Years settings are being asked to send information on children who you have identified as having delays during your checks (with parents’ permission) via the portal so they can include this information when they assess the child. There is currently no requirement to share information with the health visiting team if the children are meeting all of their developmental milestones.
- Health visitors will also send information via the portal to the nursery settings when they have identified issues

A step by step guide will soon be available to download from our [website](#).

There is also comprehensive information on the [Health visitor’s website](#).

## Duchess of Cambridge Launches Early Years Research Centre

The Duchess of Cambridge has set up an early childhood research centre with the ambition of changing the way society thinks about the first five years of a child’s life and transforming the lives of future generations.

[Duchess of Cambridge launches early years research centre | Nursery World](#)

## New EYFS and Development Matters Training

The Early Years team have recorded training sessions to help support all Early Years practitioners and leaders with their implementation of the new EYFS and non-statutory Development Matters documents. Links to each can be found here:

[Watch EYFS Training Session](#)

[Watch Development Matters Training Session](#)

## Early Years Alliance's National Week of Play!

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a hugely detrimental impact on children's access to play.

We know that play is fundamental to a child's learning and development. Play is how children make sense of the world and it is even more important now as it is the first step in giving them back a sense of control after a confusing time in their lives.

That's why **the Early Years Alliance (which runs Family Corner) has launched a National Week of Play** to encourage and inspire parents to discover and explore new play ideas to do at home.

**Throughout this week they will be sharing tips and ideas for parents on the topic of play.**

If you register your interest with the alliance, they'll send you the link to their **free resource pack** with lots of ideas and inspiration on how parents can get the best out of play time with their children.

For more information please visit: <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/national-week-play>

## Early Years Network Events

As a follow-up to our recently recorded training sessions on the new EYFS and Development Matters, the Early Years team will be hosting Question and Answer events on Tuesday 6th July and Monday 12th July at 7.00pm. Bookings are now being taken; please be advised we can accept no more than two representatives per setting.

If you have any questions related to the new EYFS or Development Matters that you would like discussed at the events, we would be grateful if you could send them to us in advance via the usual email address; [eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

Best regards,



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