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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

This week we have all been cheered by the news of lockdown measures easing, although this has been tempered by the ever-rising number of cases that continue to impact on Early Years providers across the county. This week's bulletin contains the very latest government guidance as well as a ministerial letter from Vicky Ford and Jo Churchill and a link to the DfE's Help for Early Providers Service, which is well worth a look.

On a different note, it was great to meet with colleagues for our Q&A session on the new EYFS on Tuesday evening and we are looking forward to further interesting discussions next Monday. Please come along if you haven't booked already.

Best wishes.

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Ministerial Letter

Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached a letter to all early years providers from Vicky Ford, Minister for Children and Families and Jo Churchill, Minister for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care.

The letter pulls together some important advice and guidance on support for children’s health and wellbeing which we urge all early years providers to be aware of. DfE would be very grateful for assistance from Local Authorities to distribute this to all of your registered early years providers via email at your earliest convenience. We have also published this letter on Foundation Years so it is publicly available.

With thanks and kind regards,
Early Years Entitlements

DfE Help for Early Years Providers Service

To support early years providers to understand and implement the changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework, the Department for Education (DfE) have set up the ['Help for Early Years Providers' service](#)

New food safety resource

Tragically, a child dies in the UK every month from choking and hundreds more require hospital treatment. The EYFS framework requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. Early years practitioners must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food in their setting are competent to do so.

To support this, DfE have developed a [new food safety resource](#) on the 'Help for Early Years Providers' service with advice on safe weaning, foods to avoid, how to prepare food safely to avoid choking and preparing food hygienically.

The new service is currently in a testing phase and is subject to change following user feedback. Further content is planned to be added to the website over time with additional content to be decided based on user feedback. You can provide feedback by completing [this survey](#).

Updated Covid -19 Guidance

On Monday, the Prime Minister [set out details](#) of the final roadmap step (Step 4) in the transition out of lockdown. **Subject to a final review of the data next week**, legal restrictions will end on Monday 19 July.

Government are changing the controls that apply in early years settings with the aim to maintain a baseline of protective measures while maximising attendance and minimising disruption for children. Government have published a summary of the evidence behind the decision [here](#).

Actions for early years guidance updated

DfE have published [updated guidance](#) to be followed once Step 4 of the roadmap commences which is expected to be on Monday 19th July. The [existing guidance](#) should be followed until then.

In advance of this you should:

- Prepare (or update) your outbreak management plans outlining how you would operate if there were an outbreak in your setting or local area.
- Review and update your risk assessment - using it as a living document, dating any amendments.

Subject to national confirmation on Monday 12th July, after the latest data has been considered, the key changes at Step 4 include:

- No longer recommending that it is necessary to keep groups apart as much as possible but, you may continue with bubbles until the end of term if you close for the summer holiday.
- Settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing but may be contacted to help with identifying close contacts.
- From 16 August, children under the age of 18 will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case but they will be advised to take a PCR test.
- Face coverings will no longer be recommended for staff and visitors in corridors or communal areas.
- Parent and child groups can operate as normal and without restrictions in attendance.
- A list of sections in the guidance that have been updated, moved or removed can be found on pages 4 and 5.
- Continuing with:
 - good hygiene for everyone
 - maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents
 - keeping occupied spaces well ventilated
 - follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Be prepared to work with the Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) in the case of an outbreak in your setting or locality.

LORT contact details: 01905 845491 WCCHealthProtection@worcestershire.gov.uk

The [guidance for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children](#) has also been updated.

Summer Holiday Activities and Food Programme

The Summer Holidays are fast approaching. We have secured holiday activities at over 60 locations across Worcestershire. Schools and families will be able to search for Summer Clubs through an interactive booking map and pack out their summer holidays with a whole range of activities and clubs suitable for 5-15 year olds.

- The booking system will be live to schools and families on Monday 12th July and will be linked through the Ready, Steady, Worcestershire page.
- If you have FSM eligible children with SEND at your school, please get in touch with the HAF team to discuss suitable provision we have available.
- 'Just about managing' – schools can now nominate children and young people they consider, in their professional opinion, to be just about managing. We can then work to include them in the programme.

To get in touch with the HAF schools team, email: schools@hafworcestershire.co.uk

For more information about the HAF programme, please see [Holidays and Food \(HAF\) Programme at Worcestershire](#) & [Ready Steady Worcestershire](#).

Worcestershire's SLCN Pathway has moved to Balanced System® Pathway

The pathway builds on the Balanced System® outcomes framework for meeting speech, language and communication needs which is included in the Public Health England guidance for SLCN published in October 2020. The pathway tool navigates the provisions available for parents, carers and professionals to help all children and young people develop their speech, language and communication as well as for those with identified speech, language and communication needs.

Chosen provisions and resources are presented as a personalised journey for the user, whether parent, carer or professional. Users follow a series of questions leading to relevant information and resources. As they choose which are most useful, they can 'add' to create their own pathway which can be saved and added to at a later date.

Visit the pathway to start your journey and find information about local services, practical guidance and tools to help you to support children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.

<https://pathway.thebalancedsystem.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.

The final workshop of the term is:

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@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk with:

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

Further Bereavement Guidance for Early Years



Support for bereaved children and their families in Worcestershire

Footsteps is a small, local charity supporting bereaved children, young people and their families across South Worcestershire. The charity is well established in the area and was set up almost 10 years ago in response to a real need for professional bereavement support for children and young people in the area - it offers a completely free service for those in need, aged 5 – 21 years. Four professionally qualified and experienced bereavement practitioners provide specialist one-to-one bereavement support in safe educational environments and also remotely. When resources allow, they can also provide training and inputs for school and college staff. In addition, they offer advice to parents, carers and professionals, informing and raising awareness about bereavement in the community. Their service is delivered on an outreach basis, with practitioners travelling to support young people in schools, colleges, universities and other agreed settings. Support is tailored to meet the child's and/or young person's specific needs and the number of sessions delivered is flexible and needs based.

Each year Footsteps also endeavours to organise and offer a number of family activity days, inviting bereaved families they have worked with to meet with other bereaved families; to come together to share their feelings, to help stop them feeling isolated and to help them to have fun again without feeling guilt. Again, these events are provided completely free of charge.

The referral process is very simple and straightforward and referrals for support are taken from school staff, from other professionals, from families and from older young persons themselves. To make a referral call Helen Dolton on either telephone number given here : 0845 4676065 / 07460 793596 or email info@talktofootsteps.co.uk.

There is also a service called Touchstones providing a bereavement service in the Redditch and Bromsgrove area, though on a smaller scale.

Weekly Attendance Data

Thank you to everyone who submitted a return last week.

The form to complete for the **week commencing Monday 5th July** is now available:

<https://forms.office.com/r/mAycr2xV1h>

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 13th July**.

If you have any difficulties completing the form, please contact EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk or NEF@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Worcestershire Provider Agreement

The Worcestershire Provider Agreement 2021/22 was sent out to all providers on Wednesday. For providers who wish to offer funded places from September, the Provider Declaration Form must be returned by Friday 30th July. If you have not received a copy of the Agreement, please email NEF@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk and request a copy of the email.

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.

[Watch EYFS Training Session](#)

[Watch Development Matters Training Session](#)

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

Ofsted updates to the early years inspection handbook

Ofsted has made some updates to the early years inspection handbook, with changes due to come into force in September.

[Early years inspection handbook](#)

Nasen: Meeting the Needs of Every Child

This DfE funded webinar is FREE to access and will provide Early Years Practitioners with a thorough understanding of inclusive practice for SEND in Early Years settings.

[Register for 29th July 13:00 - 15:00](#)

[Register for 12th August 18:00 - 20:00](#)

Best regards,



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