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## Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

We hope you are enjoying the glorious summer weather this week. We do not anticipate issuing a bulletin every week during the summer break but this week we do have some important information to share both locally and nationally which we think you will find of use.

Best wishes.

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## Public Health COVID advice and guidance

This information covers changes of guidance from 19<sup>th</sup> July. However, guidance is likely to change again on 16<sup>th</sup> August, this information will be reviewed and re-issued in light of any confirmed guidance changes.

We are aware that the national guidance advises to contact the national DfE helpline for positive cases, however, Worcestershire Public Health recommend that all Early Years providers continue to report all positive cases (single and multiple) to the LORT for local and swift advice and guidance until 16<sup>th</sup> August.

Early Years Providers updated guidance: Reference document: [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781447/Actions_for_early_years_and_childcare_providers_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

- Undertake/update your **risk assessment**, it should include:
  - Action to take if a child or staff member develops symptoms
  - Details about how your COVID-19 control measures will be monitored and updatedFor more details refer to: [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781447/Actions_for_early_years_and_childcare_providers_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic_-_GOV.UK.pdf)
- **Group numbers for activities** can be of any size **but** your risk assessment may conclude that keeping groups small and consistent will be a suitable preventative measure to reduce numbers having to self-isolate and develop COVID-19 should you have a positive case.
- Prepare and update an **Outbreak Management Plan (OMP)** - this to at least include arrangements for:
  - operational arrangements in the event of an outbreak
  - the re-introduction of bubbles if directed
  - wearing of face coverings
  - testing arrangements

A template to use for your OMP is being developed. The LORT will continue to advise and support outbreaks.

- Be prepared to be contacted to help with **identifying close contacts**. Until 16<sup>th</sup> August, close contacts **MUST** continue to self-isolate for 10 full days.
- **Continue to work with the Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT)** in the case of single cases or outbreaks (2 or more cases within 14 days). If there is an outbreak in a setting, or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, the Director of Public Health might advise a temporary reintroduce of some control measures. Your Outbreak Management Plan should be your document that indicates how you would re-introduce control measures if directed.

- **Face coverings** no longer need to be worn in communal areas; however, staff can do so if they wish to afford extra protection to their colleagues and children. The Government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but, expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This includes [public transport](#).
- **Minimum control measures** include:
  - Ensure good hand and respiratory hygiene for everyone
  - Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents
  - Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
  - Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19
- **LORT contact details**
  - [WCCHealthProtection@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:WCCHealthProtection@worcestershire.gov.uk)
  - 01905 845491
  - Please complete and return the Early Years checklist for cases of COVID-19 in your setting (staff and children).
- Most staff will not require **PPE** apart from that required as part of their work or when a child or staff member exhibits COVID-19 symptoms and a staff member needs to be within 2m of them. Further details can be found here: [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) \(applies until Step 4\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Staff should continue with twice weekly **LFD testing**. Test kits can be ordered here [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) this link can be shared widely with parents and staff.
- **Anyone** with a positive LFD test should **self-isolate** and arrange an immediate PCR test (at least within 2 days of the positive LFD test). They and their household must self-isolate until the test result is received. If the PCR result is negative, they can return to the setting as long as they are without COVID-19 symptoms.
- After careful consideration of the circumstances, settings can make a decision to refuse to accept a child back to the setting if, in your reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other children and staff from possible infection with COVID-19.
- You do not need to limit the **attendance of parents and carers** in your setting. However, please be aware that cases of COVID-19 are increasing, and the Delta variant is highly transmissible. If parents/carers/visitors to your setting become close contacts they will have to self-isolate and remain at home, this includes not leaving home for holidays.
- **Sports activities** and competitions can be planned in line with the [guidance on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) measures for grassroots sport participants, providers and facility operators](#).

- **Performances** in front of a live audience, sports and other events should comply with the guidance found here: [Performing arts - Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) or [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Organised events guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Educational visits** of any size can go ahead but international visits are not advised before the autumn term and settings should be aware that the guidance on [red, amber and green](#) listed countries can change at short notice.

## COVID-19 guidance update

### [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Guidance on what childcare services early years settings, childminders and local authorities need to provide during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has been updated to reflect that we moved to Step 4 on 19 July. This includes removing the section on 'contact tracing until Step 4'. They have also updated sections on clinically extremely vulnerable staff and children.

## 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 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](#)

## Choosing a Phonics Teaching Programme

The following link sets out what the government is doing to help schools choose a phonics teaching programme.

[Choosing a phonics teaching programme](#)

## Updated version of Development Matters

The Department for Education (DfE) have published a [revised version of Development Matters](#), government's non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), to reflect feedback received from the Early Adopter schools that have adopted the EYFS reforms over the 2020/21 academic year.

Please note that changes to content are minor and you will not need to alter any planning based on the September 2020 version that you may have already made.

These changes include:

- Updated links, making minor tweaks to wording for clarification purposes.
- Updates to the Introduction and Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning sections to ensure the wording is aligned with the aims of the reforms and reflects the most recent research and evidence.
- Ensuring the document is accessible, inclusive, and easier to navigate. This includes a new design, layout and colour coding.

No major changes have been made to the curriculum guidance under the seven areas of learning, therefore this update should not impact planning based on the early adopter version of Development Matters.

The DfE hope that the new design will make it easier for practitioners to navigate and use for curriculum planning.

## Guidance for schools to meet expectations for teaching early reading

[The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy](#)

## 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](#)

## Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

The Anna Freud National Centre some extremely useful updates to share with you. This includes their brand-new early years Staff Wellbeing Resource which was launched this week.

The fabulous new free [Staff Wellbeing Resource](#) is aimed at nurseries, preschools and other early years and childcare settings.

It offers practical guidance on how settings can support the mental health of their staff. It also contains some particularly interesting findings from a survey sent out to early years staff - regarding their mental health needs and experiences. Almost 1,500 nursery staff responded to this survey.

The survey discovered that nursery staff love their work, and many feel their settings are actively engaging with staff mental health and achieving positive results. But, less than half (47%) were aware of whether their nursery had a mental health and wellbeing policy in place, and where there was no known policy in place, staff stress levels were found to be higher.

Nursery staff also said that the pandemic had taken its toll on their mental health, with 50% reporting that they felt unwell as a result of work-related stress during the past year and 66% reporting that the pandemic had impacted their wellbeing and mental health.

The main areas which staff felt could make a difference to the wellbeing of staff were thought to be:

1. Supporting each other
2. Supportive management
3. The work environment
4. Help in accessing outside support

The free resource looks into how settings can excel in all these four areas. It also includes a range of practical tips and ideas on how to champion staff wellbeing, and an activity checklist designed to enable settings to implement permanent changes and monitor their progress.

So how exactly can a pair of **wellington boots sprayed gold** help a child in your setting who has been affected by trauma or abuse? And how can a **box of dead insects** help a child in your setting who has suffered a bereavement?

In the last few months, the Anna Freud Centre ran a series of three fascinating live webinars just for nursery and other early years staff. The first looked at managing challenging behaviour, the second looked at attending to the needs of children affected by a bereavement, and the third advised on how nursery staff can help any children in their setting who may have experienced trauma or abuse.

These events are free for you to watch at a time of your choosing. Just click these YouTube links:

Webinar 1) [Supporting children in early years settings who may have experienced trauma or abuse](#)

Webinar 2) [Supporting bereaved children in early years settings](#)

Webinar 3) [Managing challenging behaviour in an early years setting](#)

Speakers included **Louise Jackson**, Deputy Head of St Lawrence's primary and nursery, child bereavement specialist, **Beck Ferrari**, and our own mental health experts

**Nearly 3,000 early years staff logged on to these fascinating live webinars to watch them in real time. Now you can watch at a time of your choosing. Some of these subjects are seldom covered in training, so feel free to pass these links on to your teams or any colleagues who would be interested.**

Click [here](#) to access this great new resource!

This resource was created as part of a collaboration with a number of local authorities and other partners

## Annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment for Early Years Settings and Childminders

Over the term we have consulted with the sector and worked with some DSL's from across the County and have now developed a self-assessment audit tool (Annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment for Early Years Settings and Childminders). For some years, schools have been completing a similar assessment known as the section 175 as a legal requirement.

In Early Years the toolkit is **not** mandatory, however WCF believe this will support you in your setting to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding over the past 12 months. This is an online survey which will be available yearly and can be completed online via <https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=162566541036> .

This will need to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021, the results will then be shared with Denise Hannibal, Early Years and Education Safeguarding Lead and will support developing training needs for Worcestershire Early Years DSL's and all Practitioners, as well as supporting you in your setting to identify any priorities to ensure safeguarding is effective.

## Additional dates for Free SEND Workshops running over summer holidays

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.

Following the success of the last two terms of SEND workshops, we have put additional dates on for over the summer holidays.

Workshops available are:

Top tips for promoting positive behaviour

- Tuesday 17th August 4.30 - 5.30pm

Completing a Support Plan

- Tuesday 24th August 4.30 - 5.30pm

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

## Educational Psychology Service

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) delivers statutory and traded psychological services for children and young people aged 0 to 25, within a range of educational and community settings such as pre-schools, schools, colleges, children's homes and children's centres. Worcestershire Children First would like to seek your views on the support your school or early years setting receives from this service and understand what you may need in future from this service.

Please complete the [Educational Psychology Service: Questionnaire for Schools & Early Years Settings](#)

The questionnaire gives you chance to share your views and experiences and will be used to help shape the EP service to ensure children and young people get the best support possible. The closing date for feedback is Thursday 30th September 2021.

## Opportunity in the Wyre Forest: Early Years Language Classes

Worcestershire Children First have an exciting opportunity for a school or other appropriate early years setting in the Wyre Forest area to be part of a countywide service providing specialist Early Years Language Classes. The language classes are for pre-school aged children (3-5 years) and have been developed to ensure that pre-school children with a primary Special Educational Need (SEN) of Speech, Language and Communication have the specialist input they require through efficient and effective intervention to ensure that their educational needs can be met.

We are looking for potential providers who have appropriate accommodation within the Wyre Forest and have the delivery capacity to provide up to 10 FTE places, equivalent to support for up to 29 children per year. Places are commissioned and funded at £10,000 per place. The service will also receive dedicated and specialist Speech and Language Therapist time to provide detailed assessments, intervention work, support, advice and training.

If you think this opportunity may be of interest to you and you would like to find out more, please contact Beth Wilkinson on 01905 844724, or alternatively email [bwilkinson@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:bwilkinson@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) to arrange a suitable time to discuss.

## 'The Outdoor Practitioner'

It is **FREE** to read and **download** from the Muddy Faces website.

**The Outdoor Practitioner** is filled with feature articles, case studies/projects, activities and includes contributions from organisations such as the National Trust, The Wildlife Trusts and the Forest School Association.

We want to spread the word and share the passion for outdoor learning.

This month includes feature articles on **hand washing** & Jan White delves into **The Natural Play Principles** and much more!

[Click here to see the Summer Edition!](#)

Best regards,



Ian Morris  
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