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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

With the summer holidays fully underway we find ourselves midway through August already! Whether you are working or not, we hope you are enjoying the summer and finding time to relax.

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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Covid 19 Guidance Updates

Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case in all education and childcare sectors

From Monday 16 August unvaccinated young people up to the age of 18 years and 6 months and fully vaccinated adults, are no longer required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Those identified as a close contact will be informed by NHS Test and Trace that they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We strongly encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so. There is no requirement to self-isolate while awaiting PCR test results and so individuals can attend their setting as usual.

Children and young people who attend an education or childcare setting and who have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend their setting as normal.

18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children and young people until 6 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

We have updated the frequently asked questions on changes to contact tracing of close contacts and self-isolation. These can all be found on the document sharing platforms for [primary and early years](#), [secondary schools, further education and higher education](#) and [children's social care](#).

The DfE have also updated the following guidance to reflect the changes:

- [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)
- [Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#)
- [Special schools and other specialist settings: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)
- [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#)

Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a Government Scheme that provides weekly vouchers to eligible parents and can help parent/carers who are pregnant or have a young child under four. These vouchers can be spent on milk, fruit and vegetables and infant formula milk at local shops and supermarkets, as well as offering coupons for free vitamins too.

Early Years settings should be promoting this scheme to parent/carers in their settings.

For more information about the scheme, visit [Healthy Start website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Qualifying criteria for the Healthy Start programme

Parent/carers will qualify for the Healthy Start scheme if they are at least 10 weeks pregnant or if they have at least one child that's under 4.

In addition, they must be receiving any of the following:

- Child Tax Credit (only if the family's annual income is £16,190 or less)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)
- Universal Credit (only if the family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month from employment)

Additional criteria for Healthy Start:

- If the parent/carer is under 18 and pregnant, even if they are not claiming any benefits
- If the parent/carer claims income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are over 10 weeks pregnant
- If they or their partner get Working Tax Credit run-on only. (Working Tax Credit run-on is the Working Tax Credit they receive in the 4 weeks immediately after they have stopped working for 16 hours or more per week)

To find out if they earn £408 or less per month from employment whilst claiming Universal Credit, please advise them to look at their 'take-home pay for this period' on their monthly Universal Credit award notice.

Advice on how to apply:

Please see the [How to apply page on the Healthy Start website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Where can parent/carers get Healthy Start vitamins from?

To find where parent/carers can use their Healthy Start vitamins vouchers choose the relevant district below:

- [Bromsgrove](#)
- [Malvern Hills](#)
- [Redditch](#)
- [Worcester City](#)
- [Wychavon](#)
- [Wyre Forest](#)

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). Schools for some years have been completing a similar assessment known as the section 175 which legally has to be completed by all schools.

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 31st October 2021, the results will 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.

Save the Date - Early Years Conference

We are pleased to announce the return of our popular Early Years conference.

Titled "New Beginnings", it will take place on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th October at Worcester Racecourse. The Early Years team are inviting you to a full day of inspirational and motivational keynotes and workshops exploring the most talked about and current topics in Early Years.

Our exciting line-up of keynote speakers include the internationally renowned John Siraj Blatchford and Lynnette Brock from SchemaPlay, the former story-telling laureate Katrice Horsley, and acclaimed independent consultants Neil Farmer and Sonia Mainstone-Cotton.

There will also be the usual wide array of stalls and exhibitors. There really will be something for everyone in the Worcestershire Early Years community so please take advantage of our special Early Bird booking offer of just £50 to reserve your place.

More details will follow soon, but booking is live from Monday 23rd August.

The codes are:

- Friday 15th October - CON/21/433
- Saturday 16th October - CON/21/434

Ofsted Update

Ofsted have just launched a new page detailing what providers need to know about delivering the current and revised early years foundation stage (EYFS)

[Ofsted EIF inspections and the EYFS - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-2021)

Ofsted Early Education Update for Childminders
[Webinar for childminders - July 2021 - YouTube](#)

Best regards,



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