

ANNEX

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

PURPOSE

This is an Annex to the SEND Information Report, setting out the arrangements in place to support our children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during the COVID-19 related partial school closure starting from January 2021.

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1. Context

From 4th January 2021 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to continue to provide care for a limited number of children – those who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response – who absolutely need to attend and who cannot be safely cared for at home. 'Vulnerable children' includes those supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs (including those on child in need and child protection plans), 'looked after' children, those with education, health and care (EHC) plans and other children deemed vulnerable by the school.

This addendum of Thomas A'Becket Infant School SEND Information Report contains details of our individual arrangements and changes to our usual mode of working in the following areas:

- Vulnerable children and eligibility
- Safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing
- Arrangements for consulting parents of, and young people with, SEND
- Arrangements for assessing and reviewing children's progress
- Arrangements for supporting children in moving between phases of education
- Transition periods within school

- The approach to teaching children with SEND
- Support for emotional and social development
- Working alongside other professionals

2. Key Contacts

Role	Name	Email
Head Teacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs A Dingwall	head@tabinfant.org.uk
Inclusion Lead/ SENDCo	Ms C Thomson	cthomson@tabinfant.org.uk

3. Vulnerable children and eligibility

Vulnerable children include those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

These risk assessments will consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This will be on an individual basis and with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered
- the availability of appropriately trained staff (school will liaise with the local authority if a place is needed for an eligible child, but the school is unable to provide the specialist staffing for it)

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans, with local authorities needing instead to apply 'reasonable endeavours' to support these children and their families.

4. Safeguarding and monitoring of wellbeing

Thomas A'Becket Infant School continues in its commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its children during this period of general school closure.

Where children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in school, we will continue to ensure a safe space for these children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher and Deputy Head will work alongside the SENDCo to ensure that appropriate staff, facilities and provision are available to secure a safe, appropriate and positive placement for those children. The support appropriate to each child in this circumstance will be reviewed on an individual basis. Any updates to a child's situation will be updated on their risk assessments.

Thomas A'Becket Infant School will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

Where children with EHC plans do not take up a place in school and are cared for at home, an individual risk assessment will be completed and a communication plan will be put in place for the child. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

This plan will be reviewed weekly and where concerns arise, the Head Teacher/DSL and SENDCo will consider any referrals as appropriate.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, who have not been offered a place in school, there will be regular contact with class teachers through google classroom and emails. Parents can also contact the SENDCo by email or phone . This will ensure that parents of children with SEND will always have a way of contacting and communicating with school staff where needed.

5. Arrangements for consulting parents of, and children with, SEND

Working in partnership with children with SEND and their parents continues to be central to Thomas A'Becket Infant School's policies and practice.

The views of parents and children will always be considered in determining whether children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in school.

For children with EHC plans who are being cared for at home, their individual risk assessments will include communication plans to ensure that regular contact is maintained with key school staff. These communications may include: individual expectations for home learning, discussions around appropriate learning activities, adaptations to learning resources/activities and discussions of strategies for supporting children at home. In addition, all families can have personalised weekly homework packs with work along with resources to support them.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, school staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when setting accessible home learning for children with SEND. Personalised homework packs can be made for children with SEND.

The school website will include contact details so that, should parents of children with SEND need to contact a member of school staff for additional support or guidance for home learning, they can do so.

Where statutory processes relating to SEND are in action, the school will continue to maintain communication with parents of, and children with, SEND so that their views are actively sought, considered and promoted.

6. Arrangements for assessing and reviewing children's progress

Thomas A'Becket Infant School recognises that assessments and reviews of children's progress will continue to be necessary for some purposes during this period of school closure, mainly for the purpose of statutory assessment and review for new or existing EHC plans and for other assessments being completed by external professionals, for example speech and language therapists.

Where this is needed, key school staff will maintain communication with parents and relevant professionals to share, with necessary consents, the most current assessment information and professional observations that the school holds.

Where children's EHC plans are due for review within the period of school closure, the school will discuss arrangements with parents, children, the Local Authority and professionals involved in the plan to decide whether arrangements for a 'remote review' should be made, or whether reviews should be postponed until it is possible to meet with all parties involved in the plan. The SENDCo will make the necessary arrangements following this decision.

7. Arrangements for supporting children in moving between phases of education

For children due to move between phases of education at the end of this academic year, Thomas A 'Becket Infant School will continue to make contact with the new settings to share necessary information to make children's transitions as smooth as possible. The SENDCo will make contact with SENDCos in the new settings to share information on SEND needs. Where children with SEND would benefit from additional transition visits, every effort will be made to facilitate these where possible within DfE, PHE and government guidance.

For Year 2 children, we will seek to maintain a good flow of important information to support children's transfer from infant to junior school.

We recognise that transition may be a particular concern for parents of children of SEND, and communication remains open for parents to contact key school staff to discuss this.

Our approach to supporting children with transition will continue to be reviewed in line with all available DfE and government guidance on school closure.

8. The approach to teaching children with SEND

Thomas A'Becket Infant School recognises that children with SEND need access to home learning resources and activities which take account of their strengths and needs.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, class teachers and SENDCo will support them in accessing appropriate learning activities. School staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when setting accessible home learning for children with SEND. Parents of children with SEND can contact the class teacher or SENDCo if there are any concerns over home learning.

9. Support for social and emotional development

Thomas A'Becket Infant School understands that children's social and emotional development is particularly at risk within the current national climate and period of school closure.

Individual risk assessments for children with EHC plans will consider children's social and emotional development and will ensure that communication plans are in place to enable weekly reviews. Regular contact between school staff and parents/children will be central to identifying when additional support may be needed. Where concerns are raised or are apparent within these communications, the child's risk assessment will be reviewed by key school staff and appropriate action and onward referrals considered.

For all parents, key contact details are available on the school's website so that they are always able to reach school staff for support if needed.

If needed, we will signpost parents to other professionals who may be able to support them and their children at this time, particularly the Educational Psychology Service and other mental health and wellbeing support strategies and agencies.

10. Working alongside other professionals

Thomas A'Becket Infant School will continue to maintain contact with other professionals during this period of school closure. This will particularly include liaison with Learning and Behaviour Team and the Educational Psychology Service within the Local Authority. This service will be sharing resources which may be of use to parents and professionals during this time, and we will be adding links to these to our school website.

The SENDCo holds contact details for external professionals already working with children with SEND including speech and language, health and social care staff and will maintain both planned contacts and referrals if needed. Contact details for the SENDCo and key school staff are available via the school website should professionals need to make contact.

The SENDCo will signpost parents to appropriate external professionals as needed and will continue to fulfil authorised requests for information for assessment or review purposes.

Review

This addendum to the information report will be reviewed in light of new government guidance as and when it is published.