

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

To: Cambridgeshire Schools Forum

Date: 17th July 2020

From: Jonathan Lewis: Service Director, Education

Purpose: The Council's response to COVID-19 and our strategies for county-wide recovery will have a significant impact on outcomes for individuals and communities.

This report provides an update on the Council's ongoing response to the current Coronavirus pandemic in relation to Education.

Recommendation:

Schools Forum is recommended to note the continuing commitment of leaders and staff across children's services and partner agencies to ensure that the education needs of all children and young people continue to be met.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Council's ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic in relation to Education for the period from 22nd June to 3rd July 2020 set out in Appendix A.

Source Documents	Location
Covid-19 Highlight Reports	https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/CambridgeshireCommittees/PolicyServiceCommittees/tabid/138/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/528/id/60/Default.aspx

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREAS:	Education
REPORT AUTHOR:	Jonathan Lewis
REPORTING PERIOD:	22nd June to 3rd July

NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

- The government have announced that there will be no compulsory school opening during the summer holidays. Unlike in other holiday periods since schools closed, they have also indicated that schools do not need to open for vulnerable children or children of critical workers. Their guidance outlines that *'teachers, support staff and school leaders deserve a break, to recharge and rest'*.
- On the 2nd July the Department for Education (DfE) announced the process for full education opening in September along with detailed guidance. The guidance covered Early Years / Schools / FE / Special Schools.

The schools guidance outlines the key focus should be on control system to ensure the safety of children and staff. These systems include

- minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- introduce enhanced cleaning
- minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible including the operation of bubbles in schools (class or year group depending on sector).
- where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

School transport is going to be a challenge as LA delivered transport should try and maintain the bubble arrangements in schools. Use of public transport by pupils, particularly in peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum. Further guidance is due to be issued to Local Authorities shortly.

Attendance will be compulsory from September. This includes the parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school. Schools retain the responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence. They will be able to use their ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct. Where children cannot attend due to health issues, schools will be expected to offer these pupils access to remote education. In terms of curriculum, schools will be required to teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content. While substantial modification to the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year, schools should aim to return to the school's normal curriculum in all subjects by summer term 2021. Schools are required to develop remote education so that it is integrated into school curriculum planning.

Routine Ofsted inspections will remain suspended for the autumn term. However, during the autumn term, inspectors will visit a sample of schools to discuss how they are managing the return to education of all their pupils. These will be collaborative discussions, taking into

account the curriculum and remote education expectations set out in this document, and will not result in a judgement.

Statutory primary assessments will take place in summer 2021. The early years foundation stage profile, and all existing statutory key stage 1 and 2 assessments, will return in the summer 2021. The statutory rollout of the reception baseline assessment has been postponed until September 2021. GCSEs and A levels will take place in summer 2021 but with adaptations, including those which will free up teaching time.

- The government have announced a £1bn fund for pupil catch up. £650m of this funding will be allocated to schools directly. The remaining £350m will be focused on the new National Tutoring Programme (NTP). The NTP will be targeted to reach disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium. However, teachers and school leaders will be able to exercise their professional judgement to determine if tutoring is the right support for each pupil. The offer is in two parts –
 - NTP Partners - access to heavily subsidised tutoring from an approved list of tuition partners. These organisations, subject to quality, safeguarding and evaluation standards, will be given support and funding to reach as many disadvantaged pupils as possible. The tutoring will be provided by trained tutors who are external to the school. This is targeted support and will include activity such as one hour of tutoring per week for a course of 12-15 weeks.
 - TP Coaches – Coaches will be based in, and employed by, schools. They will be trained graduates in schools in the most disadvantaged areas to provide intensive catch-up support to their pupils, allowing teachers in these schools to focus on their classrooms. These coaches will be in schools full-time and can therefore provide more intensive and frequent support for the pupils who need this the most. They will mostly be providing one-to-one or small group support, but can also provide in-class support.

Provision will be subsidised by the DfE for up to 75%. This means that a school can buy a session that would normally cost £50, for £12. Schools are also free to use additional catch-up funding, announced by the Department for Education in 2020, to pay for the remainder of the cost.

- We are receiving around 10 update and guidance emails per day from the DfE to support the current situation around Covid-19.

NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

- We have seen the number of pupils attending school rise from 17,603 on the 11th June to 25,947 on the 30th June.
- Following government announcements, the LA advice to schools is to follow their existing plans and risk assessments until further guidance is received. Many of our school have gone to extraordinary efforts to open and have filled all capacity they have – the main challenge to further opening is the availability of staff. This has led to challenges with more key worker staff wishing to return.
- Early years numbers continue to fill with children. The position on the 2nd July within early years provision can be seen below –

	Childminders		Early Years Settings		Overall Children (11 th June position in brackets)
	Number	% Open	Number	% Open	
CCC	350	59%	270	77%	4,588 (2,231)
PCC	96	61%	91	85%	2,748 (1,847)

- We are communicating daily with schools and settings giving updates and interpretation on government guidance. We have provided support on use of hand dryers, the new guidance on [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#), changes in government guidance on social distancing, test and trace materials for parents, covid-19 funding for schools, summer free school meals, schools contribution to armed forces week, schools admissions code consultation, our summer learning resources, procurement guidance, DfE digital devices scheme and support for Headteachers with mental health challenges.
- A weekly report is provided to schools on the local public health data to help inform schools of position around Covid-19. The test and trace process continues to operate well. We have seen higher rates of suspected symptoms in line with increasing pupil numbers but very low reported cases of covid-19 in either staff or pupils. The operation of bubbles and the detailed risk planning undertaken by schools have been effective.
- Briefing were held with Headteachers and SENCOs on the easement to Education Health and Care Plans. These legal changes which will be in place until the end of September.

RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

- We have started our support for the recovery plans for schools for September. We will provide sign off for maintained schools risk assessment. In line with the previous partial opening, we will continue to share these with the trade unions.
- Development of a primary recovery curriculum and getting ready for restarting.
- Twice weekly meetings are held with the Department for Education to seek clarity on arrangements.
- A Headteacher briefing is taking place on Zoom on Monday 6th July – the 300 places have been fully booked.

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- We have agreed to restart restructuring proposals from schools. These were originally put on hold due to the covid-19 crisis. In all cases, these changes are a result of financial challenges so they are essential.

NEW FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- Following the release of reopening guidance, we remain concerned around the lack of clarity on providing home to school transport. If social distancing is required, there is a significant additional cost if we can source suitable vehicles to provide transport. Our teams are currently working out the implication of this new guidance.

WORKFORCE CHANGES

- There are no critical issues currently with staff absence although the workforce has worked extended hours for nearly a 3 month period. Our capacity for business as normal activity is impaired.
- We continue to be concerned around the stress and anxiety in schools and settings and are providing whatever support we can to leaders. Sickness around stress is rising across the education sector.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Daily positive news stories from Education continue to be published.
- The Service Director has written an article for the Trust Journal on collaboration in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough during Covid-19. He also undertook an interview on Radio Cambridgeshire Breakfast Show on school re-opening.