



Friday 15th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities during lockdown

Children with special educational needs and disabilities may face lots of changes in their day to day lives because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. Their routines, regular support and the people they see may all be different now.

As a parent or carer you may feel concerned about how the current situation will affect your child. This could include being worried about how you'll manage your child's care, medication or educational needs at home. You may also be worried about juggling your home and work life.

Every child with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN,D) is different and will have different support needs in the current situation. We're here for parents and carers and have advice to help you and your child find ways to cope together.

Can my child attend school?

We have invited all children with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) into school. We have also invited other children that we class as vulnerable, and the children of critical or keyworkers.

How can we work together to meet my child's needs during the national lockdown?

Every child on the SEN,D register has a Support and Achievement Plan (SAP). These were written by class teachers in the autumn term and shared with you. Staff reviewed these at the end of the autumn term and will be writing a new plan, which they will share with you over the phone by the end of January. This is for all pupils, whether they are at home or in school. Provision may have to be tweaked because of lockdown but all children will have revised targets. These plans will be reviewed just before Easter.

Will professionals, such as therapists or educational psychologists, still be able to assess and support my child?

Meetings between school staff and professionals are continuing remotely. Most assessments will take place virtually, if this is appropriate. Occasionally professionals may assess your child in school but each individual case will be individually risk assessed. As usual, parents and carers will be informed if their child

is being assessed by a professional. We will continue to work with outside agencies to get your child the support and provision that they need.

Where can I go for extra information and support?

In the first instance, please continue to communicate with your child's class teacher through the year group emails. If you continue to have a concern please do contact me, and either myself or one of the senior leaders will be in touch to see what we can do to support you. There are also external agencies and support groups that can help and on this page I have collated some links that may be able to provide support and advice.

The NSPCC website is a useful starting point for general advice.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/coronavirus-supporting-children-special-educational-needs-disabilities/>

The West Berkshire Autism Team are running:

Zoom coffee mornings.

21st Jan 2021 and – 11th March 2021 9.30am -11.00am
Meet the New Autism Team Members

Melissa Hutchings the Autism Advisor for Families, West Berkshire, along with Lesley Botchway and Sue Granger the Autism Advisor's for Schools will hopefully both be joining us. Please come along if you can. Remember to make your coffee and share your biscuits!

All parents who have children with additional needs are welcome, little ones are also welcome to be with us, however please make sure they are fully clothed.

Workshops :

Time: 9.45am to 12noon

Venue: Zoom:

- 28th Jan 2021 – Sensory Processing Difficulties –What does it mean and how can we help?
- 18th March 2021 – Understanding Behaviour and how best to support our young people with a Therapeutic approach.
- 27th May 2021 – Understanding and Supporting Self–Regulation Skills in Young People

Support for siblings:

Date: 9th Feb 2021 9.30am – 12.30pm

Venue: Thatcham Baptist Church

This workshop will be discussing 'Siblings of brothers or sisters on the Autism Spectrum'. The aims of the course is:

- To offer advice and provide information on the experiences and emotional needs of Siblings
- How to support them and to explain 'What is Autism'
- What support is available for them?

**All workshops are run by Melissa Hutchings – Autism Advisor for Families.
Please contact Admin to book a place on: 01635 503646.
Or email Learning Support Team LearningSupportTeam@westberks.gov.uk**

The West Berkshire Parent Carer Forum is also a vital lifeline for families. They have a website and a Facebook page. <https://www.wbpcf.org.uk/>

I hope you have found this information helpful. We are also working hard to update the SEN,D section of our website <https://www.pdp.w-berks.sch.uk/send>

We are here for you. Please do continue to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Ms Laura Street
Inclusion Manager
Parsons Down Partnership of Schools