

Email: debbie.jones@croydon.gov.uk

Please ask for/reply to: Debbie Jones

Date: 14 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We are making contact to update you on the current position re Covid 19 in Croydon and the potential impact this is having on our schools and settings. We all hoped for a better 2021 but the situation remains serious with Croydon categorised as within the contingency planning area which provides additional guidance to limit further spread of the virus.

I am grateful that you have supported all that the schools have done to date and assure you that we are working closely with them to address the next phase of activity to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities during this pandemic. With the planned roll out of testing for our secondary phase schools and the possibility of effective vaccinations in the pipeline there is much planning to be done. I understand that the rise in infection rates has added to the uncertainty and anxieties that surround the next phase of the Covid 19 plan but can assure you that the education directorate will support all our schools during the next few weeks and months as we have always done.

In conjunction with the Director of Public Health we are monitoring closely the advice and guidance being issued by central government and developing implementation plans for our Croydon context. The current Public Health guidance is for as many of us to remain at home where possible in order to minimise opportunities for Covid 19 to continue to spread. As part of our planning we are working to ensure that schools and settings are supported and decisions regarding the safe education of our children and young people are taken in respect of individual circumstances and in line with national guidance. We will fully support and endorse our schools in this process and the bespoke plans they put into place to meet their context.

There is no doubt that the safety, health and well-being of our children, young people and all the staff that work in our schools must be paramount in this. We are confident that all schools and settings will consider along with their parents and carers the best and safest way to deliver education for their community throughout this challenging time. As part of this, Croydon Schools will continue to work hard to ensure that all our children have the opportunity to learn at home where attendance is not possible. While this is not the same as being in the classroom all our headteachers and teachers and staff in our schools have enjoyed seeing the responses to the remote learning opportunities they have set up and have asked to join me in thanking you for your responsiveness to this. I hope that this will

continue. Certainly the feedback to date is very positive on the range of remote learning packages provided.

For children and young people who have additional needs the council's SEND Service continues to deliver the statutory processes linked to requests for assessment and issuing of Education, Health and Care plans as necessary. This has been managed through a variety of approaches including virtual meetings. The key assessment panels are scheduled throughout the year to ensure effective processes are maintained and delivered. Where possible, annual reviews will be undertaken through virtual means also until such a time as schools are fully reopened and we can meet together. The SEND Service officers have engaged with many parents through virtual 'Microsoft Teams Meetings' and we have received positive feedback on these meetings.

We have also responded to a number of wider matters that may impact upon families, such as adequate access to food, in the context of children not receiving meals at school. In these cases families have been sign-posted to the range of family support options and, if and when appropriate, direct contact has been made with social workers on behalf of parents.

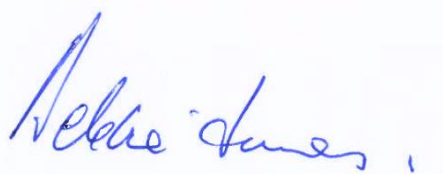
We have posted advice and links to information and activity packs for children and young people with special educational needs on the Local Offer website which can be accessed at: <https://localoffer.croydon.gov.uk>. We hope that you find these helpful. Along with this we will be publishing regular Frequently Asked Questions and information up-dates in order to support our planning and response to the Covid 19 situation. We are keen also to work with our Parent Forum throughout this period in order to ensure we have effective communications with yourselves.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your understanding, commitment and for following government advice to keep us all safe during this period. We are in an ever-changing period where we need to remain vigilant and responsive in order to best address the challenges we are currently facing.

Yours sincerely



Shelley Davies
Interim Director of Education



Debbie Jones
Interim Executive Director

Should you have any concerns or questions linked to Health advice please see the following contacts:

Health Services Contact Details:

Special Schools Nursing Team

Schools and parents can contact their normal named school nurse in the Nursing Hub on 020 8680 4810, or email mhn-tr.specialschools@nhs.net

Speech and Language Therapy

0208 714 2594 between 8:30am and 5pm. You can also email CH-TR.SLTCroydonchildren@nhs.net.

Physiotherapy

email ch-tr.croydonchildrensphysio@nhs.net. If you can't email, telephone 020 8274 6853.

Community Paediatrics

email us on ch-tr.communitypaediatrics@nhs.net. If you do not have access to email, please call 02084013982 option 1.

Occupational Therapy:

If you need to contact the service, please email us on ch-tr.croydonchildrensOT@nhs.net. If you do not have access to email, please call 0208 274 6854/6850.

Public Health

Covid19@croydon.gov.uk

SEN Service

SEnquiries@croydon.gov.uk