



Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

Annex to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy (COVID-19 Response)

April 2020

Policy Tracker – Responsibility for monitoring this policy: Andy Plant (Education Lead)			
Date	Reviewed and Updated By:	Role	Date Approved by the Council of Management
28/04/2020	Ruth Beachim-Ratcliffe	Designated Safeguarding Lead	

PURPOSE

This is an Annex to the SEND Policy, setting out the arrangements in place to support our children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during the COVID-19 related temporary school closure starting from 24th March 2020.

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1. Context

From 20th March 2020 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, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

This addendum of the Elmfield School SEND Policy 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

Please note: This annex should be read in conjunction with the COVID-19 Safeguarding Policy Annex.

2. Key Contacts

Role	Name	Email
Education Lead		
SENCCo		
Safeguarding Lead	Ratcliffe	

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, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing

Elmfield 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 need to take up an eligible place in school, Elmfield School will liaise with the relevant Local Authority to ensure a safe space for these children to attend and flourish. The Education Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 recorded and reviewed on an individual basis. Any updates to a child's situation will be updated on their risk assessments which are then shared with the Local Authority and the relevant staff at Elmfield School.

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.

Elmfield School, its Education Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and SENDCo will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan for children with EHC plans.

This plan must be reviewed weekly and where concerns arise, the Education Lead, DSL and SENDCo will consider any referrals as appropriate.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, who are not attending school, parents of children with SEND will always have a way of contacting and communicating with school staff where needed, using Google Classroom and/or staff email.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website.

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 Elmfield School's policies and practice.

The views of parents and children will be considered in determining whether children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in an alternative setting, as detailed in Section 2 of this addendum.

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,

adaptions to learning resources/activities and discussions of strategies for supporting children at home.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, signposts will be included within Google Classroom to 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.

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

Elmfield 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 (GCSE) and review for new or existing EHC plans and for other assessments being completed by external professionals, for example Educational Psychologists.

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. The approach to teaching children with SEND

Elmfield 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, signposts will be included within year Google Classrooms to 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.

Communication plans will be in place for any children with EHC plans being cared for at home to ensure that regular contact is maintained for discussion and setting of individual, appropriate learning activities, strategies and resources.

Learning Support for individual children will be agreed with the parents, the class teacher and the child's Learning Support Assistant alongside the risk assessment and the EHC plan. Learning outcomes should be clear, realistic and age appropriate. Remote support methods should be fully risk assessed and should be in line with the school's Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. This means that staff are not expected to facilitate 1:1 sessions using video conferencing. If it is decided that video conferencing is the most appropriate method, this is agreed with parents and staff, and parents must be present during the sessions. This will be part of a written agreement with all parties concerned, and form part of the child's risk assessment.

8. Support for social and emotional development

Elmfield 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 at least fortnightly review. 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.

Elmfield School will signpost parents to other professionals who may be able to support them and their children at this time, particularly the Educational Psychology Service. The school will also signpost families to mental health and wellbeing support strategies and agencies.

9. Working alongside other professionals

Elmfield School will continue to maintain contact with other professionals during this period of school closure. This will particularly include liaison with the Specialist Teaching and 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 health and social care staff and will maintain both planned contacts and referrals of arising need.

Elmfield School will signpost parents to appropriate and available 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.