



Services to People

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Dear Primary Headteachers,

We are mindful that you are currently experiencing a number of challenges in respect of the volume of children who are requesting places in school. As you will know central government released revised guidance on 16 June about the 'critical workers who can access schools or educational settings; which reiterated the point that key workers and vulnerable children remain the priority groups.

However this guidance needs to be read in the context of the planning processes that were articulated in the revised documents for both primary and secondary school on 15 June, which asked schools to continue with their plans for the wider re-opening if schools for Nursery, Reception, Year 1, year 6 and a quarter of Year 10 and Year 12 at any one time.

Locally the number of key workers attending schools has increased considerably since May 22nd, from 1013 to 2539 on June 18. This is placing schools under additional pressure given that plans were originally set by schools to accommodate the specified year groups taking account of the staffing available and the space within their schools.

Schools worked hard to develop their plans in preparation for the wider opening. The critical worker guidance does state that 'there is no expectation on primary schools to welcome additional children where they do not have capacity to do so, and they should only do so where they can accommodate more children while still following the approaches set out in the relevant guidance and their own risk assessment'.

With this in mind schools should continue to work with the bubbles that they originally established in their planning for wider re-opening. Where schools have additional requests for critical workers these should be accommodated wherever possible. Schools will need to communicate carefully to families about why a request has been declined and should refer to their risk assessments and planning processes within these responses. If any key workers are unable to access a place at school and require childcare please refer the parents/carers to schoolenquiries@stockport.gov.uk.

Schools will of course continue to provide home learning for any children that are not in school.

The planning guide for primary schools that was revised on 15th June states that: 'Now that primary schools will be opening more widely, larger numbers of staff will be needed to provide face-to-face teaching at school. This means that it may be more difficult to maintain the same level of remote education provision for pupils in the year groups that are not eligible to attend, or for those pupils in year groups who are eligible to attend but who themselves cannot.

Chris McLoughlin
Director of Children's Services

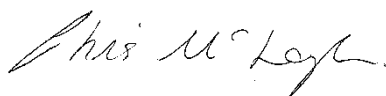
We are conscious that many schools are being challenged about the quality and the amount of home-learning that is being provided. It is important to remember that there are no nationally agreed 'standards' around home learning. Schools have worked hard to develop their own local offer and these will vary from school to school. This will be dependent upon the resource available within school, both the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and the people available to work on this. Please try wherever possible to be transparent to parents/carers about the offer that you are making, through your website or other known communication routes with parents. Equally it may also be helpful to post examples of where the home learning has been particularly effective.

Live-lessons has also been a consideration for some colleagues within the context of home-learning. At the moment the Local Authority is recommending that live-lessons should not be undertaken in our primary schools. If you have any concerns about this please contact either your link adviser or Julia.Storey@stockport.gov.uk.

As we are all aware home-learning has changed and developed hugely during the pandemic. As yet we do not know what September holds but it is likely that some aspect of home-learning may be with us for the foreseeable future. So this may be good time to take a pause and reflect upon the benefits of home learning on children's education. We recognise that this will also need to take into account the type of contacts that have been maintained between school and the child as well as the actual activities that have been provided. It may be helpful to gather examples of where this, in the round, has worked well to help us collectively consider how we might do this in future.

Thank you again for all that you are doing to support our children.

Yours sincerely,



Chris McLoughlin
Director of Children's Services



Steve Nyakatawa
Director of Education Services (Interim)