



To All Headteachers

Children, Young People and Education

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Dear Colleague

I know there seems to be a constant stream of updates each day and so I had made a commitment to avoid, where possible, writing to you on a Friday. Therefore, I apologise for another letter but some of the updates included are time limited and I am keen to ensure you continue to receive any updates in a timely fashion.

January School Census

The DfE have made the decision to go ahead with the Spring Term School Census return. The dates are as previously published, and therefore, census day will be Thursday 21st January 2021.

The DfE are working on additional guidance and note the following:

“Whilst most of the School Census requires details of pupils on roll, additional guidance will be provided ... to help you provide data for other items such as school meals and class activity. To help you prepare, it is likely that this guidance will explain about how we will require details of what you would expect or what would be timetabled if schools was open as normal.”

Census Day - All files from Maintained schools should be sent to Management Information via the secure method of Perspective Lite by Friday 22nd January 2021. If you think you will have difficulties in meeting this timescale then please contact us at MIEducation&WiderEH@kent.gov.uk

Query Notes - You will need to send us any explanations for the queries in your census return so that we can add them to the file on the DfE website 'Collect'. Please send them to MIEducation&WiderEH@kent.gov.uk as we cannot see the notes that you enter in the authorisation box in SIMS.

Reduced Timetables - KCC are required to maintain a central record of all pupils not accessing a full-time education in the usual way and schools have a responsibility to record and submit that information so that it can be monitored centrally. You should already be recording this information via the online form so that KCC can monitor the information in schools. Part of this monitoring is to record those schools that do not have reduced timetable information at census time for the current census term.

In order to collect this information, we will send an email during census week asking that if you have a nil return for the current school term, you reply to the email stating your DfE number and "NIL RETURN". If you do have any pupil on a reduced timetable that has not been recorded via the online form, please go to <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/school-management/data-and-reporting/management-information/school-census/reduced-timetable> to provide this information.

For further information on Census, please see our Kelsi page: (<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/school-management/data-and-reporting/management-information/school-census>)

Thank you in advance for your help with this statutory return.

Serial Testing of Close Contacts

I am sure many of you will have read articles this morning, reporting that the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is not approving serial testing in schools for close contacts. It is unclear if these reports are correct, or a misrepresentation.

While the issue is clarified by the DfE and the Regulator our advice to schools is to pause serial testing of pupils and staff who have had contact with a Covid-19 positive individual and require self-isolation. We will of course update you as soon as we can.

Updated Guidance for Specialist and Alternative Provisions

The DfE has recently updated their specific national lockdown guidance for Specialist and Alternative provisions, which can be found here.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952377/Guidance_for_special_schools_specialist_post-16_providers_and_alternative_provision_during_the_national_lockdown.pdf

I have chosen to include this update in my letter to all schools, as a key point to note is that the document clearly indicates that the government is not minded to relax the obligations on LA's and healthcare commissioning bodies to secure the provision prescribed in a child's EHCP, stating:

Where a pupil or student has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, it remains the duty of the local authority and health commissioning body to secure or arrange the provision specified in the plan (under section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014)..... At this stage, we do not intend to use the powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to modify the section 42 duty, but we will keep this position under review based on the evidence.

SEND Update

I am pleased to announce the launch of our new Mainstream Core Standards guidance and our Statement of Inclusion. Thank-you to all who inputted into the development of these, they reflect our collective ambition and continued efforts to secure the best outcomes for our children and young people.

Mainstream Core Standards:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-educational-needs/the-mainstream-core-standards>

Inclusion Statement:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/inclusion/inclusion-statement>

We have made the decision to continue to deliver our Mainstream Core Standards Online Introduction sessions, next week, as previously advertised. To allow more flexible access to these, we will also run a repeat of the sessions in February, more details to follow. If you have not yet booked your free place on one of the sessions, please use the links below:

Event	Code	Date	Venue	Location
Introduction to the new Mainstream Core Standards for SEND	SCH 21/483	18/01/2021	Zoom course	Location not specified
Introduction to the new Mainstream Core Standards for SEND	SCH 21/484	18/01/2021	Zoom course	Location not specified
Introduction to the new Mainstream Core Standards for SEND	SCH 21/485	20/01/2021	Zoom course	Location not specified
Introduction to the new Mainstream Core Standards for SEND	SCH 21/486	20/01/2021	Zoom course	Location not specified

SEND Strategy consultation

A gentle reminder that our SEND strategy is currently out for public consultation. We welcome as many views as possible on this and would like to reiterate our offer of facilitated discussions with collective groups of schools. The consultation **closes on 4th February 2021** and can be found at:

<https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/sendstrategyconsultation/consultationHome>

I hope you all have a restful weekend.

Yours sincerely



David Adams
Interim Director of Education