



To: All Headteachers

**Children, Young People and  
Education Directorate**

Sessions House  
County Hall  
MAIDSTONE  
Kent ME14 1XQ

Phone: (03000) 416991  
Ask for: Matt Dunkley  
Email: [matt.dunkley@kent.gov.uk](mailto:matt.dunkley@kent.gov.uk)

Date: 29 April 2020

Dear Colleague

Today's updates primarily focus on subjects that I have previously touched on in recent letters. However, as has always been the case, I am keen to ensure that when Government guidance changes or is expanded you are alerted to this as soon as possible.

On the 19th April the Government announced support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people who do not have access to a digital device during the coronavirus outbreak. Further information has now been released regarding those pupils that are eligible for the devices, they are as follows:

1. Care leavers
2. Children and young people aged 0 to 19 years with a social worker
3. Disadvantaged Year 10 pupils

The Local Authority will identify all Care Leavers and those children with a social worker and supply them with the necessary equipment. Schools will only need to apply for Disadvantaged Year 10 pupils; these are Year 10 pupils on your school's roll that are eligible for Free School Meals and do not have a social worker; this includes pupils on roll who currently attend an Alternative Provision.

Relevant schools, maintained by the Local Authority with Year 10 pupils, have already been contacted by their AEO for this information and academy trusts have been sent information by the DfE on how to order a device. Schools, parents and pupils will not be able to apply for internet access or digital devices themselves.

If your Academy Trust has already requested a device for a Care Leaver or Pupil with a Social Worker, please forward the name and DOB of the pupil to [paul.manning@kent.gov.uk](mailto:paul.manning@kent.gov.uk). The relevant Government guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

In respect of free school meals, we know that families looking to access universal credit face delays in that application process and then subsequently have to apply, with further delay, for FSMs. Without the relevant documentation to evidence the fact they are eligible to receive universal credit, free school meals cannot be accessed. The entire process can take several weeks. If you are aware of any families in such a situation, I recommend you refer them to the Kent Together Website [www.kent.gov.uk/kenttogether](http://www.kent.gov.uk/kenttogether) or the helpline: 03000 41 92 92, where they can request support. You will be aware from earlier updates that each district has provision in place to support vulnerable households, including food hubs. These will be able to support in the interim period while the universal credit application is being processed.

In my letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> April I highlighted the DfE's update regarding COV-19 testing for critical workers displaying symptoms. I can now provide further information in respect of how testing can be accessed in Kent.

Any school employee who is not registered to a GP practice in the East Kent CCG area and is displaying symptoms, can be referred for a COVID-19 test via the national testing scheme which, for Kent, is being operated via the Ebbsfleet testing centre.

However, for employees who are displaying symptoms and are registered to a GP practice within the East Kent CCG area, the embedded document below explains how testing can be accessed. Schools will be treated as a smaller employer for the purposes of the flow chart, and therefore, results will go to the individual's GP. I stress this process is only available to school staff who have a GP practice in East Kent.

The EAST Kent CCG area covers the districts of Canterbury, Thanet, Ashford, Folkestone and Hythe, Dover and part of Swale (Faversham).



Staff and key  
worker testing for C

Finally, I need to highlight an update to the DfE's "Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak". The document now refers specifically to the early, May bank holiday, which will be on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May. It advises that schools should decide, in consultation with the parents of children who are currently attending school, whether it is necessary for them to continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children on Friday 8 May 2020. From this, it is clear the DfE are recommending that schools continue to support pupils who require a school place on this day, just as many schools did over the Easter weekend.

As always, I thank you for your continued efforts. I will provide updates to you as an when I feel it is necessary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dunkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Matt Dunkley CBE  
Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education