



**Children, Young People and
Education Directorate**

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Dear Colleague,

The Prime Minister confirmed yesterday that from Monday primary schools have been asked to open to those in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 alongside the wider opening of nurseries and preschool settings and that a fortnight later, on 15 June, secondary schools will begin to provide some face-to-face contact for Years 10 and 12. The emphasis on supporting the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils remains in place.

Preparing for wider opening in line with Government guidance whilst continuing to provide remote education for pupils at home and provision in school for children of critical workers and vulnerable children has been exceptionally challenging. We recognise this has been a stressful and anxious time. I would like to thank you, your staff, and governors.

Message for Schools and Carers regarding CIC and PLAC transitions back into school.

Please find attached to this letter a message from the Virtual School Kent. I know you will be thinking carefully about the needs of you CICs and PLACs and how you can support them back in to school or to adjust again if they have been attending throughout this period. It's going to be important to create a strong bridge back to school life - drawing on any gains as well as acknowledging losses and challenges. The Service is emphasising to carers, the children and young people, and to all professionals that we will need to be constantly working together to help our children adapt as best as possible with a plan, do, review approach. The Service has gathered some ideas and examples of support for the next transition our children and young people will experience. These are included in the attached message.

Digital devices for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.

As you are aware the government has introduced a national scheme to provide IT devices for the most vulnerable young people. The government has prioritised all young people with a Social Worker and/or are in care, therefore these devices have

been ordered and will be delivered to KCC shortly. Social Work teams will then be able to collect the devices and deliver to the young people over the next 2 weeks.

The Government has not yet opened the ordering system for devices for disadvantaged year 10's in LA maintained schools; we expect this to open soon and will keep those schools up to date with information when we have it.

Resuming the attendance register

From Monday 1st June schools will need to resume taking an attendance register and continue to complete the DfE's 'Education Settings Status Form' and KCC's online submission form.

In order to ensure we have an overview of the developing picture, and to ensure that we are in the best position to support colleagues, we have made some changes to the submission form that you have so diligently completed. We will request the numbers of Nursery (where applicable), Year R, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils attending school provision are submitted. The numbers of key worker and vulnerable pupils will be required for year groups OTHER THAN Year R Year 1 and Year 6. The questions in regard to Nursery or Pre-school pupils have been retained as we have to give this information to the DfE as part of our Early Years return.

The Government has now published guidance regarding attendance codes, a summary is appended to this letter, the guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

Finally, two additional sections have been added to the Return to School Guidance today with an additional package of resources to support the emotional wellbeing of children with SEND and highly anxious pupils. It can be found on [KELSI](#).

As always, I thank you for your continued efforts.

Yours sincerely



David Adams
Interim Director of Education



Message for Schools and Carers regarding CIC and PLAC transitions back into school.

The world changed very suddenly in March 2020 when schools closed for most of our children and young people. For all children, families and school staff, the Covid-19 'lockdown' has presented a variety of challenges. For **children in care**/those **previously in care** and their parents and carers, these challenges may well have been even greater given their children's experiences of loss in their early lives. At VSK we have also heard about gains: children feeling less pressured, settling at home and gaining new skills and experiences.

As we begin to contemplate the easing of 'lockdown', it's going to be really important to create a **strong bridge back to school life** - drawing on any gains as well as acknowledging losses and challenges. It is also important that we all understand change will be ongoing and how as professionals we will need to be constantly working together closely and help our children adapt as best as possible with a plan, do, review approach. We have gathered here some ideas and examples of support for the next transition our children and young people will experience.

Planning Transition Support together

As a member of school staff or parent/carer involved in the life of a child in care/previously in care you will already be thinking about when schools will open more widely, how they will be organised to maintain social distancing and how we can support children and young people to successfully integrate back into school. We don't yet know the answer to the first two aspects – except for Years R,1,6,10 &12.

However, together we can think through how best to support children and young people if they:

- are returning to school (but it's quite different to how it used to be e.g. they might have a different teacher/key adult)
- have stayed at school while it's been open - but it's changing again
- are starting at a new school or moving on to post 16 opportunities in September

The Summer term's **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** meeting for **children in care** is the ideal opportunity to think about transition support. We can think of this as a '**Transition PEP**'. Schools may well have already used a variety of approaches to maintain home/school contact such as regular telephone/video link check-ins, postcards, messages sent by email etc. Any of these approaches can be used to support enhanced transition planning for a child in care/ previously in care as they will help with understanding the child's feelings, how they are experiencing the challenges of the moment and will keep relationships as a key focus.

In addition, it would be helpful to:

➤ Hold telephone/video meetings involving parents/carers to hear how the child has been getting on during lockdown, hear their views and form a plan together

➤ Play the child/young person this film clip from our participation team and apprentices.

<https://vimeo.com/423947586/df8c7f7e3e>

- Gather the child/young person's view either directly through a virtual meeting or maybe using a creative option appropriate to age and stage such as a 'passport' so we know what you've enjoyed/what's been rubbish/what are you most-to-least looking forward to from school life/what will help most-to-least to re-enter school positively?
- Develop a shared narrative (social story) to use at home and school to normalise the mixture of excitement and anxiety that are likely to be part of this time of further change. It might be important to give social/pastoral catch up time as part of the transition. (We have also attached a social story you could use - most beneficially with children from year R to 4.)



RAINBOW.pdf

- Remember there will be children who may act as if nothing out of the ordinary has happened – a clue in itself that it will still be important to explore hidden needs.
- Ensure relevant staff in school are engaged in planning and have the information they need in preparation as they may not have taught the child before - and that the Designated Teacher (**DT**) is kept up to date with planning, even if not directly involved themselves.
- Make **DT** to **DT** contact if a child/young person is moving to a new school or starting college to ensure continuity of planning (ensuring consents are gained)
 - Where children will have missed rites of passage (Yearbooks, Leavers hoodies, Prom parties, shirt signing, Residentials/school trips etc) provide clear information about what can be achieved/experienced.
 - a virtual tour of school and video messages from staff describing key features of school life
 - online introductions to key staff (Form Tutors, Team around the Child, Support Staff) and with peers (including new form/tutor group)
- Use a 'holding in mind' approach e.g. a key adult from school sharing a meaningful memory/shared joke/photo with a young person.

Within school it will be important to continue to support all staff in their knowledge and understanding of trauma and attachment aware practice and some helpful links are:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlnJVfzvN9w>

<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/schools/education/research/attachment-aware-schools/>

Additionally, Kelsi is home to a plethora of information, plus existing organisations will be available for additional support that may be particularly relevant for children in care/those previously in care and along with this letter there are some attachments with links/signposts.

Reviewing Transition Support

Holding a '**Transition PEP review**' at a relevant time will be very important to identify what is working to engage our children and young people with their education and what needs adjusting. We know that children who have experienced early life adversity can go on to thrive in school. However, we also know that they can lose out in accessing all the opportunities that school life

offers. The challenge we face now is to ensure that their experiences during the Covid 19 pandemic do not create more barriers and instead create more opportunities to thrive.

Please stay in touch with your local VSK contact so that we can support you all as best as possible. Thank you as always for your commitment and support for our young people.

Best wishes

Virtual School Kent team.

Extract of Attendance Coding Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session

This includes any pupil who is not in an eligible year group or priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children). This may also include children who are in an eligible year group but are not required in school for a specific session, i.e., year 10 and year 12 pupils who are not among the quarter of pupils expected in school at a given time.

They should be recorded as code X (not required to be in school). (Temporarily, code X can be used for compulsory school age children – usually it is only used where non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.)

Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not

This includes children in eligible year groups, children of critical workers and vulnerable children, such as:

- where a pupil is shielding, self-isolating (see note 1), or the pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met in school, they should be recorded as code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). (Temporarily, code Y can be used where a pupil is prevented from attending school due to following government guidance on coronavirus). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the absence is due to shielding or isolation*
- where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be recorded as code I (illness). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms*
- where a pupil does not attend school - despite being eligible and is not shielding, self-isolating, unable to attend due to illness, nor has an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school, the pupil should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) where no other authorised absence code is appropriate*

At this time, all absence should be classed as authorised