



Appendix: COVID-19 Additional Information for SEND Information Report

School Name: Astrea Academy Dearne

Date: 13/1/21

1. Context, Legislation and Guidance

The Prime Minister announced on 4th January 2021 that England would go into a National lockdown, which includes the closure of schools to the majority of children. Schools and all childcare providers are asked again to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. Guidance was released on 7th January 2021, to support schools through the national lockdown with restricting attendance at schools (found [here](#)).

The government outline that early years provisions should continue to remain open and should continue to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetable hours. This includes early years registered nurseries, maintained nursery schools, as well as nursery classes in schools and other pre-reception provision on school sites. Only vulnerable children and children of critical workers should attend on-site reception classes.

The SEND Information Report is based on the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities; and
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEND Information Report

In 2020, the Coronavirus Act Modification of Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (England) Notice 2020 provided the following modification in relation to the duty to secure educational and health care provision in accordance with the requirements of the Education, Health and Care Plan:

- The absolute duty to make the provision in an EHC plan (section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014) can be temporarily amended to a 'reasonable endeavours' duty. This means that during the specified period the Local Authority (LA) needs to do whatever it reasonably can to put provision in place, but if they cannot do so they would not necessarily be breaching the law.

This modification was in place from 1 May to 25 September 2020 inclusive, and adjusted the statutory timescales for the EHC needs assessments and plans. Following this date range, the modifications ceased and there are **currently no modifications in place**.

This appendix of the school's SEN Information Report should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Behaviour Policy (and any relevant Annexes). All Astrea schools continue to have a Covid-19 Risk Assessment in place which is reviewed regularly and in accordance with any guidance changes, taking account of Safeguarding at every stage.



This appendix contains further details of our arrangements for pupils with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities in line with revised procedures from the government, in the following areas:

1. Context, legislation, guidance and key contacts
2. Vulnerable children
3. Risk assessments of pupils with SEND
4. Supporting children's mental health
5. Supporting vulnerable children at home or in school
6. Statutory assessments, annual reviews and reviews for pupils at SEN Support
7. Dedicated School Transport for children with existing arrangements
8. Transition
9. Support from Astrea Academy Trust
10. Annex: Suggested SEND Risk Assessment Template

Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
SENCO	Ryan Purdy	01709	ryan.purdy@astreadearne.org
Principal	Joanne Wilson	892211	joanne.wilson@astreadearne.org
SEND Officer	Caroline Embery	07387108846	caroline.embery@astreaacademytrust.org
Specialist Leader of Behaviour and SEND	Naomi Reed	07552995410	naomi.reed@astreaacademytrust.org
National Leader of Inclusion	Jenni Machin	07900401418	jenni.machin@astreaacademytrust.org
Director of Inclusion	Nicola Crossley	07393237674	nicola.crossley@astreaacademytrust.org

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not always be possible to have the SENCO on site, however, the SENCO, or a senior leader, will be available to be contacted via phone (contact school office to arrange a call) or email.

2. Vulnerable children

From 5th January 2021, following Public Health England advice, schools and all childcare providers are to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. Children at home are to access the remote education offered (see section 5).

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a **child in need plan, a child protection plan** or who are a **looked-after child**;
- have an **education, health and care plan (EHCP)**;



- have been identified as **otherwise vulnerable** by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - **children and young people on the edge of receiving support** from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - **adopted children or children on a special guardianship order**
 - those **at risk of becoming NEET** ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those **living in temporary accommodation**
 - those who are **young carers**
 - those who may **have difficulty engaging with remote education at home** (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - **care leavers**
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend **to receive support or manage risks to their mental health**.

We know that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families, can be disproportionately impacted by being out of education. The school will strongly encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, so long as they have not been advised to stay at home and access remote learning due to being clinically extremely vulnerable.

For vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers, who should still attend school or college, the system of protective measures means that risks should be well managed and controlled. Where vulnerable pupils are not attending school, discussions between parents/carers, and social workers (where applicable) will take place to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions will focus on the welfare of the child or young person and will ensure that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.

3. Risk Assessments of Pupils with SEND

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people. The operational risk assessment of the setting will drive decisions on provision and places offered to children. Health and safety considerations are paramount in all decision making.

From 7th January 2021, [government guidance](#) states that for Special Schools , 'On occasion special schools may encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with vital specialist training. In these circumstances they should seek to resume as close as possible to the child or young person's specified provision as soon as possible. **Pupil level risk assessments, which were used last spring, should not be used to filter children and young people in or out of attendance, but could be helpful to prioritise the provision a child or young person can get if full time provision for all is not possible.'**

With this in mind, we may choose to re-visit risk assessments previously used in 2020 to re-assess and identify what additional support children and young people with SEND may need to access education (e.g. visits, social stories, specialist support). Risk assessments may also prove useful if children and young people have to self-isolate, shield or when a school has to limit attendance, or temporarily close. As a school, we may also utilise these for some pupils at SEN Support where it is deemed beneficial e.g. for those with more complex needs. As a school, if we are leading a risk assessment for a young person over 16 who has an EHCP, we will involve them in the process. Where schools complete these, please see section 12 for an example template.



Where a child routinely attends more than one setting (e.g. dual registered), we will work collaboratively to identify and address any risks, allowing the joint delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum for the child.

4. Supporting Children's Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. We are aware that there may be children with additional or worsened social emotional and mental health needs as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). Teachers should be mindful of this, in setting expectations of pupils' work.

The government has issued guidance and advice for parents/carers on looking after the mental health and wellbeing of children or young people during the COVID-19 outbreak. When considering mental health and wellbeing, the school will also refer to this as a starting point - [guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak](#). Further information for parents and carers in relation to supporting mental health and wellbeing can be found in the Astrea Home Learning brochures which can be found [here](#).

In addition to this, government guidance (found [here](#)), states:

'Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust, either to a return to learning at home or being in school without their peers, and some may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be content with the change in circumstances.'

In response, the guidance provides specific school information and signposting to:

- the [Wellbeing for Education Return Programme](#) which was launched to provide training and resources for teachers and staff to respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19);
- a [webinar](#) recording from the DfE, Public Health England and NHS England for educational professionals on how to support pupil wellbeing;
- The Whole School SEND consortium – who have produced a variety of resources to support educational staff as well as families. This includes 2 leaflets, funded by DfE, to support young people with SEND and their families to have conversations with schools about [successful returns following a period of absence](#) and about [transition planning for post-year 11 destinations](#). They have also produced a [handbook](#) to support teachers to take a whole school approach to supporting pupils following a traumatic event.

The Department for Education has also published relationship, sex and health education training modules (found [here](#)) for teachers to support them in delivering the required content on mental health and wellbeing (found [here](#)). Similarly, teachers and adults can also access the free MindEd learning platform (found [here](#)) for useful materials.



The school will continue to communicate with school nurses and other professionals where needed, as we are aware that some pupils may require support. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school or college (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from the Astrea Therapeutic Team, specialist staff or external support services.

If parents/carers have any specific concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of children which they would like to discuss further, they can also contact the school SENCO, Ryan Purdy, or Designated Safeguarding Lead, Sally Fisher, by telephoning the school directly.

5. Supporting Vulnerable Children at Home or in School

From 5th January 2021, during the period of national lockdown, primary, secondary, alternative provision and special schools should remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers only. All other pupils should receive remote education. Pupils who are self-isolating should not attend school. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are also advised not to attend school and shield.

Where individuals who are self-isolating and are within our definition of vulnerable, the school will put systems in place to keep in contact with them, offer pastoral support, and check they are able to access education support.

Where a pupil has provision specified within their EHCP, it remains the duty of the local authority and any health bodies to secure or arrange the delivery of this in the setting that the plan names. However, there may be times when it becomes very difficult to do so, for example, if they are self-isolating. In this situation, decisions on how provision can be delivered should be informed by relevant considerations including, for example, the types of services that the pupil can access remotely, for example, online teaching and remote sessions with different types of therapists. These decisions should be considered on a case by case basis, avoiding a one size fits all approach.

From January 5th 2021, educational visits are advised against. However, the use of **outdoor learning, music and sports**, may be utilised to support the delivery of the curriculum whilst following government advice on safe practice. In line with [guidance](#), the school will also endeavour to offer extra-curricular provision (such as before and after school activities as well as wraparound childcare provision) wherever possible, as this may support the children of critical workers. Such activities also provide enriching activities for children that can improve wellbeing or support their education.

Some pupils with SEND will continue to need specific help with the changes to routines they are experiencing, so teachers and schools should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories. The school will also explore the use of government packages (such as 'catch-up support' package and the National Tutoring Programme) to assist in addressing any individual gaps in learning. During Covid-19 restrictions, this may be offered as part of a remote learning package.

If the school has to temporarily stop on-site provision on public health advice, we will inform the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people and work towards welcoming back pupils as soon as possible, where feasible to do so. The school will also liaise with local partners to maximise the opportunities for face-to-face provision for vulnerable pupils during these times if at all possible.



School based learning and protective measures

We know that particular care is needed to support pupils with SEND. Staffing needs will be considered as part of a collaborative, flexible approach - we will work with internal staff members, any relevant volunteers and appropriate external specialist staff to support pupils in school, ensuring that any relevant staff training required is in place. We will ensure that appropriate support is made available for pupils with SEND, for example by deploying teaching assistants to work with pupils in different classes or year groups. Where capacity allows, support staff may also deliver catch-up provisions or targeted interventions.

Measures will be taken to minimise the potential risks posed from external specialist visitors to school such as social distancing to allow any planned support to continue. Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND will be encouraged to provide interventions in school as usual.

When working within the classroom, preventive distancing measures will be in place for the majority of children in order to reduce any risk of transmission. We know 2 metre distancing is not always possible, but staff will do this when circumstances allow. Staff will try to avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. However, it will not be possible when working with many pupils who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These pupils' educational and care support will be provided as normal.

In line with guidance, for children old enough, they will also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. Similarly, this will not be possible for some children with complex needs and if it is not feasible where space does not allow.

The use of face coverings will also be considered where relevant and in line with guidance (found [here](#)) as part of our system of controls to minimise risks. However, we acknowledge the need for some exemptions and considerations in relation to the use of face coverings in order to support pupils (and staff) with specific special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children and young people should not be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Children and young people in school will be encouraged to regularly clean their hands thoroughly, including before and after using any specialist equipment. We acknowledge that some small children or pupils with more complex needs may require help. Similarly, good respiratory hygiene will be encouraged. Again, some children and young people will be helped to get this right. Where pupils with specific needs struggle to maintain good respiratory hygiene (for example, through uncontrollable spitting or where saliva is a sensory stimulant), a risk assessment should be completed (see Section 3) in order to support both pupils and staff with face-to-face education provision. Government guidance states that this is not a reason to deny these pupils face-to-face education.



The school will participate with the rapid testing programme, following the [Mass asymptomatic testing: schools and colleges guidance](#) as appropriate.

The school will take swift action if we become aware that someone has tested positive for coronavirus. Following advice, all pupils (including the most vulnerable) may be sent home to self-isolate – in this instance, they would be given access to remote education.

Remote education

Any **remote education and home learning** needed will be of high quality and will align with in-school provision and curriculum resources. The educational offer will include both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. To support this, the school may refer to the nationally available resources to support SEND pupils, such as the [Oak National Academy specialist content for SEND](#), as well as utilise the digital and technological support. The school staff may also utilise the government's [Get Help With Remote Education](#) page which signposts support available.

In relation to remote learning, we acknowledge the importance of:

- teaching a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject so that pupils can progress through the school's curriculum;
- setting meaningful and ambitious work each day, considering a pupils' age, stage of development and/or special educational needs (considering whether the work set would place significant demands on parents/carers for help or support);
- effectively utilising digital platforms for remote education provision to allow interaction, assessment and feedback;
- overcoming barriers to [digital access for pupils](#), including for vulnerable learners and those with SEND;
- acknowledging that some pupils who have difficulty engaging in remote education may be considered to be vulnerable children, and therefore eligible to attend provision in person;
- recognising that some pupils with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support (we will try to work with families to ensure the delivery of a broad and ambitious curriculum appropriate for their level of need);
- checking daily whether pupils are engaging with their work, and work with families to rapidly identify effective solutions where engagement is a concern;
- monitoring the quality and delivery of remote education (at a senior leadership level), including that provision meets expectations for remote education;
- publishing information for pupils, parents and carers about the remote education provision;
- considering what we already know about effective teaching, for example:
 - providing frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources
 - providing opportunities for interactivity, including questioning, eliciting and reflective discussion
 - providing scaffolded practice and opportunities to apply new knowledge
 - enabling pupils to receive timely and frequent feedback on how to progress, using digitally-facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate



- using assessment to ensure teaching is responsive to pupils' needs and addresses any critical gaps in pupils' knowledge
- avoiding an over-reliance on long-term projects or internet research activities.

For pupils with SEND, their teachers are best-placed to know how pupil needs can be most effectively met to ensure they continue to make progress even if they are not able to be in school.

We will work collaboratively with families, putting in place reasonable adjustments as necessary, so that pupils at home can successfully access remote education alongside their peers. When designing home learning and support for children and young people with SEND, we may also involve external professionals to support the design or adapt interventions or learning materials.

Where appropriate, staff in school may also access specialist online training on assistive technology (from the National Star College) to strengthen remote education provision for pupils with special educational needs. This is available until March 2021 through the [SEND support hub](#) on the National Star College website.

The online learning offer for the school is available on the school website.

6. Statutory Assessments, Annual Reviews and Reviews for Pupils at SEN Support

From the 25th September 2020, any previous temporary modifications to SEND policy and practice made by the Secretary of State ceased. Applications for statutory assessments / needs assessments / high needs funding will continue to be submitted to the local authority in line with normal practice.

Where possible, the school SENCO will liaise with pupils, parent/carers, appropriate key professionals and external agencies for children and young people with SEND – this will ensure effective co-production. However, these processes may take place remotely as the school adheres to government guidance on social distancing.

If parents/carers feel there is an urgent need to amend the outlined pupil needs, provision or placement in an EHCP, they should speak to the SENCO to see what additional review mechanisms could be put in place. In law, parents/carers can also request a personal budget and seek direct payments for special educational provision during the Education Health and Care needs statutory assessment process or during an annual review.

Further information about the LA's approach towards statutory assessments for children with SEND as well as their guidance for processes during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found on the relevant Local Offer pages:

- Barnsley Local Offer - [click here](#)
- Barnsley Additional COVID-19 Information - [click here](#)

7. Dedicated School Transport for SEND Pupils with Existing Arrangements

Local authorities should continue to provide dedicated transport for children and young people with EHCPs who are attending their usual educational setting. If children and young people with EHCPs are accessing an educational setting that is not their usual setting, the local authority should review



transport arrangements and endeavour to make appropriate provision for children to reach their educational setting safely. We will work closely with the local authority where they have statutory responsibility for 'home to school transport' for children (e.g. those with SEND).

Local authorities are not required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport on dedicated school or college transport. However, distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible. We will work with the local authority to, wherever it is possible, also ensure that:

- children sit with their 'bubble' on school transport, or with the same constant group of children each day;
- children clean their hands before boarding transport and again on disembarking;
- additional cleaning of vehicles is put in place;
- organised queuing and boarding is put in place;
- ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) is maximised, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents.

In accordance with advice, children and young people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport. This does not apply to people who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. More information on this can be found at the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#). Children must not board home to school transport if they, or a member of their household, has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

8. Transition

Key school staff will continue to complete and plan for any relevant transition arrangements to support vulnerable pupils, liaising with the Trust, local authorities, pupils, any relevant external agencies and parents/carers to ensure that any planned transitions are supported as best as they can. The local authority should complete EHCP transfer reviews within normal statutory timeframes (e.g. for pupils transferring between phases of education into/between schools such as a transfer from primary to secondary school).

9. Support from Astrea Academy Trust

Astrea central team continues to be available to provide support and guidance to colleagues as appropriate. Members of the Astrea Inclusion team, Astrea Education team and Astrea Therapeutic team continue to be available to all SENCOs and Principal's in order to carry out their role effectively and can be contacted as per page 2.



10. Suggested SEND COVID-19 Risk Assessment Template (page 1 of 2)

Please see Section 3 of the 'Appendix – COVID 19 Additional Information for SEND Information Report' for further information regarding when a risk assessment (or review of a risk assessment) may be completed.

Academy / School:	Date of assessment / review:
Assessed by:	Job title:
Other people involved in assessment:	
Name of child / young person:	
The potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. <i>This must be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required</i>	
The risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHCP (and/or Support Plan) cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner/ in the usual setting.	
The ability of the individual's parents/carers 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 potential risks in travelling to/from school, including the safety of other children, young people and adults.	
The potential risks to the home setting, including the safety of other children, young people and adults if the individual did not attend school. <i>This can include any external risks. For example, a child or young person becoming involved in dangerous behaviour or situations or requiring support from a social worker. This applies to those whose needs are best met in educational settings, particularly in order to stop a care placement breakdown.</i>	
The potential risks to the school setting, including the safety of other children, young people and adults if the individual is at school .	
What can be done by the school or setting to control any risks?	
What is the level of risk after all controls possible have been put in place? (HIGH/MED/LOW)	
What support and education is the setting or school providing to parents/carers if the child or young person is not able to attend?	
Is this a safeguarding risk – if so, please describe	
Who else /what other agencies need to be informed if child does not attend?	



Parent/Carer Views:	
Child's View (if appropriate):	

From 5th January 2020, the school will strongly encourage vulnerable children and young people to attend school, so long as they have not been advised to stay at home and access remote learning due to being clinically extremely vulnerable.

Guidance states: Pupil level risk assessments should not be used to filter children and young people in or out of attendance, but can be helpful to prioritise the provision a child or young person can get if full time provision for all is not possible.

This risk assessment has determined the following:

- *Please insert summary statement or bullet points*
- *Outline what additional support children and young people with SEND may need to access education*

The person completing this risk assessment should ensure that if the Local Authority is not the assessor / joint assessor, then the Local Authority is informed of the outcome and any relevant risks.

Document to be stored confidentially.