



(Sent via email)  
Parent/Carer

23 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers in Kingston and Richmond,

### **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans), Summer Term 2020**

We hope that you and your families are managing the current lockdown and are staying well.

As the Easter break has now finished, we thought it would be helpful to explain how children and young people with EHC plans will be supported while schools are still temporarily closed for most pupils.

The Department for Education has asked Local Authorities to carry out a risk assessment for all children and young people who have an EHC plan. The risk assessment will decide whether they are able to have their needs met at home, and be safer there, or whether they need to be in an educational setting, like a nursery, school or college.

Risk assessments should include consulting with the nursery, school or college and with the parents and carers, and should also capture and consider the views of the child or young person.

If the risk assessment decides that a child or young person with an EHC plan will be safer at home, the Department for Education (DfE) recommends they stay at home.

These risk assessments have been taking place since the 18th March, when the Government announced that schools would close for most children. The assessments are being checked and reviewed to make sure the decisions made are the right ones. Achieving for Children (AfC) and the Clinical Commissioning

Group (CCG) will continue to work with schools, providers and families on these risk assessments.

The majority of children and young people with EHC plans have been at home, and we expect that this will continue until schools are allowed to open up more.

It is still the responsibility of the local authority and health colleagues to make sure children and young people receive the support agreed in their EHC plan during this very unusual situation, but in reality there may be times when it becomes very difficult to do this. For example, there have been situations where schools have not had enough staff because of sickness or where health and therapy staff are not available because they have been asked to do a different job in the NHS to help with Coronavirus. These situations are likely to continue.

EHC plans will still be checked and reviewed during this time, and Annual Reviews should still go ahead, although in a different format. Meetings will be held virtually or via conference calls or video links rather than in school. Some reports from professionals may be delayed, for example if a therapist has been unable to see a child in their school, but our aim is to have them available in time whenever possible.

AfC and the CCG are very grateful for the ongoing support and commitment that health colleagues and early years, school and college teams are showing, and for the imaginative approaches they are using, to do the very best they can in these difficult circumstances.

Whether the child or young person is at home or in nursery, school or college, education, health and social care staff will continue to work with families, as well as the child or young person themselves, to do what they can to provide the support agreed in an EHC plan.

For children and young people at home, staff from their usual education setting should be in contact at least once a week. This will be to provide work or activities, suggest other resources or support and to check on progress. This may be via email, telephone, or via videolink.

If a child or young person needs other materials, like physical resources or specific equipment, these may also be provided.

Staff will continue to work hard and plan the best way to provide learning and support whilst following the Government's advice to stay at home wherever possible and /or ensure social distancing.

The organisations who provide our health and therapy support for children and young people in Kingston and Richmond are contacting families directly (on a priority basis) to organise and provide online support. We are also looking into other ways we can provide therapy support during times when our therapists may be asked to do work in different jobs.

You can find contact details for the therapy services, as well as many other useful resources on the Local Offer here:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/covid-19-updates-and-resources>

We are also thinking carefully about children and young people who are due to start new schools or colleges in September 2020, and for whom preparation for these changes may be disrupted. AfC will work with schools, colleges and other professionals involved to make sure this process is as good as it can be.

We are also doing additional work to plan for those children and young people, whether they have an EHC plan or not, who will have found the current events particularly difficult for their emotional wellbeing and the impact that this may have on returning to a school routine when that happens.

If you have any questions about the support your child is receiving during this time, the best place to contact is their nursery, school or college. After you have done this, if you still have any questions please call 020 8547 5872 or email [senteam@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:senteam@achievingforchildren.org.uk).

Yours sincerely



Ian Dodds  
Director of Children's Services  
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames  
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames



Tonia Michaelides  
Managing Director  
Richmond and Kingston  
Clinical Commissioning Groups