

To: Headteachers of all schools

Ealing Council
Perceval House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2HL

Tel 020 8825 5000

Your ref	My ref	Extension	Date
	`JL/Resp	6473	7 July 2020

Dear colleagues,

From response to recovery: Securing full-time education provision for all pupils in Ealing from September 2020

Introduction

1. On the 2nd July, the government announced its plans for all pupils to be back in school in September 2020. The rationale for the plans is that “the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased, our NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and we are clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools”. Included in these plans are a set of principles to guide all schools in preparing for September.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>
2. Our aims are to support Ealing schools in:
 - a. implementing these plans so that all pupils can return to full-time education as soon as possible in September;
 - b. achieving as much consistency across the area as possible, recognising that decisions are for governing bodies in the context of national guidance and their own circumstances;
 - c. building confidence and providing reassurance to children, young people, parents/carers and staff that steps have been taken to minimise risks as far as possible;
 - d. ensuring children’s special education needs are met and, where required, reasonable adjustments are made; and
 - e. planning for possible future confirmed cases, outbreaks and lock downs.

Links to planning tools and local guidance are included at the end of this letter.

Local context

3. Following the return of eligible groups of pupils to Ealing schools in June, we know that less than a third of all primary aged children, who could have been in school, attended school in the summer term. We also know that less than half of all primary-aged children with a social worker and less than a quarter of children with an EHC plan, attended school during the same period.

In the secondary phase, fewer than a fifth of vulnerable pupils have attended school since March. Patterns of attendance across different parts of the borough also indicate that disadvantaged families and those from BAME backgrounds attended fewer sessions than their non-disadvantaged and non-BAME peers. The vast majority of Ealing's children and young people have now been out of school since 23rd March. For these reasons, we know that school leaders will want to get all pupils back to school as soon as possible.

September start; towards consistency in returning to statutory provision

4. We suggest that schools do not change their published start dates unless absolutely necessary and we would strongly advise schools to avoid extended phasing-in arrangements. Schools will be making informed decisions about staggering the school day where necessary to reduce transmission of the virus but arrangements should not impact on pupils' access to full-time provision. We would also encourage schools to re-open wrap-around provision. Some schools may be considering more significant adjustments to the school week, but these may require extensive consultation with parents and staff. **If you are considering significant adjustments, do please discuss these with us.**
5. We encourage leaders to share their ideas and approaches with colleagues, parents and local communities as soon as possible. We will also be asking schools to share key aspects of their plans with us in the week before the end of term through a short survey. This will help us to communicate to members, other agencies and to direct any support that may be required.

Confidence of pupils, parents/carers

6. In supporting your own communication to parents/carers, we will publish a letter that sets out expectations around attendance and behaviours that will help to reduce the transmission of infection at home and at school. We will ensure that key public health messages are communicated simply and clearly for a range of different audiences and communities. This letter will be provided to schools for distribution to parents.

Vulnerable children and young people including those with Special Educational Needs

7. We know that many children and young people have become increasingly isolated and vulnerable over the last few months. The same groups of children and young people may struggle with new behaviour policies and sanctions designed to protect the school community. Our own analysis, and reports, indicate how important it is for schools to ensure that advance preparations and communications are made for the reintegration of the most vulnerable children. We would encourage schools to provide Designated Safeguarding Leads with more time, especially in the first few weeks of term, to provide support to staff and pupils and to liaise with children's social care and external agencies.
8. The modification that enabled schools and the local authority to make reasonable endeavours to meet provision specified in plans is expected to end on 31st July. The requirement will then be that provisions in education, health and care plans are made in full and for schools to plan on this basis. Schools will be mindful of the need to make reasonable adjustments, for example, around behaviour policies, for children who will be returning to school after many months.
9. All pupils are expected to return to school full-time in September unless specific exceptions apply. Co-produced risk assessments should be completed to identify

what additional support children and young people need to make a successful return to education.

10. Specialist therapists, clinicians and other support staff should provide interventions as usual.
11. The authority will provide further guidance for schools on SEND

Contingency Planning

12. We know that infection rates have significantly decreased but we remain ever vigilant and mindful that there may be a case at a school or a local outbreak of coronavirus and that “bubbles”, year groups or even schools, may need to close at short notice. With this in mind, we want all schools to develop robust contingency plans and to be ready to implement high quality home learning support for all pupils by the end of September.
13. Guidance on how to respond to single cases and local outbreaks is available on the EGfL.

Health and safety planning and risk assessment

14. We have updated the **planning framework** and the **generic risk assessment template** for use by schools in conjunction with the measures that all schools and settings must have in place alongside the additional measures schools are asked to consider.
15. Staff and their representatives must be consulted on risk assessments and, once finalised, the assessment should be published. Employers must monitor and review the preventative and protective measures regularly and take actions to address any shortfalls. We welcome feedback from schools so that we can update and share practice across schools in the authority.

HR guidance and individual risk assessments – staff

16. In addition to the generic risk assessment, schools will need to review individual risk assessments, where required, for staff. Ealing’s HR guidance is designed to support schools in implementing consistent approaches to managing staff, supporting wellbeing and building a resilient workforce

Documents on EGfL

17. A copy of this letter and revised documents can be found on the EGfL through the following link egfl.org.uk/coronavirus by Thursday 9th July following consultation with representative headteachers and trade unions. We will notify schools through an EGfL newsflash when these are ready.

Best wishes,



Julie Lewis

Director Learning, Standards and School Partnerships
Ealing Learning Partnership

020 8825 6473

jlewis@ealing.gov.uk