

Frequently Asked Questions – Issue 3 SEND support during the Coronavirus pandemic

How does the FAQ work?

- This FAQ shares questions sent into the CDCQuestions@ncb.org.uk email inbox.
- Each week the questions received are collated and shared with the Department for Education (DfE) as well as colleagues with specific areas of expertise within CDC.
- Each FAQ includes questions received before Wednesday lunch time of the week in which it is published.
- If you have submitted a question but cannot see the response below your question is either awaiting feedback from DfE or will be featured in next week's FAQ.
- We may edit some of the questions to allow us to include as many as possible in each weeks FAQ and to protect individuals privacy so your questions may appear slightly differently than your original emails.
- Where questions are on similar themes or have similar answers we may group the questions together.

Guidance and Resources

In addition to this FAQ, we have gathered a list of resources and guidance about Coronavirus related support for disabled children, young people and their families and the practitioners working with them across Education, Health, Social Care and the VCS which you can access [here](#).

For questions relating to specific individual circumstances the **Contact** helpline (0800 808 3555) and [website](#) are an excellent source of information and support.

Changes to the law

The Government has announced temporary changes to the law on Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and plans. This is to give local authorities, health commissioning bodies, education settings and others who contribute to these processes more flexibility in responding to the demands placed on them by coronavirus. You can read more about the changes and download the guidance here:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/news-opinion/news/temporary-changes-law-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans>

Questions from parent carers and those supporting them directly:

Q

My son has been diagnosed with ASD this week, with the consultation having to happen over the phone with the paediatrician. I have been told that usually there would be support and provision being put into place, but in these current times this may be limited and restricted. What support is available at the moment to support not only my son? (who is finding things harder at the moment) but also for us as parents who are dealing with a new diagnosis?

We usually have a close family network for support, are we able to receive support from them in some form? As it can feel quite overwhelming and stressful at times. He is finding the separation from family difficult.

A

For questions relating to specific individual circumstances the **Contact** helpline (0800 808 3555) and [website](#) are an excellent source of information and support.

The [National Autistic Society](#) are another great source of information.

You can also apply for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment although some of the timescales may be longer than usual, your local SENDIAS service can support you with this:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service>.

Q

My two year old son has recently been identified as a SEN child by our nursery's SENCO worker. Can someone please help us work out how to apply for free child care at his nursery?

A

Some two-year olds are eligible for free childcare. The criteria are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds>. Your childcare provider or your local council's Family Information Service should also be able to advise you on eligibility. Your local SENDIAS service can also offer support with a wide range of SEN topics:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service>



Questions on education:

Q

My 18 year old son who has ASD was over halfway through a Supported Internship Programme with NHS Project Choice. He has an EHCP and turns 19 in June, he will have missed 15 weeks of unpaid work experience which not going to resurrected due obvious issues with the NHS. We have been given no information about possible extensions this may or may not happen over August/September. It is still the intention to exit interns in July. We have no information about what will happen to the EHCP. We have no information on pathways my son will be heading towards NEET as his programme has been suspended. Why has the DFE not provided information for those who either post 16 or post 18 who will be at FE Colleges, on Supported Internships or Apprenticeships? So far everything has been about schools.

A

Your son's EHCP can, if necessary for him to complete his education, go on until he is 25. The local authority can talk to you both about what may be available to support him now and what may be possible in the future. You can contact your local SENDIAS service (<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-adviceand-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service>) who can support you in having conversations with the local authority.

Questions on Social Care:

Q

Social workers are asking that I send my children to two separate schools during the coronavirus lockdown. The social workers call every two days to speak to the children and have suggested they can do video calls. My son is doing work at home and following a timetable set by the school every day. We submit work daily at 4pm. He has one kidney and a weak immune system but yet not classified as a high risk child.

My 1 year old is in early nursery placement to help me take care of my elderly father with dementia. I don't feel it is safe for my kids to attend school where they are most at risk of becoming ill themselves but also increasing the danger towards my father. What can I do as I'm taking daily calls demanding they be taken into school.

A

The following NHS guidance sets out that 'those with a weakened immune system caused by a medical condition' are at moderate risk of developing complications from the coronavirus infection:
<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list#risk-criteria>. If you are shielding because of this you can talk to the social worker and school, your local SENDIAS service (<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-adviceand-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service>) can support you in having these conversations. They can also support you in contacting social services.

Q

For children with a disability who have an EHCP but now are self-isolating due to being vulnerable, what care support is being offered at home that would usually be provided at school and could give parents more support in caring for their child?

A

For questions relating to specific individual circumstances the Contact helpline (0800 808 3555) and website are an excellent source of information and support.

The local authority is responsible for ensuring that children receive the provision set out in their plan, while this may not happen in the same way as it did before the pandemic some provision should still be made. It may also be possible for children to attend school and parents can talk to the school and the local authority about this, the local SENDIAS service (<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-adviceand-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service>) can support parents in having conversations with the local authority and the school. They can also support families in contacting social services where appropriate.



Questions on self-isolating:

Q

A member of staff asked an Senior Leadership Team member if the team and children would self-isolate for 14 days should an adult or child in their class become ill with Covid-19 symptoms.

A

As per the stay at home guidance, only those with COVID-symptoms (new persistent cough or fever) or their household members are required to isolate

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Therefore, if a member of the school community becomes unwell, the rest of the class do not need to isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves.

If a member of a SEN school community becomes a symptomatic COVID case, they will also be required to isolate as per the Stay at Home Guidance. If the member of the community has been in the school while symptomatic, the school should follow the guidance "COVID-19: guidance for educational settings" for advice around infection prevention and control procedures. The school is not



**NATIONAL
CHILDREN'S
BUREAU**
Part of the family

required to notify PHE of the case but we (or NHS 111) are available if they have specific questions or would clarifications on the guidance.
