

ANNEX

COVID-19 school arrangements for Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

PURPOSE

This is an Annex to the SEND Information Report, setting out the arrangements in place to support our students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during the COVID-19 related to those who are self-isolating, or in the event of a further partial closure starting from 1st September 2020.

Date written:	10.11.20 updated 08.01.21
Written by:	Phillippa Hible
Next review:	As required
Summary of Changes:	New Annex published for Covid 19 Crisis

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to continue to provide care for a limited number of students – those who are vulnerable and students whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response – who absolutely need to attend and who cannot be safely cared for at home. ‘Vulnerable students’ includes those supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs (including those on child in need and child protection plans), ‘looked after’ children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Students returned to school in September 2020 to a new operational system in line with Government guidelines to keep them safe in school where they were educated in Year group bubbles and wear protective masks. Hand sanitiser has been provided in all areas of school including classrooms. Staggered arrival and dismissal times and separate break and lunchtimes between Year groups were part of the new operational plan.

In January 2021 we returned to the same status as March 2020. Students who have previously accessed support from external agencies online September 2020-December 2020 will continue to receive the support remotely. This is in direct liaison between parents, school and the external agency in line with the changing Government Guidance of December 22nd 2020.

This addendum of the Hope Academy SEND Information Report contains details of our individual arrangements and changes to our usual mode of working in the following areas:

- Vulnerable children and eligibility
- Safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing
- Arrangements for consulting parents of, and young people with, SEND
- Arrangements for assessing and reviewing children’s progress
- Arrangements for supporting children in moving between phases of education
- Transition periods within school
- The approach to teaching children with SEND
- Support for emotional and social development
- Working alongside other professionals

Please note: This annex should be read in tandem with the Hope Academy COVID-19 Safeguarding Policy.

2. Key Contacts

Role	Name	Email
Principal	Marie Adams	Marie.Adams@sthelens.org.uk
SENCO	Phillippa Hible	Phillippa. Hible@sthelens.org.uk
Safeguarding Lead	Rachel Harkness-Brennan	Rachel.Harkness-Brennan@sthelens.org.uk
SEND Governor	Fran McCaul	franimak@hotmail.com

3. Vulnerable children and eligibility

Vulnerable children include those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

These risk assessments will consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This will be on an individual basis and with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting

- the ability of the individual's parents 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 availability of appropriately trained staff (school will liaise with the local authority if a place is needed for an eligible child, but the school is unable to provide the specialist staffing for it)

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans, with local authorities needing instead to apply 'reasonable endeavours' to support these children and their families.

4. Safeguarding, attendance and monitoring of wellbeing

Hope Academy continues in its commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its Students during any period of general/ partial school closure.

Where children with EHC plans take up an eligible place in school, Hope Academy School will continue to ensure a safe space for these students where they will access their lessons online via the school's virtual learning platform, Satchel One in a designated computer room supported by a Teaching Assistant. The support appropriate to each child in this circumstance will be recorded and reviewed on an individual basis. Any updates to a child's situation will be updated on their risk assessments, which are then shared with the Local Authority and the Senior Management Team.

The Academy will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Having worked with parents and other professionals to decide whether children with EHC plans will be attending school, Hope Academy will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not attend for two consecutive days.

Where children with EHC plans do not take up a place in school and are cared for at home, an individual risk assessment will be completed and a communication plan will be put in place for the child. This will be recorded on risk assessments for each pupil, which are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Authority.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Hope Academy, its Head Teacher (DSL) and SENCo will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan for children with EHC plans.

This plan must be reviewed weekly and where concerns arise, the Head Teacher/DSL and SENCo will consider any referrals as appropriate.

For students with SEND, but without an EHC plan, who have not been offered a place in school, contact details for key staff will always be available on the school website. This will ensure that parents of children with SEND will always have a way of contacting and communicating with school staff where needed.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website.

5. Arrangements for consulting parents of, and students with, SEND

Working in partnership with children with SEND and their parents continues to be central to the Hope Academy's policies and practice.

The views of parents and students will be considered in determining whether students with EHC plans take up an eligible place in school.

For students with EHC plans who are being cared for at home, their individual risk assessments will include communication plans to ensure that regular contact is maintained with key school staff. These communications may include: individual expectations for home learning, discussions around appropriate learning activities, adaptations to learning resources/activities and discussions of strategies for supporting students at home. In addition, all families were hand delivered homework packs with several weeks' worth of work along with resources to support the change of timetable and routine, sensory activities and key websites personalised to the needs of each students.

For students with SEND, but without an EHC plan, signposts will be included within year group home learning to support them in accessing appropriate learning activities. School staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when setting accessible home learning online for children with SEND. Teaching Assistants are assigned to students who are self-isolating to organise online meetings via Microsoft Teams/ Zoom every two days to offer support for online lessons.

The school website will include contact details so that, should parents of children with SEND need to contact a member of school staff for additional support or guidance for home learning, they can do so.

Where statutory processes relating to SEND are in action, the school will continue to maintain communication with parents of, and children with, SEND so that their views are actively sought, considered and promoted.

6. Arrangements for assessing and reviewing student's progress

Hope Academy recognises that assessments and reviews of student's progress will continue to be necessary during this period of school closure, mainly for the purpose of statutory assessment and review for new or existing EHC plans and for other assessments being completed by external professionals, for example community paediatricians.

Where this is needed, key school staff will maintain communication with parents and relevant professionals to share, with necessary consents, the most current assessment information and professional observations that the school holds.

Where students are funded or have EHC plans are due for review, the school will discuss arrangements with parents, students, the Local Authority and professionals involved and organise for a 'remote review' to take place.

7. Arrangements for supporting students in moving between phases of education

For Year 11 students due to move between phases of education at the end of this academic year, Hope Academy will continue to make contact with the new settings to share necessary information to make students transitions as smooth as possible. The SENCo will make contact with SENCos in the new settings to share information on SEND needs. Where students with SEND would benefit from additional transition visits, every effort will be made to facilitate these where possible within DfE, PHE and government guidance.

For Year 6 children, Hope Academy have a virtual tour of the building on the school website and children with an EHCP will be able to speak to the SENCo by email request. The Head of School, Mrs Adams with all our feeder schools, will lead primary liaison meetings with parents virtually. Parents will have an opportunity to speak directly to the head of School at these meetings.

Hope Academy recognises that transition may be a particular concern for parents of children of SEND, and communication remains open for parents to contact key school staff to discuss this.

Hope Academy's approach to supporting children with the virtual transition will continue to be reviewed in line with all available DfE and government guidance on school closure.

8. In-Year Transitions to Hope Academy

For students transferring between schools mid-year the SENCo will continue to inform the new class teachers of student's needs using electronic folders and virtual meetings where appropriate. Additional virtual transition can be accessed in advance from the school website where necessary to relieve any worries and doubt.

Any consultations that the school receives in during this time will be responded to within the designated timescales unless illness prevents this.

9. The approach to teaching children with SEND

Hope Academy recognises that children with SEND need access to home learning resources and activities which take account of their strengths and needs.

For children with SEND, but without an EHC plan, signposts will be included within year group home learning to support them in accessing appropriate learning activities. School staff will also be mindful of the availability of support and resources when setting accessible home learning for children with SEND. This will be available through the school's virtual learning platform Satchel One. All students have log in details for this platform and as far as possible, students who do not have access to a laptop at home and are eligible, will be provided with one by the school so that no learner is disadvantaged. Teaching assistants dedicated to the Year group Bubble who are isolating will arrange virtual meetings with the students to support them with their work.

The school website will include contact details so that, should parents of children with SEND need to contact the pastoral manager or SENCO for additional support or guidance for home learning, they can do so.

10. Support for Social and Emotional development

Hope Academy understands that the student's social and emotional development is particularly at risk within the current national climate of isolating and potential partial closure.

Individual risk assessments for children with EHC plans will consider children's social and emotional development and will ensure that communication plans are in place to enable at least fortnightly review. Regular contact between school staff and parents/children will be central to identifying when additional support may be needed. Where concerns are raised or are apparent within these communications, the student's risk assessment will be reviewed by key school staff and appropriate action and onward referrals considered.

For all parents, key contact details are available on the school's website so that they are always able to reach school staff for support if needed.

Hope Academy will signpost parents to other professionals who may be able to support them and their children at this time, particularly the Educational Psychology Service. The school will also share the contact details of multi-agencies who are able to support their son/ daughter.

Locally St Helens Council Youth Services have been consulting with members of the St Helens Youth Council to create an online Mental Health Toolkit –aimed at educating young people about the importance of self-care.

#GrowYourHappy is an easy to read, navigate, fun, pressure-free online space, full of swipeable recommendations, resources, support services and mood-boosting content. It can also be easily accessed using a simple QR Code

[Padlet.com/StHelensYC/growyourhappy](https://padlet.com/StHelensYC/growyourhappy)

Further online resources can be found at:

www.stem4.org.uk/anxiety/parents

www.youngminds.org

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

11. Working alongside other professionals

Hope Academy will continue to maintain contact with other professionals during any partial lockdown or period of school closure. This will particularly include liaison with the Specialist Teaching and Educational Psychology Service within the Local Authority. This service will be sharing resources which may be of use to parents and professionals during this time, and we have added links to these to our school website.

The SENCo holds contact details for external professionals already working with students with SEND including health and social care staff and will maintain both planned contacts and referrals of arising need. Contact details for the SENCo and key school staff are available via the school website should professionals need to make contact.

Hope Academy will signpost parents to appropriate external professionals as needed and will continue to fulfil authorised requests for information for assessment or review purposes.