

Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning - Report to Governors

SPRING 2021

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***DEVELOPING THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF
YOUR GOVERNING
BODY***

Covid-19 Lockdown Update

Summary

1. Funding for Covid-19 Outbreak Management

The council has been allocated funds from government to help manage the COVID outbreak locally and is allocating some of this funding to all Barnet schools as a contribution to the costs schools have incurred or may incur in this respect. Please see the attached letter from Anisa Darr (Appendix 1), the council's Director of Resources, with details about the funding, the conditions attached and a link to the council's website indicating how much each school has been allocated.

2. Opening of nursery classes and funding of places

Last week, the DfE issued guidance on the early years census. Although this guidance does not address concerns about safety of staff and families arising from the risk of increased transmission of the virus if nursery settings are open, it does address one of the principal objections to the proposed return to funding based on attendance during lockdown, which is that this would be unfair on settings because attendance is bound to be lower than usual as a result of the lockdown.

Now, provided settings make places available for all children, they will be funded for the 'usual expected attendance', i.e. for children who would attend 'were it not for the impact of coronavirus on their personal circumstances or on the operation of the setting'. This means settings will be funded for children on roll who are kept at home by their parents. We believe it also means settings will be funded for places that would be available if it were not for operational reasons, such as staff absences due to coronavirus. However, these changes do not apply to settings that restrict attendance only to vulnerable and critical worker children; in those cases, settings will only be able to claim funding for children who actually attend.

What it means for schools is that they need to communicate to parents that the setting is open with places available to all children on roll, subject only to any restrictions arising from the impact of coronavirus on the setting. Schools can place a limit on numbers if you need to for operational, health and safety reasons, and clearly you will want to prioritise places for vulnerable and critical worker children, but you should make clear that other children may attend as well subject to any overall restriction on numbers.

It is still important for schools to base decisions on risk assessments and health and safety considerations. A decision to restrict attendance to vulnerable and critical worker children will fall foul of the DfE funding rules, but schools can and should decide how many children can safely be supported and therefore how many may attend, taking account of the number of staff available and staff-child ratios and any additional tasks staff might need to undertake to mitigate against the risks of transmission of the virus, in line with your risk assessment.

Actions for schools:

1. Revisit your risk assessment in respect of your nursery provision and determine how many children can be supported safely given the number of staff available, child-staff ratios and additional mitigating actions the staff need to take during this period of high transmission of the virus.
2. If you have not been open to all nursery pupils already, communicate to parents that the nursery provision will now be open with places available to all children, subject to any limits arising for operational reasons due to coronavirus.

3. If you need to restrict numbers, communicate that to parents, with an indication of the reasons, the numbers being supported and the fact that you will need to prioritise vulnerable and critical worker children.
4. You may also want to indicate, if you do need to restrict numbers, that if parents are able to keep their children at home, that would help the school to ensure places are available for those parents who are most in need of a place. We recommend that you ask parents if they are still interested in a place, so that, as and when it is safe to expand the offer, you have an idea of numbers that may be interested.

Please note that the local authority does not have discretion to fund settings other than in line with national guidance. Furthermore, the funding paid to the local authority for early years settings is in line with the same DfE guidance, so it would cost the authority millions of pounds that it does not have to fund settings for places based on pre-covid levels given that it will not be funded by the DfE on that basis.

3. National free school meals voucher scheme opens to orders

The DfE has announced that the Edenred site is now open for schools to purchase eGift cards/vouchers for eligible families to use at their choice of supermarkets. Schools can now begin ordering free school meal vouchers for eligible pupils.

The vouchers are worth £15 a week per child and families can receive codes by email to redeem themselves, or as a gift card provided by post, collection or delivery to families without internet access.

Schools should have already received an email from Edenred advising them to activate their account, or to reset their password if they have already used the platform.

The Department will reimburse costs for locally arranged vouchers up to £15 and provide £3.50 on top of a school's regular funding for those providing parcels. Costs can be claimed back to 4 January, recognising that schools will have provided support since that point.

Ten retailers have signed up to the Edenred scheme: Aldi, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrison's, Iceland, the Company Shop Group, Waitrose, McColls and M&S.

You may have seen that Marks and Spencer are giving extra support to families by funding an additional £5 per week for each £15 lunch voucher redeemed at M&S via the Government's free school meals scheme in England. Schools may want to share this information with parents: <https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/media/press-releases/5ff7017fc6fe1bc26cb21d12/m-and-s-food-to-bolster-the-government-s-15-free-school-meals-vouchers-to-20-to-give-children-breakfast-and-lunchtime-meals>

Department for Education [guidance](#) explains how schools can order vouchers and distribute them to families – this includes eCodes, which can be sent directly to families, or gift cards which can be posted by schools to those who do not have access to a printer.

4. Testing for primary, school-based nursery and maintained nursery school staff

The DfE has announced that all primary schools, including school-based nurseries, and maintained nursery schools will start to receive deliveries of home testing kits to offer to all their staff from 18 January. Staff will be supplied with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits to self-swab. Staff will be asked to take their test kits home and carry out the test twice a week. This is to start from Monday 25th January. The LFD test will give a result in around 30 minutes. Staff must report their result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is

completed either online or by telephone as per the instructions in the home test kit. Staff should also share their result with their school to help with contact tracing.

Testing is not mandatory for staff and staff do not need to provide proof of a negative test result to attend school in person, although participation in testing is strongly encouraged.

Staff with a positive LFD test result will need to self-isolate in line with the [stay-at-home guidance](#). They will also need to arrange a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result. Staff with a negative LFD test result can continue to attend school or nursery and use protective measures unless they show covid symptoms or they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive and therefore need to self-isolate.

The asymptomatic testing programme does not replace the current testing policy for those with symptoms. Anyone with symptoms (even if they recently had a negative LFD test result), should still self-isolate immediately according to government guidelines.

Those with symptoms are also expected to order a test online or visit a test site to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to check if they have the virus.

The DfE has been clear that these tests are available for all staff who come into school on a regular basis. This will include contracted catering and cleaning staff. The number of test kits supplied is based on staff numbers from the Workforce Census, so will not include these staff. Replacement kits may therefore need to be ordered earlier than anticipated.

5. Serial testing of close contacts

The DfE has issued new guidance on serial (daily) testing of staff and pupils:

“In light of this changing situation, we now recommend that the rollout of daily contact testing within schools is paused, other than for schools involved in further evaluation.”

This page has just been published: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/daily-contact-testing-in-schools-statement-from-phe-and-nhs-tt-about-next-steps>

6. Reporting positive cases

Schools should continue to report to the Barnet public health team any cases of staff or pupils attending school who test positive for covid19 and details of the public health action you have taken (e.g. bubbles self-isolating). This includes any staff or pupils who test positive in Lateral Flow Tests. Schools do not need to notify the team of positive cases of pupils not attending school (i.e. those who are at home engaging in remote education).

7. Vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers

The DfE has updated its critical worker [guidance](#) to make clear that critical workers should keep their children at home if they can. It is important that schools should speak to parents and carers to identify which children need to go to school and which can be supported at home with remote learning. Government guidance also states that “whilst schools are attended by vulnerable children and the children of critical workers only, where possible schools should keep group sizes small”. Schools should have reviewed

	<p>their risk assessments having regard to the lockdown, closure of schools, current risks, number of staff available etcetera and may well need to restrict numbers attending in order to manage those risks appropriately. The presumption and expectation is that all vulnerable pupils will be offered a place and certainly every child with a social worker or an Education, Health and Care plan should be offered a place and encouraged to attend. Some of the other descriptions of which children count as vulnerable clearly require some discretionary judgements by the school (e.g. which pupils 'have difficulty in engaging with remote education' and which ones are 'at risk of becoming NEET').</p> <p>Currently the percentages of pupils attending mainstream schools in Barnet are 14.9% for Primary schools and 3.3% for Secondaries. Numbers are higher in some schools serving more deprived areas with the percentage in some primaries being between 20% and 25% of the school roll.</p> <p>8. DfE Attendance Form</p> <p>The DfE daily attendance form has been re-titled the 'Educational Setting Status Form' and needs to be completed by 2pm each day by all schools. We have access to this data and this helps to inform us about the challenges schools are facing regarding the number of pupils in Barnet schools so schools are requested to ensure this is completed daily.</p> <p>9. Staff attendance</p> <p>Government guidance is clear that people should work from home if they can. This applies equally to teaching and support staff in schools. Schools should only require enough staff to work onsite to support the limited numbers of vulnerable and critical worker children that are attending school in person or if the nature of an individual's work is such that the work cannot be done from home.</p>
Governors' Role	To note the above information.
For action by	All Governors
Contact	<p>Ian Harrison Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Email: ian.harrison@barnet.gov.uk</p>

2.	SEND Update
Summary	<p><u><i>Special schools and PRUs</i></u></p> <p>The DfE published additional guidance on 14th January for special schools, specialist post-16 providers, and alternative schools (including hospital schools) during the national lockdown period. It should be read alongside the main guidance document: Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools and the Further education guidance for restricting attendance during the national lockdown, which covers the main operational issues.</p> <p>Special schools should continue to welcome and encourage pupils to attend full-time where the parent/carer wishes for their child to attend.</p> <p>Special post-16 settings should continue to welcome and encourage students to attend as per their usual timetable where the young person wishes to attend.</p> <p>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/young person's specified provision as soon as possible.</p> <p>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/young person can get if full time provision for all is not possible. Risk assessments should be undertaken with parent carers, whenever possible.</p> <p><u><i>Remote education for SEN pupils</i></u></p> <p>Mainstream and special schools should ensure that remote education provided for children and young people with SEND (SEN Support and those with an EHCP) is differentiated and that the appropriate support is provided.</p> <p>National easement to the statutory duties on local authorities are not at present being introduced. This will be regularly reviewed by the DfE.</p> <p><u><i>DfE cross-government SEND Review</i></u></p> <p>The DfE are undertaking a review of SEND, due to be published in the Spring term 2021. It will focus on three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND, supported by the most appropriate service across education, health and care. • Support for mainstream schools to better meet the needs of the majority of children and young people with SEND. • Make the EHCP process streamlined and consistent across local authorities and increase the capacity in the specialist sector to place children and young people with SEND close to home, at a sustainable cost.
Governors' Role	To note the above information.
For action by	All Governors
Contact	<p>Helen Phelan Director, SEND & Inclusion Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Email: Helen.Phelan@barnet.gov.uk</p>

3.	Education Strategies
Summary	<p>Governors may be interested in the key education strategies that were recently considered and approved by the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee. These have now been published on the council's website and you can see copies here: https://www.barnet.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-support-information</p> <p>The previous Education, School Improvement and SEND strategies were for the period 2017 to 2020, so were due for a detailed review. The pandemic sets a new context for all our work and we have tried to reflect this in the revised strategies. We also produced an update on our School Places strategy.</p> <p>The School and Settings Improvement Strategy now also includes all early years settings i.e. including Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries (PVI) and childminders.</p> <p>The SEND and Inclusion strategy is still in draft form as the committee agreed to it subject to consultation, which finishes on 22nd January. All partners, including schools, parent carers, social care and health have been encouraged to respond to the consultation. Feedback from children and young people with SEND has been obtained through a number of focus groups. The strategy will be revised and re-published in the light of the consultation responses and an action plan will be developed to drive forward the priorities.</p>
Governors' Role	To note the above information.
For action by	All Governors
Contact	Ian Harrison Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Email: Ian.Harrison@barnet.gov.uk

4.	GOVERNOR TRAINING PROGRAMME SPRING 2021
Summary	<p>This term's Governor Training Programme returns and is available for registration at: www.bels.org.uk > all traded and other training > governor services.</p> <p>Courses continue to be delivered online this term and, with much positive feedback received for online course delivery, the plan is to deliver a blended programme with some courses returning to face to face delivery as circumstances normalise. For virtual courses, Governors will be sent a link prior to their course which will take them to the training platform.</p> <p>Governors should register for Governor Training ahead of time and provide their primary email address to ensure they are sent the necessary link in time.</p> <p>As you know, Governors should be using school-based email addresses. In any case, by providing an email address for courses, Governors consent to this information being held by BELS and its training consultants until the end of each session, when this information will be deleted by trainers.</p> <p>Should you not receive the course link a day before your session, please email CETraining@barnet.gov.uk.</p>
Governors' Role	To note the above information.
For action by	All Governors
Contact	<p>George Peradigou Governor Services School Improvement Team Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Email: george.peradigou@barnet.gov.uk</p>

5.	GovernorHub
Summary	<p>GovernorHub is a communications tool allowing Governing Boards to securely store meeting papers, manage board membership, share calendars, and so on.</p> <p>In response to numerous requests we've managed to secure this service and offer it as a bolt-on at a discounted price of £197 per year for schools subscribing to the Governor Support Programme (the cost to schools if subscribed to directly is £400). You will be able to select this service in the traded services catalogue, which will be circulated shortly.</p> <p>We are providing a quick demonstration of Governor Hub at this term's Director's Briefing to Chairs and Vice Chairs which takes place on Tuesday 26 January at 6pm. However, I'm sure a follow up demo can be arranged for your GB if desired.</p>
Governors' Role	To note the above information.
For action by	All Governors
Contact	<p>George Peradigou Governor Services and Advice Officer School Improvement Team Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Email: George.Peradigou@barnet.gov.uk</p>

6.	What maintained schools must publish online
Summary	<p>The DfE has updated its information on what schools maintained by their local authorities must publish on their websites.</p> <p>Every local-authority-maintained school must publish specific information on its website to comply with the School Information (England) Regulations (2008), as amended by The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and 2016 and other relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010: advice for schools and the Children and Families Act 2014.</p> <p>The full guidance can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online#governors-information-and-duties</p> <p>If you're an academy, free school or FE college, you should instead read previously published guidance on what academies and colleges should publish online.</p>
Governors' Role	To note the above information.
For action by	All Governors
Contact	<p>George Peradigou Governor Services and Advice Officer School Improvement Team Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Email: George.Peradigou@barnet.gov.uk</p>

7.	Prevent Updates
Summary	<p>LGfL Online Safety Information Sessions for Parents</p> <p>Children have spent much more time on devices since the first lockdown began last March – for school work, online tutoring or during leisure time – so it is important to support parents to ensure children are safe online. . Parents can be pointed to facebook.com/LGfLDigiSafe or you could use this template letter which also references the O2/NSPCC hotline.</p> <p>Internet Filter Test for Schools</p> <p>Schools in England and Wales are required “to ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school, including by establishing appropriate levels of filtering”.</p> <p>But how do you know if you are protected? In the UK there are a number of agencies and charities working on your behalf to help you stay safe online. From this work, a number of lists exist which are used by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to provide filtering services to protect you from harmful content such as Child Abuse Imagery and Terrorist content. ISPs often have other lists to block services that provide Pornography or illegal downloads.</p> <p>Test Filtering tests your Internet Connection to see whether this content is being blocked. We currently test for access to Child Abuse Imagery, Terrorist content, and Pornography. To ensure your filtering is current please follow this link: http://testfiltering.com/</p> <p>As previously noted, The Home Office is also offering an introduction to the Prevent Duty and explains how it aims to safeguard vulnerable people from being radicalised to support terrorism or becoming terrorist themselves. This will provide an important foundation on which to develop further knowledge around the risks of radicalisation and the role that you can play in supporting those at risk. This training addresses all forms of terrorism and non-violent extremism, including far right wing and Islamist extremism threatening the UK. This e-learning has been developed by HM Government following consultation with a range of individuals and organisations. It has benefitted from the feedback of teachers, local authority officials, community-based groups, youth workers and many other links to further information can be found at the end of the training.</p> <p>The training can be found at: https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk.</p>
Governors’ Role	To note the above information.
For action by	All Governors
Contact	<p>Perryn Jasper Prevent Education Officer School Improvement Team Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Email: Perryn.Jasper@barnet.gov.uk</p>

Appendix 1: Covid19 Funding Letter

London Borough of Barnet
2 Bristol Avenue
London NW9 4EW

Contact: Anisa Darr
E-mail: anisa.darr@barnet.gov.uk
Date: 20th January 2021

Re: Funding for Covid-19 Outbreak Management

Dear Head Teacher

Thank you for your efforts in minimising the impact of Covid on children and young people, teachers and learning. As a local authority, we have been allocated funds from government to help manage the COVID outbreak locally. We recognise schools as a key partner in this endeavour and therefore the council are writing to you to inform you that we will be making a contribution to the costs the school has incurred or may incur in this respect. This is intended to be a one-off payment for the period of the pandemic to be spent in line with the conditions specified below.

This money will be allocated based on a standard rate per pupil plus a lump sum. The amount you have been allocated can be found on the website ([Financial year 2020-2021 | Barnet - WWC](#)) using the dropdown for your school's name on the relevant sheet. Payments are expected to be made on the week commencing 25th January 2021.

There are conditions attached to this funding that have been instructed to us by central government. Examples of activities that this funding could be used to support include but are not limited to:

- Contact tracing;
- Enhanced communication and engagement;
- Extension / introduction of specialist support;
- Support for those disproportionately impacted;
- Additional resource for compliance with, and enforcement of, restrictions and guidance.

Through receipt of this funding, you are acknowledging that you have spent, and/or will spend, this money on solely the purpose of containing the outbreak and that this may be subject to audit checks and clawback in the future. If you cannot spend money on this purpose or do not spend all the money, please get in touch to arrange return of any funding.

Yours sincerely,

Anisa Darr,
Director of Resources,
London Borough of Barnet