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Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I wanted to write to you to reassure you all that following the announcement last night by the Prime Minister, we are working closely with all of our schools and education settings to ensure that we support successful transitions for all students back into schools when the time is right.

At present, we, and schools, know no more than what was confirmed last night. A phased return is currently planned for certain year groups from 1<sup>st</sup> June. I know that this decision will cause further anxiety for many parents and carers regarding the safety of their child in returning to the classroom. This is understandable and as we move towards a position where we have further guidance from the Department of Education we will ensure that schools plans for reopening follow all relevant Public Health advice to keep schools as safe as possible.

I recognise that there will be a host of other questions, concerns and worries that you have as a parent too. We have created a list of frequently asked questions that you can find on page 2 of this letter. If you do have any questions that the Education Team at the Local Authority can help you with, please don't hesitate to contact [education@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:education@nelincs.gov.uk) or the main council number of 313131 can redirect your call to the most appropriate colleague.

On behalf of North East Lincolnshire Council I would like to thank-you all for the role that you are undertaking in supporting your child to adhere to lockdown, social distancing advice and to keep up with their learning. I firmly believe that in working together we will all succeed.

Yours faithfully,

Joanne Hewson

Director of Children's Services

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Does my child have to return on 1<sup>st</sup> June, even if I want to keep them at home?**

We currently await further information and guidance from the Department for Education on their full plans for a phased transition. Try and not to worry about this, as plans will evolve and both the Local Authority and your child's school will share them with you and provide plenty of opportunity to speak to staff to share any concerns that you may have.

### **I am worried that a family member is still in the shielding category and don't want to send my child back to school where they might bring it back into the home. What can I do?**

Many families will be in this situation and it is important to remember that there is no immediate answer. We continue to await further guidance from the Department for Education regarding their detailed plans for a phased return. Any parent with a concern, once plans have been released by their child's school will be given the opportunity to discuss their situation with the school. Each family will have their own set of circumstances and working together with your child's school once you are fully aware of their plans, is essential.

### **My child starts secondary school in September and I haven't heard anything about transition days, or where to buy uniform yet. What should I do?**

All of this information will be sent out to you in the most appropriate way. Many secondary schools have started plans for transitioning of Year 6 children internally and will shortly be able to share those plans with you. Transitions may look different than it has done other years, which is taking schools some additional time to plan for too. Some schools have started using their social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook to start to post welcome messages from the Principal and key staff. Others have started making personal phone calls to Year 6 parents. Please rest assured that schools are making plans and will be starting to communicate with parents/carers over the next few weeks.

### **My child is 5 and starts school for the first time in September and I haven't heard from them, what should I do?**

Many Primary schools are already planning what the transition might look like for their new starters from September. As expected, this is taking some time to work out and identify what can be done and when. Primary schools know that this is a worrying time for parents/carers and will be doing all they can to ensure that your child has the best start possible when schools re-open.

### **My child has additional needs, or an Education Health and Care Plan and starts school/moves to a new school in September and I am worried about this. What can I do?**

Schools are aware of the students with EHCPs who are joining them in September and are making plans to personalise transitions for them. This is taking some time to gather the information and to plan for. Contact to parents/carers from the school that your child is joining will begin to happen over the next few weeks. For further support please contact North East Lincolnshire Parent Participation Forum or SENDIASS who are both local services to support parents and carers of children with additional needs in North East Lincolnshire. The SEN Services Manager meets weekly with representatives from NELPFF and SENDIASS to answer any questions that parents or carers may have during this challenging time.

**NELPFF** email: [help@nelpff.co.uk](mailto:help@nelpff.co.uk) or telephone: 07583 474892

**SENDIASS** email: [nelincs@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:nelincs@barnardos.org.uk) or telephone: 355365 during office hours

Alternatively, you can also get in touch with the free National Helpline operated by Contact on 0808 8083555 or visit their website - [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)

**My child has an Education Health and Care Plan and their Annual Review is due this term, can it still happen? Will the plan be removed if it isn't?**

Annual Reviews for Education Health and Care Plans still need to take place, however this may be done through a phone call, e-mail or virtual meeting instead due to schools not being able to facilitate face to face meetings. If this is not possible via an alternative method parents should agree with the school the reasons for this. No plans will be removed or stop existing if an annual review is missed. If you need any further support through this process please contact SENDIASS via email on [nelincs@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:nelincs@barnardos.org.uk) or telephone 01472 355365 during office hours. Further information is also available on their website <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/north-east-lincolnshire-sendiaass>