

Special Lockdown Edition: January 2021

Welcome to this special edition of the SEND Local Offer newsletter for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). With schools being closed for most pupils for the foreseeable future, we hope this newsletter will offer ideas for keeping children active and occupied during lockdown as well as links to support.

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SEND education during the Coronavirus pandemic

Due to the COVID-19, schools have changed the way they deliver education; however, their statutory duties for children and young people with SEND remain the same. Our Team continue to be in regular communication with SEND staff in settings to support vulnerable children. If you have questions about how SEND provision and support is being delivered during the national lockdown, please speak with your school's SENCO or headteacher. If your child has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) and you need further information after speaking to your child's school, please email the [SEND team](#).

School attendance during lockdown

Even though schools are closed, children with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) can continue to go to school as usual. The only exception is where a child with an EHC plan is 'extremely clinically vulnerable' and has been advised to shield. Government advice is that these children should not attend nursery, school or college. More advice about who can attend school can be found on the [Council for Disabled Children website](#)

Deadline for primary school admission applications

The deadline for 2021/2022 primary school admissions is Friday, 15th January 2021. If your child was born between 01/09/16 and 31/08/17, you need to apply for a primary school place now. City of London residents can get advice and further information from the [Education and Early Years Team](#).

Learning at home: online and TV resources

Here are a few tried and tested resources for home learning that you can trust.

PE with Joe Wicks: 9:00 to 9:20 Monday, Wednesday and Friday on YouTube.

CBBC: primary school programmes including BBC Live Lessons. 9:00 to 12:00 Monday to Friday from January 11th.

BBC Bitesize: Lessons for children aged 3 to over 16 with lots of videos, quizzes and practice activities to help with home learning. www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

Oak National Academy: nearly 10,000 free video lessons, resources and activities, covering most subjects, from Reception to Year 11 including a specialist classroom with lessons

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for children and young people with SEND.

classroom.thenational.academy/

TTS home learning resources: free, curriculum-focused independent learning activity books. www.tts-group.co.uk/

Online exhibitions

[Natural History Virtual Museum-](#)

'Harry Potter: A History of Magic' [British Library exhibition](#)

Home learning for children and young people with SEND

First off – please don't worry; you're your children's parent, not their teacher. You can support them to do the work sent by school, for example by sharing activities, answering questions, bringing snacks and drinks, and encouraging them to keep going; but your relationship with your children is more important than a finished worksheet.

Most primary schools schedule maths and English in the morning because this is the time when children work and learn the best. So, try starting the day with a Joe Wicks PE Youtube session and then some writing or maths before they get involved in play or watching TV. And be realistic about the amount of time your children 'should' spend on school work; two or three 20-minute sessions of calm 'sit down' work each day is better than four hours of moaning and arguing.

Think about how your children could learn through play- drawing and painting; cutting, gluing and sticking; building with Lego or empty boxes; washing doll's clothes in the sink. A tent



made from a clothes airer and a sheet becomes a great den for reading and sharing stories.

Reading counts as home learning, and it doesn't have to be Biff and Chip or school 'reading books' - stories, jokes or rhymes



(Grannies and Grandads come in really useful for this on Zoom or Facetime), recipes, instructions, the backs of sauce bottles – it's all

reading. And don't forget that a walk outside is a great way to get rid of excess energy.

If you are finding it difficult to support your children to learn at home, please contact your child's teacher or the school special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Even though your children may not be attending school, you can still ask for advice and support.

Information for parents and carers about early years providers, schools and colleges during the lockdown

On January 8th, the Department for Education published information for parents and carers of children at:

- Early years settings (including nurseries and childminders)
- primary and secondary schools (including independent schools and special schools)
- colleges (including further education colleges, independent training providers and special post-16 institutions)

The guidance document can be found [here](#).

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Learning from home for children with ASD ***from Laurence Hime Principal Educational Psychologist at the City of London***

Learning from home is not easy for children with autism. They are out of their routine, often stuck inside and suddenly spending more time with other members of the household. During the summer of 2020, the Autism Centre at Birmingham University surveyed parents of autistic children.

The survey found positives for parents/carers were that the family spent more time together on fun activities and lived at a slower pace. Some parents enjoyed working with their children, getting to know them better and see how they had changed and watching how they learned. Some children with high levels of anxiety before lockdown were less anxious at home.

Parents also described how it could be tiring to motivate them. Some children liked to spread out tasks, such as writing, over the day so they became less of a challenge. They missed their classmates and outside contact.

Parents described strategies that were useful were:

- Social stories to explain the safety guidance and reduce anxiety
- contact with their teacher/teaching assistant
- breaking learning tasks down into smaller steps
- only short activities where they did well or they could switch off
- recording answers by video and minimising having to write.

Some children became anxious about the pandemic, missing lessons and returning to school. Parents/carers need to be positive about the return. Social stories, planning with staff and given simple rules and visuals for safety all helped the return.

The COLTALE Programme ***Coltale's Adventures e-book***

The City of London understands the importance of good speech, language and communication skills in giving children the best start in life. COLTALE (City of London Talks and Listens Enthusiastically) aims to support all children to develop those skills and to develop close partnerships between parents and early years practitioners/teachers. You can find insightful updates and ideas on Facebook and Twitter - #coltaletoptips.

Coltale's Adventures

Follow Coltale the dragon and his friends on their exciting adventures with this collection of short stories written by children living in the City of London. To find out more, click [here](#).



City of London FYI website and SEND Local Offer

The FYI website and SEND Local Offer is always available for families to find the most up to date information about Covid19 developments, and information about services for and support children, young people with SEND and their families. Click [here](#) visit the FYI and Local Offer. The pages will be updates regularly with useful information for families during this time.

Mencap Covid 19 Information

Mencap have created easy read information about the latest issues relating to coronavirus in England, including lockdown rules, shielding guidance and information about the vaccine. The guidance will be updated with details of visiting in supported living services and hospitals. You can see the information by clicking [here](#).

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