Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will School Transport continue as it normally would?

* Over the next two weeks we hope to be able to gauge the numbers of children who will continue to require local authority organised school transport, and look to combine routes and re-direct resources as required. Because we are not yet clear on what level of service will be required, unless specifically told otherwise our instruction to contracted suppliers is to operate a full service from now until further notice. Due to possible staff shortages, some flexibility from all sides will no doubt be needed.

Public bus timetables are being changed over the next few days to reflect the situation. Bus operators have planned to continue to help children get to school. Parents should expect changes to their child’s public bus journey to school. They should check on their bus operator’s web site to confirm exact times and routes.

1. Can school visits go ahead?

* Schools are not advised to cancel school visits.  Any visits cancelled will be classified as disinclination to travel in relation to their insurance cover.

1. Should children’s medication held at school be returned to parents?

* The decision about where medication should be kept should be made in consultation with the parents. However, if the child is in school you need to ensure you have all the medication required to meet their needs.

1. Can parents drop off or collect their children at different times to the normal school start and finish time to match their own part time working hours?

* Children entitled to attend school during this unique situation would be expected to be at school for the normal core hours. This will assist schools in their safeguarding responsibilities.

1. Will schools need to continue any extended hours provision for example breakfast or after school clubs?

* Currently we are asking schools to focus on their core hours during the normal school day.

1. Can key staff take pupil confidential information home when working remotely?

* Pupil confidential information should be managed in line with current GDPR requirements. This should be from the school wherever possible but where this needs to be taken home it is up to individuals to ensure that data remains secure at all times.

1. Do all school staff who are able to work need to report to work on Monday?

* All teachers and support staff who are able to work, bearing in mind current restrictions, should report for work until advised otherwise. This will be reviewed given information on pupil numbers and the availability of staff to meet the needs of children and schools across the county. It will be for headteachers to determine how staff are deployed.

**HR Questions**

1. Are staff covered by insurance if we move staff to other schools?

* Any employee or volunteer acting for and on behalf of the Council will be covered under all the usual policies, no matter where they are carrying out their duties/activities. If they are deployed to an Academy or Private School, they would still be covered by the Council’s policies. If they are working in a third party property, there may be situations where a claim would fall under the Academy’s policy rather than the Council’s policy. In this situation any claim would be assessed on the facts and pursued against the appropriate party.

Students are not insured per se and are regarded as a third party at all times, so if they are moved to an alternative school it would make no difference as to the policies they are able to claim against in the event of damage or injury suffered as a result of our negligence.

1. Small schools redeployment - limited opportunity now schools closed.

* We are working with schools to identify key contacts during school closures. The two schools effected have been asked to provide preferred contact details of each employee. The HR team will still be operational during this time and coordinating redeployment activity

1. Are teachers classed as key workers?

* Yes. This is confirmed in the Government Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England, published 19.03.20

1. How do we move staff from one school to another?

* The initial step will be information gathering and assessment of pupil numbers that fall within the categories indicated. This will inform the location and staffing requirements. The Model Emergency Situation model policy adopted by schools, allows for staff to move between schools to maintain provision.

Any discussions regarding potential movements will be held by the headteacher with employees directly, taking into account any personal restrictions or concerns. Any movement of staff to an alternative location will be as reasonable as possible and appropriate to the employees' skills and competencies.

1. Management of Easter Holidays and Staffing provision

* For both Teaching and Support staff, we are currently exploring at a phased approach over an extended Easter holiday period with staff still having their 2 week break to ensure well-being and rest but, over a phased period and taken at different times to ensure continuous and adequate provision for the pupils.

The aim would be for no staff to be requested to work over their contractual hours. Please note: The situation could change depending on the national position and updates received.

1. What is the process for making appointments for Teaching posts for a September start? Specifically, is there any advice available about alternatives to face to face interviewing?

* Where possible, recruitment activity can still continue at the present time, but schools are advised to limit face-to-face contact with candidates. Interviews can take place via telephone, Skype or other online facility. Face to face interviews should be limited to the final candidate.

1. What are reasonable alternative duties for support staff and teachers?

* The questions of “reasonable” will need to be worked through between the Headteacher and staff. For teachers and support staff this may involve teaching different year groups or subjects in a different location. Wherever possible individuals’ skills, job descriptions and circumstances will be considered and balanced alongside the needs of pupils.

1. Who will pay for any additional costs incurred, for example travel costs, more hours etc

* For any staff member working at an alternative location, the normal school travel policy applies. This means that any excess travel incurred from their normal place of work can be claimed through their substantive school, and recorded on their system. It should be indicated that the claim was made through this current period.

1. If I ask a support staff member to undertake duties or tasks at a higher grade will they get paid the higher graded work?

* In the majority of cases where the request is very short term, we would not expect a school to make additional payments. Where the activity is for a more prolonged period of time, however, where the difference in grade is more significant, or for an extended period of time, it may be reasonable to consider pay arrangements. Please ensure you are recording these situations and discuss with the HR Professional support team.