

## Email from Carolyn Terry to Essex early years and childcare and childcare providers

**From:** Free Entitlement Funding Queries <[Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 30 March 2020 09:24  
**Cc:** Free Entitlement Funding Queries <[Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 30 March 2020

Dear All

I hope you managed to get some time to rest and recuperate over the weekend. Today we move into week 2 of this strange but now the new normal time we are all in.

In an attempt to help you to keep on top of developments, please find a summary of the latest below:

I am sure you are aware that the Coronavirus Bill was passed by the House of Lords on Friday. As a result some guidance documents were updated and a new one on Safeguarding was released late on Friday night. The link to the most relevant documents are below for your information:-

- Safeguarding in schools, colleges and early years settings - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>
- Guidance on vulnerable pupils and young people - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>;

You will see that the Government continues to be very concerned about the lack of take up of the offer from vulnerable pupils specifically in schools, as indeed are ECC, and this will be the key priority this week as we continue to develop an Essex Vulnerable Pupils / Children Response Plan. We do also need to ensure that any vulnerable children attending early years settings continue to be supported, even if the setting has closed. Attached is an early years safeguarding document that sets out, as a reminder, the responsibility of settings in supporting vulnerable children so please take the time to read this and ensure that you are considering how you support your vulnerable children in the current working climate. Any queries do please let us know.

The numbers of settings deciding to close is raising on a daily basis, and whilst we fully understand the reasons these decisions are being made, we do still need to ensure that we continue to have enough childcare for our vulnerable children and for the children of critical workers. The level of availability is now becoming a major concern. As a result, ECC has

raised as a matter of urgency with the DfE the financial impact of the closure policy on early years settings being able to stay open for the small numbers of children they have that are eligible for childcare and have pressed the DfE for a response to this. ECC will be chasing the DfE for an urgent update on this today. In the meantime, ECC are looking at what options are available to us to be able support the sector to enable settings to remain open to offer childcare to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers and we will update on both of these points as soon as we can.

We have also put together a briefing note, setting out some thoughts on how settings might be able to join up and work together locally to be able to continue to stay open to offer childcare to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, please see attached

For anyone needing any support in the meantime, can you please let us know by emailing the Free Early Education Entitlement funding mailbox ([Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Free.EntitlementFundingQueries@essex.gov.uk)) and we will do our best to help.

There are also a number of additional attachments attached for your information:-

- Friday's DfE update
- An update from the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing service on how they are operating during Covid-19 and how to get in touch with them if you need to

We have received a number of other queries that we are in the process of producing responses to and will share these with you in an updated FAQ document for information as soon as possible

We are continuing to work through the queries we are receiving as fast as we can, but are aware that some of you will still be waiting to hear back from us . Please bear with us thank you for your patience during this time.

Best wishes

Carolyn

**Carolyn Terry**

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