

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

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>

Sent: 22 June 2020 18:32

Cc: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>

Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 22 June 2020

Dear All

I hope you managed to get some rest over the weekend and enjoyed the sunshine.

Please find below, updates on the following areas:

- Attendance Survey
- Summer 2020 Childcare sufficiency survey
- Interim headcount dates
- Furlough paperwork
- Guidance on maintaining Early Years Bubbles
- Before and After School Childcare
- School Holiday Childcare
- Supporting Transitions
- Early Years Safeguarding Briefing from Jo Barclay
- Latest FAQs – 22 June 2020
- Updated DfE guidance

Attendance Survey from the attendance data you are submitting to us, we can see that each week there continues to be increases to the numbers of you that are open with more children attending.

The attendance data for Monday last week was the highest that has been submitted so far and from the responses, 34% of Essex early years and childcare settings were open yesterday. Of this 34%: –

- 54% were group based childcare providers
- 45% were childminders
- 1% were out of school providers

With 5,026 children under the age of 5 attending a setting

From Thursday this week, the DfE is only asking for the attendance data once a week, and the collection will be Thursday's only. The DfE have also slightly changed the questions being

asked to cover asking more information about any vulnerable children attending and data on whether there are enough places for parents wanting to access a childcare place. We will send you the updated link for Thursday's survey.

We do appreciate what a challenging this time is for you all, and we really appreciate the hard work that you and your staff teams are putting in to provide safe welcoming environments to your children and families in these difficult times

Summer 2020 Childcare sufficiency survey – as you know we always undertake a childcare sufficiency survey each Summer term. This year we will be issuing an on-line childcare sufficiency survey to gather in the data on the level of places available and any gaps. We will keep this as simple as possible, but it is critical that you provide us with a response as we will also be using this to plan for our sustainability support going forward. The survey will be issued within the next 2 weeks

Interim headcount dates – the interim headcount will open on the Funding portal from 6 July 2020. There is planned maintenance and migration work for the Funding portal, and there is a chance there may be a possible delay in opening the interim headcount for a day or two. For this reason, the interim headcount will remain open for longer than usual and won't close until 15 July 2020. Please look out for announcements on the Funding Portal confirming when the Interim Headcount is open

Please note *we have asked the DfE to urgently provide guidance on whether the FEEE funding will continue to be paid to any setting that remains closed or partially closed during the Autumn 2020 term. Until we receive this guidance, we are unable to confirm whether the FEEE funding will continue to be paid to any closed or partially closed setting, but we will update as soon as we receive confirmation*

Furlough paperwork – you may have read that HMRC are starting to think about an audit process for any business that has applied to the CJRS, so we just wanted to provide you with a reminder to make sure you have kept all of your paperwork to support your rationales for any staff you have applied to the CJRS for should you need it.

Guidance on maintaining Early Years Bubbles We have received many questions on working within bubbles, and so we have liaised with DfE and Public Health colleagues to pull together the attached guidance on merging, splitting, adding to and staffing setting bubbles, in response to some frequently asked questions on these topics.

Before and After School Childcare We are aware that the DfE guidance was updated in early June to state that *only those registered childcare providers which operate on school premises are able to operate and all other out of school settings are not able to reopen*. We also know that this has impacted some before and after school childcare providers who had remained open to support critical worker and vulnerable families throughout the peak of the pandemic.

In order to continue to support schools and families and fulfil our responsibilities around childcare sufficiency, we are working with those providers that have been open throughout the Covid-19 lockdown providing childcare to the children of critical workers to support them to

remain open. This includes those who are not on the site of a school, providing they are able to meet the necessary protective measures. ***Please see attached our guidance for Before/After School Providers for more detail.***

We are still waiting for updated guidance for Before/ After school providers operating off of school sites that have **not been open** and therefore are closed, and will update on this as soon as we receive any more information

School Holiday Childcare we have received the following, very welcome confirmation, from Sue Baldwin - Regional Schools Commissioner.

The Government's ambition is that providers running clubs and activities for children over the summer holiday will be able to open, if the science allows, on this basis, we do not intend to ask schools to open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers over this period.

As soon as we hear more on this, we will update you all

Supporting Transitions - Please see the attached documents regarding transition. This document has been designed to act as an aide memoire, recognising that all schools and settings have individual contexts, processes and procedures already in place to support and enable effective transition. They have been collated following a range of queries, feedback and discussion around specific transition issues during the Covid-19 response period and we hope you find them useful. Your Early Years Education Partner will be contacting you to offer support, but in the meantime you can contact them directly via the following mailboxes: -

For settings based in: -

North East Essex (Colchester and Tendring) - eyanortheast@essex.gov.uk

Mid Essex (Chelmsford, Maldon and Braintree) - EYAdvisers.Mid@Essex.gov.uk

West Essex (Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford) - EYFS.West@essex.gov.uk

South Essex (Basildon, Brentwood, Castlepoint and Rochford) - EYadviser.South@essex.gov.uk

Parents requesting to defer school places We are being made aware that some parents are contacting schools regarding deferring their child's reception place, not starting their child in September where they aren't statutory school age yet and/or keeping them on in their Early Years setting for longer.

We would please ask that if you receive a contact of this nature that you please let us know, including the rationale. This is because there are implications to the funding allocation between the Early Years and Reception settings, which we would need to work through. It would help us to have an understanding of the number of families wishing to make this decision. **Please see more detail in the attached FAQ document**

Early Years Safeguarding Briefing – please see attached briefing from Jo Barclay, ECC School Safeguarding Manager

FAQs - please see attached FAQ document

Updated guidance – pulling key early years guidance documents into one link
[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Best wishes

Carolyn

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