

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

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

Sent: 30 December 2020 20:13

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

Subject: Urgent - Please Read - Covid-19 Update 30 December 2020 - Spring Term and Tier 4 announcements

Dear All

I hope you have all been able to spend some quality time with family over the Christmas break.

I am writing to update you on today's Government's start of the Spring Term announcement, and am sorry to interrupt, for those of you not currently open, your precious Christmas break but I know many of you will have picked up the announcements this afternoon and I wanted to clarify the position with regard to early years settings, schools and colleges in Essex, as far as we know at the moment.

Early Years Summary: The announcement states that **all** early years settings (including childminders) should continue to allow **all** children to attend as normal. School-based nurseries in primary schools have discretion to follow arrangements for the primary school.

Primary Schools Summary: In parts of Essex, the Contingency Framework has been implemented. This means that: 'the DfE are advising at this moment that only vulnerable children and children of critical workers should be allowed to attend'

The Contingency Framework Implementation guidance applies to all districts, cities and boroughs that were placed in Tier 4 on the 19th December 2020; namely:

- Brentwood
- Epping Forest
- Castle Point
- Basildon
- Rochford
- Harlow
- Chelmsford
- Braintree
- Maldon

Therefore, for all schools in the districts and boroughs above, **only** critical worker children and vulnerable children should attend. High quality remote education will be made available to all other pupils.

The Contingency Framework Implementation Guidance will be reviewed by the 18th January 2021

Primary schools in Colchester, Uttlesford and Tendring will remain open as planned for all pupils next week on the 5th January, allowing for the remote learning day advised by ECC on the 4th January, if the school decided to take that day.

Secondary Schools and FE Colleges Summary: Nationally the start of secondary schools has been delayed:

- w/b 4th January secondary schools and colleges to open only for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Remote learning should be provided for all other learners.
- w/b 11th January secondary schools and colleges to open for children of critical workers, vulnerable children and children of all pupils in the exam years 11 & 13 and any other pupil taking external examinations this academic year. Remote learning should be provided for all other learners.
- w/b 18th January all secondary and college students to return full-time with the exception of those schools and colleges where the contingency framework implementation still applies. These are those schools in the areas listed above. The Contingency Framework will be reviewed by the 18th January 2021.

Secondary schools are expected to use the delay to implement the testing arrangements.

Special Schools, Alternative Provision Schools and Hospital Schools:

- Special schools should continue to allow pupils to attend full-time
- Alternative Provision schools should continue to allow pupils to attend full-time
- Hospital schools should continue to provide full time education where it is safe and feasible to do so, and in line with hospital infection prevention and control (IPC) measures

Independent Schools (not independent special schools): As with all DfE guidance the assumption is that is the independent school is in an areas where the Contingency Framework applies, this will apply.

Potential staffing issues this may cause - I appreciate that this may create some pressures for some your staff that have school aged children and live in areas where the school is closed. Please remember that your staff will count as critical workers and as such their children should still be able to attend their school. This will not be without its challenges for the local schools to ensure enough places are available, but please encourage your staff to liaise with their children's schools to try and get this put in place. Should there be any difficulties with this, let us know and we will try and support. NB secondary schools will not be offering places to vulnerable children and critical workers until w/ 11 January and not from 5 January. Please see the [Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children Guidance](#) for more detail

Here is the link to the [Contingency Framework Implementation Guidance](#) and Gavin Williamson's statement can be found [here](#)

As we know more, I will be in touch, but in the meantime do please send any queries through to the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox (FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk).

Best wishes.

Carolyn

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