

Back to School – Gathering the Views and Ideas of Parents and Carers June/July 2020

This document collates the questions and views shared by parents/carers who joined our two online informal gathering views sessions about the return to school. It also includes the top concerns parents have shared with SPCN and our SENDIASS service and some views shared by children and young people working with the Engagement Hub. We shared these collated views with specialist services in the LA and SPCN.

This document includes comments shared by the specialist services who joined us for the first online session as well as responses made by the LA after the events.

The LA has produced a bulletin called ‘Covid 19 Information for Parents and Carers’ which you might like to look at alongside this document. The June bulletin answers some frequently asked questions from families and is available here:

https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/suffolk/enterprise/files/cv19_parent_faq_bulletin_4_.pdf

Parent Comment or Question	Ideas Explored which might make things better & responses from specialist services
<p>Transition Support and Planning</p> <p>SPCN shared that one of the key areas of concerns shared by parents with them was transitions- how will these work/months of planning and processes have now not been followed for many children (could limited options to do this fully impact start date in September). Many children have had no transition preparation at all.</p> <p>In the virtual sessions parents shared:</p>	<p>In our online sessions we looked at some examples of school and LA resources and approaches to support transition and discussed the importance of parents being able to support their child with communicating with school.</p> <p>Some of the LA resources can be found here:</p> <p>https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=9-4-gMINCZ8</p> <p>and also here:</p> <p>https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/if/free-resources/</p>

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“The meatier issues of how children with complex needs will transition back need to be addressed in a bespoke way for each family as those transitions are really dependent on the individual child.”

“Transition back needs to be approached in a bespoke way – support for the family but with a focus on the child, especially with SEN children.”

“We would like consideration of a planned transition back into school, are schools doing this anywhere within Suffolk at present? Could we expect something along these lines?”

Year 6 children working with the Engagement Hub shared worries about what High School would look like.

One young person working with the Engagement Hub shared:

“Can’t replace face to face as you miss body language, facial expressions and hugs. However, some young people give more if it’s virtual. We need a combination of both going forward and to give the child/young person a choice.”

Parents liked the following ideas:

- Access to **All about Me templates and transition booklets** so that they could choose a form which would suit their child’s needs.
- Teachers sending pupils their **‘pen portrait’ or one-page profile** before they started school so they could get to know them a little. They could also encourage pupils to send back one of their own, offering a template or signposting to a variety of templates which the family could use.
- **Virtual tour of the school on the school website** including showing any changes to the environment.
- **Virtual meeting** regarding re-integration.
- **Welcome Video**
The year 6s working with the Engagement Hub shared ‘Would be good to have a video from the school. Perhaps their new form teacher just to say ‘Hi’. A friendly face.”
- Opportunity to **go into school in advance** of school starting.
- **Parent guide to transition.**
- One young person working with the engagement hub said that their school was having a **picnic at the end of the term.**

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	<p>The Psychology and Therapeutic service has produced a guide to video calls for children and young people:</p> <p>https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Children-families-and-learning/Psychology-and-Therapeutic-Services/Inclusion-Facilitators/A-Guide-to-Video-Calls-for-CYP.pdf</p>
<p>Questions over what schools will be like in September</p> <p>SPCN shared that a main area of concern shared by parents with their service was what will schools look like i.e class set up/start date/lessons/open hours/social distancing.</p> <p>“Will all children be returning at the same time- we are hearing the term soft start – what does this mean?”</p> <p>“What will school look like for my child?”</p>	<p>We shared some approaches that some schools in Suffolk were doing to help families understand what school will be like and also resources which specialist services have produced to support transition.</p> <p>Parents expressed interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual video tours, including showing any changes to the environment due to Covid (different entrances or one-way systems)• Photo packs to show the areas pupils will use and any changes to the environment or school practices (changes to line-up after break for example)• Transition packs (we showed some high school examples, which explain the timetable, uniform, equipment, how lunchtime works, transport to school and which include things like checklists)• Social stories and visual resources like those produced by the County Inclusion Support Service (CISS) - https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=9-4-gMINCZ8

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome newsletters or videos before term starts outlining what to expect (we showed some primary and secondary school welcome videos)
<p>Worries over friendships and ‘bubbles’</p> <p>“Our son is adamant he will not go back to school until the whole school goes back – for social reasons. None of his close mates were in the vulnerable pupil cohort. Can the school think about more linking with the friends who aren’t in that cohort?”</p> <p>A young person working with the Engagement Hub shared:</p> <p>“I want to back to school tomorrow. I want to see my friends but I am worried about friendship groups changing and that friends have been in touch with each other and not me.. I feel all sorts of emotions.”</p>	<p>We discussed ideas for maintaining links between pupils in school and at home.</p> <p>For example, parents were interested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• having a project that both pupils at home & school could work on• pupils in school writing a letter to those at home telling them what they have been doing and encouraging them to be involved• a virtual meeting which both the vulnerable pupils in school and those at home could join. <p>We shared some online resources and videos around friendship worries and an example of the transition webpage of a Suffolk school (Hadleigh High) which included links to BBC and Young Mind videos. (See below)</p> <p>https://www.hadleighhigh.net/Information-Advice--Guidance-Around-Transition/</p> <p>Parents thought this webpage was helpful and thought it would be good if all schools did the same.</p> <p>“Links on school websites for parents and children to access would be great.”</p>

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<p>“My son is worried about not being with his friends if he is in a bubble without them.”</p>	<p>“Links on SENDIASS and SPCN websites are good but not all parents would look at these, especially if their child doesn’t have additional needs.”</p> <p>Parents liked the fact that Hadleigh High webpage offered links to a small number of key sites/resources so it encouraged rather than overwhelmed.</p> <p>At the time of putting this document together the current government guidance states that the return to classrooms will be based on separating groups of children into "bubbles" and minimising contacts between them, rather than social distancing. This will mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Grouping children together in groups or "bubbles", a class in primary and year group in secondary▪ Avoiding contact in school between these groups, with separate starting, finishing, lunch and break times <p>This social story which was shared by our IAS network might be helpful for children worried about the system of ‘bubble’ and friendships:</p> <p>My Back to School Bubble</p>
<p>Concerns over mental health</p> <p>“The other big issue for us is the mental health aspect. This has deteriorated so much as well as</p>	<p>We shared examples of videos, online advice and courses to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people.</p>

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our son’s behaviour. More aggression – and we fear for the long-term impact on his mental health. “

“My child’s mental health and behaviour have really deteriorated, which we have had no support with. She has been in and out of crisis.”

A parent working with the Engagement Hub shared:

“I feel less concerned about the Coronavirus now and more concerned about my child’s mental health.”

“My daughter hasn’t been in school for a year due to anxiety and panic attacks – I need to give her the confidence to get back into schooling and this will be a struggle.. This last year has been so stressful – I’m a Keyworker so I’ve still been at work.”

These included:

[The Mix - Mental Health Resources](#)

[Young Minds - Anxiety](#)

[Childline Calm Zone](#)

[BBC Bitesize Tips and Advice](#)

[Kooth](#)

[Suffolk Emotional Wellbeing Hub](#)

[The Source](#)

[Suffolk and Norfolk Wellbeing Courses](#)

When parents said these might help their child, we asked where the best place would be for CYP to access this information and they said **school websites**, similar to the Hadleigh High links.

For parents who are not familiar with Kooth, they offer online counselling, wellbeing support, self-help material, and peer-to-peer support via online forums. The forums allow young people to contribute their own material, including a popular creative writing forum where short stories and poems are shared. There is no specific eligibility criteria.

For parents who are not familiar with The Source, the website holds a wealth of information & videos for young people, including self-help and advice. A **CAT group** for young people includes the opportunity to be involved in shaping local mental health services, asking what services they need, what they think about services now, and what services they would like to see in the future.

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During March, a 30 Day What's Up Challenge took place (this is still available as a blog post on The Source - www.thesource.me.uk/whatsup), which challenged young people with 30 things they could do to maintain their wellbeing.

In the virtual sessions we shared some resources produced by the Psychology and Therapeutic Service in Suffolk, including for reducing stress and anxiety:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/if/free-resources/>

Suffolk Mind is currently providing a service to Primary Schools which is looking to be expanded to Secondary, covering emotional needs and wellbeing.

Further information available at <https://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/for-organisations/schools/>

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT), which provides mental health services to people in Suffolk, has set up a **24/7 helpline** offering immediate support for mental health difficulties during the coronavirus pandemic: **0808 1963494**

The helpline is staffed by mental health professionals from the Trust and aims to provide reassurance, self-help advice, support and signposting during the crisis.

Anyone can call the number, regardless of whether they are an existing NSFT service user.

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Worries related to Covid

SPCN shared with SENDIASS that among the top concerns shared by parents was: anxiety and trauma around COVID/lockdown - what support will be available in schools for this?

In our virtual sessions parents shared:

“My daughter, her anxiety is just as bad, if anything it’s worse as now she is anxious about Covid. She has lost significant weight – when I’m at work she texts me constantly and doesn’t sleep until I get back in. I’m at the end of my tether. She doesn’t want to go out of the house as she thinks the virus is going to get her. She was quite an outgoing child but now doesn’t want to do anything.”

A young person working with the Engagement Hub shared that he is very anxious about going back to school as he doesn’t trust that it is safe. Before he went into lockdown a younger child at his school spat at him and this has made him very cautious and reluctant to want to go back to school. He doesn’t feel sure that things will even be safe in September but thinks it will be

The following resources and websites may help address the fears and worries of children and young people around Covid:

For young people:

[The Mix - how to deal with Corona anxiety](#)

[Young Minds - What to do if you're anxious about the Coronavirus](#)

[Young Minds - talking to your child about the Coronavirus](#)

[NSPCC - talking to your child about the Coronavirus](#)

For younger children:

[Elsa Support Coronavirus story in several languages](#)

[Coronavirus - free book for children](#)

[Australian Children Foundation - understanding the coronavirus for kids story](#)

[Carol Grey social story about pandemics and the coronavirus](#)

Easy Read

[NHS Easy Read info about the coronavirus and social distancing](#)

The Source is currently offering a Time Capsule Competition, called “The Art of Staying Apart”, for ages 5+ to submit artwork or anything creative.

The creative process can help some children and young people in dealing with Covid-19. Information is available here:

www.thesource.me.uk/home/latest-news-and-views/timecapsule/

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safer in Jan 2021. He is hopeful that things will be well managed when he goes back.

Another young person shared:

“**I can’t sleep** at night. I keep feeling really panicky and anxious. I’m worried about dying. I don’t want to die, but we all have to, we can’t stop it and it’s so scary. I don’t want to leave this world.”

The Psychology and Therapeutic service in Suffolk has produced some helpful advice and resources for children, young people and adults about **sleep** here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/sleep/>

These include:

[general guide to good sleep during COVID.](#)

[how the COVID-19 pandemic may affect teenagers' sleep](#)

The Insomnia clinic offers a free webinar around sleep and anxiety around the Coronavirus and free ‘how to sleep well’ mini-guides:

<https://www.theinsomniacclinic.co.uk/sleep-and-coronavirus>

The NHS offers audio guides which might be helpful, including a short guide around sleep issues:

[NHS audio guides](#)

In Suffolk, the children's Community Learning Disabilities Nursing Team is a specialised service, which works with families to meet the behavioural needs of children and young people with learning disabilities in Suffolk. These needs include difficulties with sleep –

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	<p>https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/childrens-health/childrens-community-learning-disabilities-nursing-team-behaviour-support/</p> <p>Suffolk Infolink provides details of a private sleep service called 2Sleep which operates in Stowmarket. 2sleep is a private sleep service run by Vanessa Moore - a sleep practitioner trained by NHS Solent in Southampton and the charity Scope.</p> <p>The service aims to provide practical help to support families who have a child with sleep issues and professionals working with families either through workshops and seminars or through one to one support. In particular, 2sleep provide advice and support for families dealing with sleep issues in children with additional needs.</p> <p>https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/service.page?id=EzcdQ0qQkKA</p>
<p>Concerns re PPE</p> <p>“For children that cannot remain in a bubble (likely to bolt etc) will 1:1's be required to wear full PPE?”</p>	<p>At the time of writing this document, the current government guidance states that the majority of staff in education, childcare and children’s social care settings will not require PPE, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.</p> <p>PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• where an individual child, young person or other learner becomes ill with coronavirus symptoms and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.

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“If a child is afraid of gloves as it is and has an utter aversion to PPE, where do you stand with a return to school?”

- where a child, young person or learner already has routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

However, we have heard of schools asking for staff and children to wear masks around school.

This Suffolk video may help reduce anxiety around PPE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZvHWMLaOXM&feature=youtu.be>

The idea below was shared by a parent for helping children who have an aversion to gloves:

- Use your hand as a puppet and engage the child in a game.
- Allow the child to become acquainted with the gloves before using them. Let him/her pick which gloves to use. Then let him/her feel the material in their hands before putting them on your hands.
- Using a pair of scissors, snip off the fingers of the glove and put on a fingerless glove. A lot of anxiety can come from the unknown and fingerless gloves might help a child see that your fingers are still there, just covered up temporarily.

Sensory Spectacle offers some advice around managing hygiene for children and young people with sensory issues:

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	<p>https://www.sensorspectacle.co.uk/spd-covid-19</p>
<p>Concerns over social distancing rules.</p> <p>“I’m worried as my year 8 child is very tactile that he may get punished if he is unable to stick to the social distancing rules.”</p> <p>“Many children may be looking for and needing more physical contact.”</p> <p>Care leavers shared with the Engagement Hub: “I feel fed up of this thing that’s covering the world and eating up all the hugs and kisses.”</p> <p>“We need hugging therapy. I would love that therapy. We all need that.”</p>	<p>We will ask the LA to raise schools’ awareness about your concern that many children and young people who are more tactile, or who may be needing and seeking more physical contact, may need additional help and understanding regarding social distancing. We will share this at the next SENDco forum in July.</p> <p>Specialist services in the LA and other organisations have produced resources around social distancing, including a social distancing booklet and prompts created by CISS which you may find helpful and which you can access here:</p> <p>https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=9-4-gMINCZ8</p>
<p>Concerns raised by parents about maintaining engagement with school and learning. Worries about the difficulty of re-engaging them on return.</p> <p>“Kids have been home so long they’re bored now – want to be back with their peers socialising.”</p>	<p>We shared some examples of approaches some schools are using to maintain engagement and a relationship with pupils, beyond setting work. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● staff offering weekly virtual story-telling or exercise sessions ● setting daily or weekly fun challenges ● sending regular photo newsletters

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“Our son before the Easter break was already starting to struggle – only getting into school 2 or 3 days..We really fear the longer this goes on, the harder and harder it will be to re-engage with school.”

“Our son has lost engagement over lockdown – now he has lost interest in some subjects.”

“There is work set via Google but not differentiated for my son – they referred to a maths pack which he didn’t receive. Initial pack wasn’t very good – clearly rushed. 2nd pack a bit better. As a TA myself, I am working with him & doing the differentiation – I have chased the school for more work rather than them offering it out.”

“School hasn’t done much to maintain interest and contact or in terms of differentiation. Feel it’s been left to us as parents to adapt for our children.”

“My son usually has a 1:1 TA but there has been no contact with any staff, TA, SENCo or any other staff to see how he has been coping.”

One parent shared: “We have been lucky enough to have virtual lessons each day, photo newsletters, continuing golden awards and engagement with the school has been pretty good- my daughter with no SEN has really benefited from this.”

We shared details of the virtual Charles Dickens school which can be accessed by all schools and families.

<http://www.charlesdickens.southwark.sch.uk/>

They offer daily task videos and weekly videos for ages 2 – 11 years which could help with maintaining engagement with learning.

We also shared resources in the sessions which LA specialist services have produced to help parents with supporting their child’s learning before the return to school.

Parents expressed an interest in accessing these resources, including resources produced by the Dyslexia Outreach Service.

A variety of resources are available here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/if/free-resources/>

And here:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=9-4-gMINCZ8>

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“Work set from school has been generic and we’ve had one welfare call.”

“One teacher has been fantastic at engaging my child who doesn’t teach him!”

“We fear that when it comes to the end of July, **how will schools keep the comms/dialogue going** over the long holidays to maintain that engagement? We don’t want the children to only be hearing what we hear on the media. Don’t want to wait till the 1st of September.”

School Refusing

“School refusal increasing - some children have been much happier at home and mental health has improved.”

Dyslexia Outreach Service added: if parents would like a newsletter relating to dyslexia/literacy difficulties, do let us know as we would be happy to add this to the Local Offer page above. You can contact the Dyslexia Outreach service by emailing their service lead: nicola.wilde@suffolk.gov.uk

A parent wondered whether schools could link to these resources?

The County Inclusion Support Service responded: Schools are trying to work out how to respond on a locality basis, to address the needs of the local community. They are thinking about resources which could be shared over the holidays so that the child or young person can keep revisiting these.

The following might help in keeping your child safe online over the coming weeks:

- [Video guides for parents](#)
- [What questions parents and carers should be asking about screen time](#)
- [6 fun online activities to boost your child's digital resilience](#)

Contact to the Suffolk Parent Carer Forum and to our SENDIASS service has shown that whilst anxiety has heightened for many, some parents have found their child or young person’s anxiety has reduced since going into lockdown.

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This could be because many of the anxieties for children with SEND can be related to an environment or with the sensory or social difficulties they may experience in school. They may feel more relaxed at home in their 'safe space' and some families have told us that they have seen an improvement in their child's wellbeing and mental health as a result.

We are aware that some families have wondered whether they should continue to home educate and take their child off a school roll. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE).

If you are thinking about this, we would encourage you to look at the information on our SENDIASS website here, including points to consider:

<https://www.suffolksendiass.co.uk/education/choosing-a-school-for-a-child-with-send/choosing-to-home-educate>

and on the LA webpages here:

[Local authority information about home-educating](#)

The LA EHE team would really like to have a conversation with you before any decision is made, just to talk everything through and make sure you understand what is involved and how it is different from the home schooling that has happened during the lockdown.

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Concerns over EHCP provision.

“My daughter needs intimate care and full time 1-2-1 support - both are in her EHCP. I am really worried about where we will stand if her school say they can't manage this as I know there have been changes to the law.”

An emergency Coronavirus Act has been passed, in force from May 1st for up to two years which aims to give local authorities, health commissioning bodies, education settings and other bodies more flexibility in responding to the demands placed on them by coronavirus.

The Act includes temporary emergency powers which enable the Secretary of State, where appropriate and proportionate, to issue a notice on a month-by-month basis, to modify or change some legal requirements under the Children and Families Act 2014.

A notice has been issued from July 1st to July 31st to temporarily amend the core duty to 'secure' SEN provision and health provision in EHC plans to 'reasonable endeavours'.

This means that local authorities and health bodies must consider for each child and young person with an EHC plan what they can reasonably provide in the circumstances during that month's notice period.

For some children and young people, the LA and health commissioning bodies may be able to secure the provision (or support) as set out in the EHC plan but for others, the support may need to temporarily be different.

This situation calls for open minds, creative thinking and collaboration and the guidance around the Coronavirus Act emphasises even more strongly the need for local authorities, health services and education settings **to work closely with families** to explore and agree best ways forward.

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<p>Working with parents</p> <p>“Are schools using parent forums enough to explore what parents and young people feel would help them to help their children with the transition back to school?”</p> <p>“Are secondary schools using parents’ views enough? Could they integrate more with parent representatives? In our experience, secondary schools can feel more removed.”</p>	<p>In both sessions, parents liked the idea of schools holding a virtual meeting with some representative parents to talk through what transition support would be most helpful and how parents and schools could work together.</p> <p>SPCN has heard from good practice from some schools and has been heavily involved with health and LA services and would like to hear about more parent involvement with plans around education. We need the feedback from parents.</p>
<p>Support for Parents and the rest of the family</p> <p>“My other child will also need more support. As a young carer she has been through a huge ordeal in this too - will there be any potential provision for that?”</p>	<p>SPCN responded : Young Carers are included in our thinking and concerns. We have raised this as part of our concerns that it’s not just the children with disabilities but also their families, the siblings that we need to think about - the impact on all of them. We have heard about children who were previously managing really well who are now struggling. Some of this is like trauma. We are reiterating that services need to think cleverly and quickly.. We need to take a holistic family view.</p> <p>Suffolk Family Carers has an online space for Young Carers (5-13) and Young Adult Carers (14-25) which includes blogs, tips and information. Children may also like to share their worries with Wilf the Worry Monster.</p> <p>Suffolk Family Carers - young carers</p>

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“We would like SENDcos to know where to signpost parents to for support. We feel that SENDcos may not be aware of all the resources and help that is out there for parents for support. Parents are often so overwhelmed that something said in a meeting might fly out of your head. Need information to be more robust. Especially today, if things are going wrong, they need to signpost parents.”

For questions and advice around SEND, parents can contact our confidential and impartial SENDIASS service – we work hard to increase schools’ awareness of our service and understanding or how we can help families and practitioners. We will share your request with the SENco forums and with the Headteacher for Specialist Services in the LA.

For support around your own wellbeing and financial advice, you may find the following websites helpful:

[BBC Bitesize wellbeing tips](#)

[Mental Health Foundation advice](#)

[Young Minds Parent Helpline](#)

[Mind - Coronavirus and your mental health](#)

[Every Mind Matters - 10 tips to help if you're worried about the coronavirus](#)

[Contact - support and advice for families of disabled children](#)

[Suffolk and Norfolk Wellbeing - online courses and webinars](#)

The following BBC videos for parents and carers may also be helpful:

[Supporting a child moving to secondary school](#)

[Starting secondary school with Special Educational Needs](#)

[Top tips for mobile phone & online safety](#)

[Survival guide & cheat sheet](#)

Triple P Parenting has a free online booklet with resources for parenting a child or young person during Covid 19:

[Positive Parenting in Uncertain Times](#)

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	<p>Parentchannel.tv is a free video service designed to support and encourage parents and carers of children from ages 0-19, with a collection of over 200 videos addressing day-to-day questions and concerns spanning wellbeing, behaviour and learning.</p> <p>Parent Channel-tv</p> <p>Suffolk Parenting team now has a Parenting Hub Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Suffolk-Parenting-Hub-105589491185801/</p> <p>The Incredible Years parenting website offers free resources and handouts for parents and carers here:</p> <p>http://www.incredibleyears.com/parents-teachers/articles-for-parents/</p> <p>Including: Keeping Calm and Providing Supportive Parenting During the Coronavirus</p> <p>Sharing Parenting are offering some online webinars in August and September around Building Resilience, Successful Habits for Families and Mindfulness – details and how to book here: info@sharingparenting.com</p>
<p>Transport</p> <p>SPCN shared with SENDIASS that one of the key areas of concern parents have shared with them is:</p>	<p>Suffolk On Board has recently issued a newsletter for parents which parents may find helpful:</p>

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<p>Transport - cleanliness of transport/capacity of transport (more than 1 child in car), social distancing in cars/buses etc/wearing of PPE.</p>	<p>https://mailchi.mp/b51148d7ae5e/suffolkonboardcom-newsletter-july-4009253?e=ee80a2e53f</p> <p>There is additional information on the Local Offer about transport including frequently asked questions which may answer some parent questions:</p> <p>https://www.suffolkonboard.com/school-travel/bus-getting-to-school-college-or-sixth-form/coronavirus-faqs/</p> <p>Children and young people will need to wear masks if they have to use public transport to get to school. The Dfe guidance includes ‘how to make a cloth face covering’ -</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering#:~:text=Step%201%3A%20Cut%20out%20two,side%20and%20stitching%20this%20down.</p> <p>This Suffolk video may help reduce anxiety around PPE:</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZvHWMLaOXM&feature=youtu.be</p>
<p>Tuition over the holidays</p> <p>“We’ve heard on the news that Boris has been thinking about tuition over the summer holidays – we think that’s ridiculous. Instead, think outside the box and shorten the next school year’s holiday time like Easter and possibly half term or the next summer holiday.</p>	<p>Dyslexia Outreach Service responded : The government is already thinking about catch-up tutoring in school to support those children who are significantly behind and those who have SEND. Funding has been announced but there is no real detail yet – still early days. Our service will be supporting schools around learners with literacy needs in September.</p>

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<p>Need to think drastically about what these young people have lost. Knee-jerk reaction just won't work. We feel the children won't want to work over the summer."</p> <p>"Work in the summer would be awful. It's a bad enough time for them now."</p>	<p>(On the 19th June the government announced a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, aiming '<i>to increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged over the 2020/21 academic year.</i>')</p> <p>The County Inclusion Support Service (CISS) responded: we have been talking to a lot of schools about what it will look like in September and schools are very aware of this and are focussing on the positives and how they can adapt their practice to meet the needs of children with SEND. It's important to get consistency.</p> <p>SPCN responded: we're aware of one academy which has already started their Saturday school – SPCN are querying how this would work for pupils with SEND. They are querying any blanket policies with the LA and education colleagues. SPCN have asked for clarification.</p>
<p>Repeating a Year</p> <p>"There has there been much national and local thought that some SEND pupils may need to repeat a year – not just due to time lost due to Covid but also due to the impact of the outbreak. Think of 4/5 months of loss – county needs to recognise the possible scale of how many children may need to repeat a whole year."</p>	<p>The School Admissions and Transport department responded:</p> <p>If a child is already attending a school</p> <p>Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the Headteacher to decide how best to educate them. This may, on occasion, include deciding that a child should be educated in a different year group to their normal age group. Any decision to move a child to a different age group should be based on</p>

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sound educational reasons and made by the Headteacher in consultation with the parents.

This is the advice on the DfE website dated 2 July 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

If a parent is applying for a school place

It is expected that children will normally be educated within their chronological year group, however, when a parent is applying for a place at a school, they can request that their child is admitted out of their normal age group. The school admission authority is responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to. They are required to make a decision on the **basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned.**

There are different ways of making a request for delayed or accelerated transfer depending on what type of school the parent is applying for (ie whether the school you want is a community and voluntary controlled school or a voluntary aided school, or a free school or an academy).

Information on delaying a child's admission to school can be found at:
www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Summer born children

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The term ‘summer born’ is used to refer to children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children are not required to start school until a full school year after the point at which they could first have been admitted – the point at which other children in their age range are beginning Year 1.

Should the parent wish their child to be admitted to Reception, rather than Year one, at this point, they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group. Where a parent requests their child is admitted out of their normal age group, the admission authority must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

Extending provision set out in an education, health and care plan

We do not anticipate that children and young people will need to repeat a year of educational provision as a consequence of the coronavirus outbreak. This also applies to those with EHC Plans. Similarly, we do not anticipate that young people will need to remain in education any longer than originally set out in their EHC Plan.

However, in a small number of individual cases it may be appropriate for a child or young person to extend their current educational provision or have their EHC plan extended. In most cases this would consist of an individualised programme for a term or half term.

In all circumstances, this would need to be decided by the local authority, following a review of the child or young person’s needs and EHC plan.

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Parents and young people can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if they disagree with certain decisions made by their local authority in relation to Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and plans.

SENDIASS highlighted in the virtual sessions: In a non-Covid world, the UK approach has always been that any short-term benefits of repeating a year may also be achieved through agreeing appropriate interventions and adjustments based around the child's year group. Evidence has suggested that in the majority of cases repeating a year has been harmful to a pupil's achievements in the long-term. The decision for a child to repeat a year has therefore never been taken lightly.

Key points that are usually examined include:

- that your child can learn more from the children in the proposed year group than by being around children of his/her own age group;
- that consideration has been given to the long-term emotional and social impact of the placement;
- that consideration has been given to likely future issues including transfer to high school;
- that your child will have a relationship group which is likely to continue to be somewhere he/she can 'fit in' as the cohort matures;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ that the plan for your child includes interventions to address his/her particular needs, in addition to placement with a different year group; ○ consideration has been given to the rights of other children who might otherwise take that place in that year group.
<p>What if there is a second wave?</p> <p>“Covid may come back, so whatever the county and schools do, they need to have contingency plans in place so that there isn’t the same 4 or 5 months of disruption. There needs to be some ‘future-proofing’ to prevent this kind of frozen scenario.”</p>	<p>CISS responded: we are hopeful that now schools are more equipped to manage distance learning this may be more accessible if we have another full lockdown again.</p>
<p>Concerns that additional support staff will be needed.</p> <p>“I do a lot of volunteer work at a school and I do aspiration work with kids as a mentor and I spend more time with the SEN pupils and those who are struggling.– will there be enough teaching staff? We don’t really hear about volunteers for school – has there been any forward-thought about this, like the NHS volunteer scheme? So many young people have suffered or are going to suffer and there may be a need for more support.”</p>	<p>This parent suggested: the county needs to think about what volunteers are available to help. There will be some volunteers who are DBS checked who could help make up staff/adult numbers. Could do with some direction from county. They may have buildings near existing schools which could be used for support, but they may not have enough staff support to resource these. Retired teaching staff? Suffolk could lead on this with a hub of people ready for September as this will take a lot of time to set up – build a pool of volunteers. There must be a lot of people who would happily give time to help.</p>

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	<p>We have shared this question and suggestion with the LA and hope to post a response on our social media pages in the coming weeks.</p>
<p>Support processes</p> <p>“If a nurture class is in place only in the morning and the children then return to their normal classrooms how will this work? Especially if classes are expected to stay together to form their own bubble?”</p>	<p>The Headteacher for Specialist Services responded: This would depend on the schools’ individual risk assessment as to their management of bubbles. Each school would be different. It is likely that interventions and support for children’s social and emotional needs will be covered as part of the teaching and learning within the bubbles too.</p> <p>CISS responded: generally, what we have been hearing from schools is that they may be unable to run small group interventions, however they are looking into whether these could be run virtually or as part of whole class PSHE sessions.</p>
<p>Concerns re Social Care needs</p> <p>“Many agencies can’t engage right now and this leaves parents in a really stressful situation.”</p> <p>“Family support was coming in, but this came to an abrupt end due to lockdown. Sourced private therapy myself but then Covid interrupted that too. We were literally just getting somewhere then it was all dropped –</p>	<p>We have shared your comments with the LA and hope to post a response on our social media pages in the coming weeks.</p>

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we felt left. Although the house is calmer now I know it's going to re-start. I'm dreading it."

"Social services use the school environment as a way to engage with these youngsters. The children and young people are 'captive' in school, but they lost this facility since the outbreak started."

"We have felt very isolated in terms of social service support for our child. Some days we've been at our wits' end. We want a return to some sort of normality, and we think we could all integrate better."