



FAQs for children and young people with EHCPs during COVID 19 outbreak

Schools

Will my child have a place at school as he/she has an EHCP?

Not necessarily - many children and young people with EHC Plans can remain safely at home. The school will decide on a case by case basis whether it is better and safer for each individual child to be at home or school, with input from parents and other experts as required.

Schools will contact the parent(s) of children who are eligible to attend school. **This could change daily depending on the staffing levels in the school.** If you have any questions please get in touch with your child's school?

What will my child do at school?

During this period children will be supervised and properly cared for at school, and be offered a range of suitable activities. They will not be having formal education in the usual way.

Will the school keep in touch with me while my child is at home?

Yes. If your child is at a special school, you can expect a regular weekly call from your child's school – usually an allocated key worker. If you have not yet had a call please contact the school to let them know.

If your child attends a mainstream school you should receive regular calls. If you do not hear from the school, please ring them on their main school number.

If your child attends a school outside the Borough of Enfield, you should receive regular contact either from the school or from the Education Service within the Enfield Local Authority.

If your child is 16 or over and is attending college, generally most colleges remain open for eligible children and will provide online support.

If your child is pre-school, the Early Year's team will be in touch every week.

Should I be teaching my child at home whilst they are off school?

No – parents do not need to try to 'teach' their children, or set up a structured 'home school'. Parents should do their best to set up as much structure and routine as their children/family need, but this could include lots of everyday things like doing the washing together, cooking, lots of play, reading together, listening to stories. If your child's school has provided activities for your child to do, you can use these as far as you are able, but you should not feel under pressure to provide formal teaching.

**What should I do if I have a problem regarding my child or I need to get in touch with the school?**

If your child is at a special school in Enfield (except Oaktree school) You should ring the main telephone number of your child's school.

Some schools have may have also given parents alternative telephone numbers – make sure that you keep a note of these to hand if that is the case.

As Oaktree school is closed, parents have been given a telephone number for Lorraine Stocks who will be the main point of contact.

Why do some children get priority for school places?

The main aim of partly closing schools is to help reduce the spread of COVID 19 so the intention is to have as few children going to school as possible.

Priority for a place at school will be given to:

- 1) Children who are particularly vulnerable – this will include some but not all children with EHCPs.
- 2) Children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response, so that they can continue to work where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made.

What if there are not enough staff in schools and other educational settings due to COVID-19?

The Local Authority will work closely with educational settings – and in particular special schools and other specialist provision – to ensure sufficient provision is available across the local area. Staff (including teachers, or support staff) may be redeployed if necessary.

Will Schools open over the Easter holidays?

We are currently in discussion with local schools and colleges to decide which ones will be open during the holiday period.

Have the arrangements changed for children with EHCPs moving into the Borough?

No. The SEND Service will continue to process these requests and will consult with the parent's preferred school(s), but there may be delays in getting a response during this time.



Provision of services and therapies

Will my children still get all the provision set out in their EHCP?

As part of the government's emergency powers, there will be short term changes to the statutory duties that Local Authorities currently have to provide services set out in EHCPs. The Local Authority are expected to use 'reasonable endeavours' to make sure provision is made – this means that they should try as hard as they can but there may be some cases when it just won't be possible to provide certain things.

Will my child still get his speech and language therapy/OT in school?

Not currently. Schools don't want non-essential visitors as this is an infection risk. The therapy services will try to contact parents over the next 6 weeks to discuss an activity/target for their child. This advice may change due to the redeployment of NHS Staff to essential services.

EHCPs and Annual Reviews

I have applied for an EHCP for my child. Does the twenty-week time frame still apply?

The 20 -week timescale does still apply currently, but we know that this will be challenging.

The SEN team will be very busy during this period and are experiencing some IT challenges as they are now working from home. However, they will do their best to meet deadlines as much as possible.

The team will need to prioritise carefully as the situation changes, so realistically there could be some delays.

Requests sent by post are likely to take longer as only one member of staff will be in the office.

Expert advice needed as part of the EHCP process:

- Existing information and reports will be used.
- Telephone calls will be made to obtain extra information when needed e.g. from Speech and Language or Educational Psychology.
- In some cases, assessments may be postponed until a later date, when a full face to face assessment can be made.
- Advice from Health is being given by telephone.
- Plans may be issued missing particular pieces of advice which can then be added at a later date.

When plans are issued changes can be made through the Annual review process.

Services will be writing a clause on their advice explaining the limitations caused by the current Covid-19 crisis.



My child was due an Annual Review/MAM meeting last week. It was cancelled. What happens now?

The SEN Service in Enfield is working very hard to get annual reviews finished in the required time.

Schools have been postponing face to face meetings but we have now asked them to have annual review meetings by a telephone call with parents. They will then fill in the form and return it to the SEN Service.

If a change of placement is asked for - or if it is time for the young person to move to a different provision, the SEND team will continue to consult with schools, but the response time could be longer than usual.

If you have any queries, please contact your school or your Advisory Officer.

Will the SEN Service continue to operate as normal for the foreseeable future?

All Services are continuing to work hard and will do their best to serve the parents, children and young people of Enfield.

The SEN Service team staff will work from home with a skeleton staff being in the office on a daily basis. Telephone access is available to your Advisory Officer on the same phone numbers and the SEN phone line is still available. Much of the work will be conducted electronically and virtually. This will include SEN Panel.

As the team is not office-based, please be aware that any letters sent by post are likely to have delays.

Direct Payments and Short Break Grants

Will I continue to receive my Direct Payments or Short Break Grants from Cheviots?

Yes, parents who receive direct payments or grants will continue to receive these, although it is understood that there may be difficulties using the funds whilst we are in lockdown.

If you do receive direct payments or grants, you should consider if you can use these flexibly for the period of immediate crisis and contact Cheviots when you can.

Are families able to carry over their grant spend into April / May if they have not been able to spend it due to COVID-19?

Yes, Cheviots will be flexible with the grants being carried forward. They will review the accounts in September and contact parents where there are substantial balances.