

**OFFICIAL SENSITIVE**

**CORONAVIRUS – COVID-19**

**SCHOOL GUIDANCE BRIEFING 5<sup>th</sup> June .2020**

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**1. DfE Guidance: Free-School Meals – May Half Term**

As outlined in a briefing last week the DfE have confirmed that costs for free-school meal vouchers will be supported for the half-term last week. This has now been confirmed in the guidance [here](#), which says:

*“Costs of the national voucher scheme to provide free school meals for eligible pupils will also be met by DfE over the Easter and May half-term holidays.”*

If you are not using the national voucher scheme you should record the costs as part of your tracking of exceptional expenditure in relation to COVID-19.

**2. GCC Guidance: Transition for Vulnerable Children**

We all recognise that the pressures of COVID-19 are going to make transition back to school difficulty for all children, but particularly our vulnerable children. The Education Psychology service have put together some advice in supporting vulnerable children back into education, which can be found [here](#). We are exploring how we might be able to provide additional support and resources to support those children and young people that find the return to school most challenging.

**3. GCC Update: A message from the MASH**

Thank you for your amazing hard work and dedication during these difficult times. We really appreciate your help, support and patience with MASH enquiries and requests to attend strategy meetings, often at very short notice.

School's information can be crucial in the decision making. We have very short time scales in the MASH and the Social Workers usually have to make their decisions within 1 working day based on the information available from all the agencies within the MASH, which include Education in order to

ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right response at the right time. We appreciate that it is not always possible to obtain the information within a few hours during the school holidays, but it is extremely helpful to be able to include it wherever possible, especially under the current circumstances.

Halah and the other two education researchers (Claire Purves and Rehana Tola), have a shared list of contact details of DSLs/DDSLS, including emergency contact landline/mobile numbers and these are proving crucial to supporting swift information share.

We would never share personal mobile numbers with anyone, with the one exception being Georgina Summers in the very saddest of circumstances, but the Social Care /MASH teams know that they can ask us to contact DSLs/DDSLS via our emergency contact list in case of urgent need. An example of where this is particularly important is when MASH Strategy meetings have to be arranged at very short notice, and the current circumstances can cause delays in contacting DSLs through the normal channels.

Please could you share emergency contact details for your safeguarding team with Halah Shams El-Din (01452 328953 or [halah.shamsel-din@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:halah.shamsel-din@gloucestershire.gov.uk))

#### **4. GCC Update: Exclusion Process**

Attached to this briefing is an update from the inclusion service regarding the exclusions process. Alongside reviewing this guidance it is worth considering the addition of a COVID-19 annex to your behaviour policy to reflect the flexibilities that might be required during the pandemic. As ever, early engagement with the inclusion service is welcomed if there are children that you consider to be at risk of exclusion.

#### **5. GCC Update: New Covid-19 leaflet on its way to every household in Gloucestershire**

More than 240,000 copies of a new Covid-19 leaflet are being delivered to all homes in the county, with distribution starting this week.

The leaflet has been created with a range of partners to help those without easy access to the web and to ensure all Gloucestershire residents are aware of the support available to them.

Although the number of recorded cases is dropping, Covid-19 hasn't gone away so it's important to remind people of what is available to help and support them.

The leaflet includes information on how to:

- **Stay safe** with the latest NHS advice;
- **Stay well** by following the five ways to wellbeing or accessing free, confidential mental health support;
- **Report concerns** about the welfare of vulnerable children, young people or adults; and
- **Get support and offer support to others** through the Community Help Hub and other networks.

You can find a copy of the leaflet to download and an accessible webpage below here:

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/covid-19-a-guide-to-what-s-available-to-help-you-and-others](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/covid-19-a-guide-to-what-s-available-to-help-you-and-others)

Please do to share through your networks/newsletters as you see fit.

#### **6. GCC Update: GHLL/GSEP Safeguarding & Wellbeing Re-Opening COVID-19 Action Plan**

Attached with this briefing is a reopening action plan focused on safeguarding and wellbeing. This has been produced to augment the risk assessment. It is not compulsory and does not need to be submitted with your risk assessment to the SHE unit.

#### **7. GCC Update: Mental Health Support for Children and Young People**

Attached you will find a stakeholder briefing from public health which provides information on mental health support available for children and young people affected by the Covid-19 outbreak.

#### **8. GCC Guidance: Enabling a return to work during COVID-19**

Attached with this briefing is a document “Enabling a return to work” which is designed to work in conjunction with the whole school COVID-19 risk assessment. Individual staff members may be reticent or concerned about returning to school, so this template is designed to facilitate discussion with those individuals and to help managers and staff develop their individual risk assessment based on the identified school risks and how they are addressed to facilitate the individual return to work. If there are health concerns, schools can talk to OH about individual circumstances, and agree where appropriate, an OH referral. This document only works within the following principles:-

- School undertakes a full risk assessment
- Where staff are concerned/resistant about returning to work, the “enabling a return to work” document forms a discussion with the individual about their concerns and how they might be addressed. The school can then finalise the risk assessment to cover the individual assessments.

Where there is a health issue, perceived or otherwise, OH can be contacted in the first instance to discuss the issue, and if appropriate, the school can make a referral to OH.