11th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As you know on Monday 4 January, the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, which has now come into effect. Full details of the lockdown restrictions can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home.

We are all committed to doing our best for our children and young people during this pandemic. We aim to create a fair, equitable and high-quality offer, whilst enabling ongoing safety for all. In order to achieve this, we have worked closely with School and Setting leaders, Family Voice and Pinpoint, our Parent Carer Forums, Local Authority services, the Clinical Commissioning Group, SENDIASS and the Department for Education. There is an ongoing challenge when we try to provide any advice or guidance that meets everyone's needs. We have tried to "stand in each other's shoes" to understand the challenges families, schools and professionals face during this pandemic and all agree that we have to put children and young people's needs first.

All children and young people on roll at schools or settings who have an Education, Health and Care plan are defined as eligible to attend onsite, along with children and young people with additional needs (and without an EHCP) at the discretion of the head teacher according to the Department for Education criteria. However, this places significant pressure on our schools and settings, who have a legal duty to keep children and staff **safe**. It is important to acknowledge that the pandemic has moved into a phase where COVID19 is more easily transmissible. Therefore, we need a community response that keeps everybody safe.

We have asked schools to work with parent/carers to identify the best way of meeting children and young people's needs *as best they can*, whether this is face to face, remote learning or a blended offer.

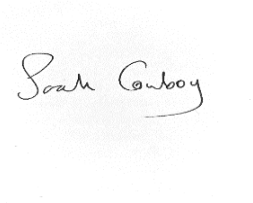
We have been working with schools to help them to think about how they might best support the most vulnerable within their communities. We have emphasised that decisions will need to be reviewed on a regular basis, as the national and local picture develops. Schools have been encouraged to communicate directly with families to identify any individual circumstances or needs that might have to be considered when making or reviewing an offer. Schools have been asked to contact you in the first instance to agree any decision. Please do feel able to contact your school directly, if you have a concern or you have not yet heard from your school.

Transport arrangements continue to be in place and can be accessed as usual; each school will ensure that transport providers have accurate up-to-date information on which children are attending.

The current guidance advises that children and young people who are deemed clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend their school setting and should remain at home as much as possible. If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable please liaise with your school who will continue to support you. If your situation changes or you have concerns about your child's well-being then please contact your child's school. Any queries regarding your child's attendance should be raised with your school in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued support; together we all play our part to protect ourselves, those around us, and the NHS.

Yours sincerely



Toni Bailey AD SEND & Inclusion	Sarah Conboy Pinpoint	Louise Ravencroft Family Voice	Robert Wilson SENDIASS