



# Newsletter

For parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs in Sheffield

Published by the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum

Written by parents, for parents!

Special 'Back-to-School' Edition

Autumn/Summer 2020 - Issue 22 - FREE!

## Infection control measures

What will school be like from September?

Pages 5 & 6

## Frequently asked questions

Transport, therapies, EHC plans and more

Pages 7-10

## Catch-up support

Extra funding for schools and colleges

Page 15

## Visual resources

Prepare your child for their new routines

Pages 18-25

## About us

We are an independent group of over 1,900 parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs in Sheffield.

Our aim is to make sure the needs of our children are met. We understand the challenges you face on a day-to-day basis, because we are parents and carers too. We organise regular events where parents can meet each other. We can tell you about the most up-to-date sources of information for your children.

We are here to give parent carers a voice. By joining the Parent Carer Forum, we can work together to improve services for our children.

### Membership is free, join us today!

Fill in the membership form at the back of this newsletter, or go to

[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member)

### Get in touch

#### By Post:

St Mary's Community Centre  
Bramall Lane, Sheffield S2 4QZ

**By phone:** 0300 321 4721

#### By email:

[enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

#### Website:

[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

#### Drop-in:

Currently by appointment only; please contact us to arrange a time.



Find us on Facebook!



Follow us on Twitter!  
@ShefParentForum

### St Mary's Community Centre



Funded by People's Health Trust using money raised by Health Lottery Yorkshire and Humber.



National Network of Parent Carer Forums  
"Our Strength is our Shared Experience"  
[www.nnpcef.org.uk](http://www.nnpcef.org.uk)

### Your advert here?

Would you like to advertise your products or services in our next newsletter? For a small fee, you could reach up to 6,000 families in Sheffield.

Our rates are:

- Full page £150
- 1/2 page £75
- 1/4 page £37.50

Charity discounts available. Please call us on **0300 321 4721** to discuss your requirements.

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please contact us on **0300 3214721** or email [enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

Design by 'Side of the Hill'. Printed by Volta Creative Ltd. Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Sheffield Parent Carer Forum. Sheffield Parent Carer Forum does not endorse any organisations, products or services mentioned in this newsletter. Please contact us before reproducing any material contained in this newsletter. We welcome articles from parents, professionals and practitioners. Please contact us to discuss possible contributions. Sheffield Parent Carer Forum is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Company number: 7226540. Charity number: 1145913

# A very warm welcome to this special 'Back to School' edition of our newsletter!

Families have told us that the information we have provided during the pandemic has been really useful. This special edition of the newsletter is intended to try and alleviate some of the confusion and anxiety we know many families are feeling about the return to school in September.

Throughout lockdown, we have found that support from schools has been inconsistent across the city – some schools have gone above and beyond helping families with remote learning and transition arrangements, whereas others have barely made contact. I would hope that most schools have now been in touch with families about their children returning in September. Please contact your SENCO if not!

Hopefully you will have seen (and completed!) the parent carer survey about returning to school that we co-produced with Sheffield City Council. Findings from this survey are being shared with schools to inform them about what support is needed for our children as they transition back into school.

As we move into September, with the majority of children returning to school, it's important that we acknowledge that the first week back will be a bit "hit and miss". Schools, as well



as families, are in unprecedented times, with government guidance changing frequently. Good communication between parents and schools has never been more important!

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, our popular Family Fun Day had to be cancelled this year. However, we will hold an event for families as soon as we can, subject to social distancing restrictions being lifted. Something for us to look forward to hopefully!

I hope you find the information in this special edition useful. We will still be producing our standard newsletter in the autumn, so look out for that.

I hope you and your family remain safe and well and that the return to the new normal is as smooth as possible.

Best wishes,

*Katie Monette*  
Chair

## Ten top tips for parents

### 1. Be (or at least appear) calm

If you feel anxious about your child's return to school, talk to another adult about it. Don't talk about your worries to (or in front of) your child.

### 2. Keep in touch with school

Senior staff like head teachers and assistant heads will be working for part of the summer holidays. Let them know if your child is anxious about returning to school, and what would help. If you think your child will struggle with any of the new infection control measures (see page 5&6), discuss what reasonable adjustments the school can make. Tell school staff about any significant family events that have happened during lockdown, like illness or bereavement. Double-check that important information about your child has been shared with their new teacher(s).

### 3. Think about your child's sensory needs

Anxiety can heighten sensory difficulties, so talk to school staff about reducing the

sensory load. Also think about reducing stimulation and demands after school for the first few weeks, when your child is likely to feel exhausted.

### 4. Prepare your child for changes to the school routine

Use the resources provided by their school (or our social story on pages 23 to 25) to prepare your child for what school will be like in September. Ask the school if your child could come for a one-to-one visit before the start of term. If that is not possible, then perhaps a virtual meeting with a key member of staff could be arranged, or staff may be able to provide photos or videos of areas of the school that look different.

### 5. Help your child re-connect with their friends,

either online or in person.

### 6. Get your child back into a good sleep routine

see page 17.

### 7. Have a clear routine for school mornings

You could create a visual timetable (use our resources on pages 19-21) and practise the routine beforehand.

### 8. Help your child recognise their feelings

Help them to name their emotions and reassure them that these feelings are normal. Don't dismiss or minimise their fears. If they can't express their emotions verbally, they might be able to draw them. You could also try using feeling scales or Widgeit symbols.

### 9. Talk about things to look forward to in school,

whether that's seeing their friends or a favourite activity. However, check with the school to make sure that this will actually be possible!

### 10. Don't wait to ask for help if your child is struggling.

Work with the school, and contact relevant services (see [sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/support-organisations](https://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/support-organisations) for details).

---

# Returning to school – a parent’s story

We asked parents whose children had returned to school before the summer what it was like. Here is what local mum Sarah told us:

*“My son is 10 years old and has developmental language disorder, ADHD and dyslexia. He returned to his mainstream school for the last few weeks before the summer holidays. It was a very hard decision, but both the SENCO and his class teacher spent a good chunk of time discussing this with me and going over my fears and concerns.*

*My son wanted to go back, but he was also a bit worried as he struggles with change and social interactions. The school outlined all they were doing - social bubbles, frequent hand washing etc. I know visuals and social stories were used for younger children and those who needed it (my son didn't). They put him into a group of 15 children, some of whom he knew.*

*On first day back, he came home so happy! Sending him back was the best thing we did, as it helped him so much and his mental health has greatly improved. Our fears were unfounded and he coped surprisingly well.”*

---

## Infection control measures

Schools, nurseries and colleges will have to implement a range of infection control measures to limit the spread of the virus as much as possible:

- Minimising contact between individuals will be key. For younger children and those with complex needs, the emphasis will be on separating groups; for older children, it will be on social distancing.
- In order to be able to contain any future outbreaks and reduce the number of people required to self-isolate, children will be grouped together in “bubbles”:
  - In mainstream secondary schools, groups are likely to be the size of a year group.
  - In mainstream primary schools and in special schools, groups will usually be the size of a full class, but may be bigger.
  - Nurseries can use their normal group sizes.

---

Contact between these bubbles will be limited as much as possible, for example by having separate start, finish, lunch and break times.

- There will be a strong emphasis on hygiene, with schools promoting frequent and thorough handwashing, and the “catch it, bin it, kill it” message.
- There will also be enhanced cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. Schools may need to use rota systems for areas that are difficult to clean, such as outdoor play equipment.
- Staff and children must not come into the setting if they have symptoms, or if they live with someone who does. Children who develop symptoms in the setting must be sent home to self-isolate, and their parents should arrange for them to have a test (see [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus))
- Masks or temperature checks are not advised for pupils or staff. School uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual.
- Teachers in secondary schools have been advised to stay at the front of the class, and pupils should be seated side by side and facing forwards.
- There will be no assemblies and other big group events.
- Breaktimes and lunchtimes may be shorter.
- There may need to be changes to some subjects (such as PE and music) to ensure they can be delivered as safely as possible. This is because people are thought to expel more droplets during specific activities, like singing or sports.
- There will be new arrangements for drop-off and pick-up. Parents will be told not to gather at the school gates or come onto the school site without an appointment.

Government guidance says that these measures will still bring benefits even if implemented partially, for example if children from different bubbles mix at after-school clubs or on transport.

**Whilst schools have been implementing these measures with small numbers of children during lockdown, scaling them up to whole-school level is uncharted territory.** Arrangements that are put in place for the first week of term may well have to change later on. Some activities, such as intervention groups, breakfast clubs and after-school clubs, may not restart immediately.

**Please be patient with staff while they work things out,** and talk to your child’s SENCO if you think your child would be unable to cope with frequent changes to their routine. The government has advised that schools can offer a phased return where needed.

**Schools must also be prepared to make reasonable adjustments** to their policies and procedures to accommodate the needs of disabled children.

Answering

your  
questions

???

### Q: What about children who cannot follow the new rules?

**A:** The government has told schools to ensure that appropriate support is made available for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), for example by deploying teaching assistants and enabling specialist staff to work with pupils in different classes or year groups.

Government guidance states that: "Some pupils with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these pupils and the staff working with them, and is not a reason to deny these pupils face-to-face education."

The government has also pointed out that staff may not be able to avoid close contact with pupils who have complex needs or who need close contact care. The educational and care support

for these pupils should be provided as normal.

The guidance also emphasises the need for good transition planning: "Some pupils with SEND (whether with education, health and care plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that this will involve, so teachers and special educational needs coordinators should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories."

**If you are concerned that specific measures could have a negative impact on your child, contact your SENCO as soon as possible to discuss how these could be adapted. Schools must be prepared to make reasonable adjustments to their policies and procedures to accommodate the needs of disabled children.**

### Q: What about children with challenging behaviour?

**A:** The government has acknowledged that there is likely to be an increase in social, emotional and mental health issues when pupils return to school. Schools have been advised to consider any challenging behaviours or social or emotional problems as a response to the lockdown and offer additional support, access to external services (like educational psychologists, counsellors and social workers) and phased returns where needed. There should be a focus on nurture and wellbeing at the start of the autumn term.

Most schools will have updated their behaviour policies, particularly with regard to the new hygiene rules and staying within "bubbles". It is important to remember that equalities

legislation requires schools to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities. This might mean disregarding behaviour that is a direct consequence of a pupil's disability, making reasonable adjustments to manage such behaviour, or considering alternative, more appropriate punishments. Schools will have to balance the rights of disabled children against the safety of their classmates and teachers.

If you are concerned that your child might be at risk of exclusion, contact Genine Nuttall in the local authority's Exclusions Team (**0114 2736197** or **genine.nuttall@sheffield.gov.uk**), or get in touch with SENDIAS (**0114 273 6009** or **disabilityinformationservices@sheffield.gov.uk**).

### Q: Will Education Health and Care (EHC) plans be enforceable again?

**A:** Yes. The duty to arrange the provision described in EHC plans was temporarily relaxed in May, June and July due to the coronavirus outbreak. This is no longer the case. From 1 August, local authorities are once again under an absolute legal duty to arrange the special educational provision described in a child's EHC plan, and the same applies to Clinical Commissioning Groups in relation to the health provision. The only exception would be if more flexibility was needed to respond to a local outbreak.

The timescales relating to EHC needs assessments and annual reviews were also temporarily relaxed in May, to give local authorities more flexibility in responding to the coronavirus outbreak. These changes remain in force until 25 September.

---

### Q: What about provision that goes across bubbles, like after-school clubs or intervention groups?

**A:** Out-of-school provision should keep children within their year groups or bubbles where possible, or use small, consistent groups if not. Schools can allow children from different bubbles to mix where this is necessary to deliver specialist teaching.

### Q: Will therapies and interventions resume in September?

**A:** Yes, specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual. In Sheffield, some therapies and appointments may continue to be virtual where necessary. Staff delivering interventions may need to work across bubbles and settings. These interventions should be provided as normal, but staff should be particularly rigorous about hand washing and respiratory hygiene. The Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust are currently reviewing face-to-face services for schools and all staff will follow NHS guidelines on where and when it is necessary to wear PPE.

---

### Q: What happens if there is a local lockdown?

**A:** All schools have been told to draw up plans for the possibility of local lockdowns. This may involve a return to remaining open only for vulnerable and key worker children, and providing remote education for the rest.





### Q: What happens if there is a case of coronavirus in a school?

**A:** If a child starts displaying coronavirus symptoms at school, they will need to stay in a separate room until they are picked up by their parents. Staff supervising them will need to wear PPE if they are unable to keep at least 2m away from them. Parents should arrange for their child to have a test as soon as possible and inform the setting of the result. Tests can be booked through the NHS website ([NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)), or ordered by telephone via NHS 119.

If a child tests positive, the child and their household must self-isolate as advised by NHS Test & Trace.

If a setting has a confirmed case of coronavirus, NHS Test & Trace will be implemented. If a school has two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus is suspected, they may have an outbreak. In such a case it may be necessary to send specific classes or year groups home to self-isolate. In rare cases a decision may be taken to close a whole school. Public Health England will advise on any decision to isolate pupils or staff members. Mobile testing units may be dispatched to schools.

Schools are expected to offer immediate access to remote education to pupils who have to self-isolate.

### If you have symptoms, however mild, you must:

- Self-isolate and get a coronavirus test immediately at [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119.
- If the test is positive: To protect others, you must follow the advice provided by NHS Test & Trace. Household contacts should isolate for 14 days.

### The coronavirus likes confined and crowded places and close contact. You can reduce your risks by:

- Keeping a safer 2m distance from people outside your household or bubble, wherever possible.
- Regularly washing your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and hot water, or using hand sanitiser.
- Wearing face coverings on public transport, in shops and when you cannot socially distance or come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

Some people are exempt from wearing face coverings, such as young children and people with disabilities. You can download or print face covering exemption cards from [www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-GB/LandingPage/Journey-Assistance-Cards](https://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-GB/LandingPage/Journey-Assistance-Cards) or collect them from Transport Interchanges. This may help you explain to people in an official capacity why your child is not wearing a face covering in places where this is mandatory.

### Q: How will transport be different?

#### A: SEN transport

SEN transport has run throughout the pandemic, with a smaller number of passengers. Safety measures have included PPE for drivers and escorts and enhanced vehicle cleaning.

Transport Services are working with school leaders to prepare for more passengers from September. Details about individual journeys will be shared with families around mid August.

If parents are able to take their child to school or college, and would rather do this, the local authority will reimburse travel costs. This would be 45p per mile for one or two return journeys per day, depending on individual circumstances. Where parents take up this offer, children will not lose their place on SEN transport and will be able to take it up at a later date. If you are interested or have any questions about this, please email

[indetravel@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:indetravel@sheffield.gov.uk) or call **0114 205 3542**.

#### Public transport

The government advises that pupils should avoid public transport, particularly at peak times, and walk or cycle to school or college if at all possible. Some parents may be able to take their children by car.

However, many pupils will have no other option but to use public transport to get to school. These pupils will have to follow the guidance for public transport; they will have to wear a face covering (unless they are under the age of 11 or exempt because of a disability) and observe social distancing rules. Providing enough buses to facilitate social distancing will be a major challenge. Please see [www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-gb/journeyplanning/school-buses](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-gb/journeyplanning/school-buses) for up-to-date information.

---

### Q: Will there be any changes to exams?

A: For pupils going into Y6, SATS are expected to take place as normal in summer 2021.

For pupils going into Y11 and Y13, the government is planning on the basis that GCSEs and A-levels will take place in summer

2021, with some adaptations – for example, a delayed start to the exam season and changes to coursework requirements. More information will be published in the autumn term.

---

### Q: Could my child drop some subjects so they can concentrate on catching up in others?

A: Schools may have to change the curriculum at the start of the school year to allow pupils to catch up on any content that they have missed. Schools can suspend some subjects for some pupils in exceptional

circumstances, subject to discussion with parents. The government has said that schools should aim to return to the normal curriculum in all subjects for all pupils by summer term 2021.



## School attendance mandatory again from September

From September, pupils of compulsory school age (5-16 years) must attend school, unless they have been told to self-isolate (e.g. following a positive test result) or advised to shield by their health professional.

The government has asked schools and local authorities to identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning to school and develop plans for re-engaging them. Schools should use the additional catch-up funding they will receive (see page 15), as well as existing funding and resources, to put measures in place for those families who will need extra support to ensure their child attends school regularly. The government has said that schools can offer phased returns where needed.

Sheffield City Council's Inclusion and Attendance Team told us: "Whilst the government has stated that from September school attendance will be compulsory, in Sheffield we recognise that for some children and families the transition back into school may be difficult. Some pupils may need extra support and

plans to ensure all identified needs are met and supported. Schools will follow their own attendance processes and we will continue to support them with this. We can offer general advice and also assess individual pupils whose attendance causes concerns, to find out if more support is needed. We would encourage parents to let their school know if their child is having difficulties with the transition back into school, so that they can offer support."

If a child's attendance falls below the school's target, parents are likely to receive a standard letter that will highlight parents' responsibilities and may mention fines. This may feel inappropriate if there are genuine reasons for the child's absence. Communication with school attendance staff is key to ensure support is offered if needed. Parents should be aware that it is the head teacher who decides whether to authorise an absence. For unauthorised absences, the school can ask the local authority to issue a fine. The local authority will assess the appropriateness of such requests on an individual basis.

---

## Remote education set to continue

Schools will have to continue to provide remote education. This is because a small number of pupils may not be able to attend school, either because they are self-isolating in line with public health advice, or because they are medically vulnerable and their health professional has advised them to shield. In addition, schools need to be prepared for the possibility of a local outbreak, which could result in whole school closures or classes or year groups being sent home.

Government guidance states that home learning and support for pupils with EHC

plans could involve a range of professionals, like SENCOs, speech and language therapists or educational psychologists, to design or adapt interventions or learning materials. For example, a speech and language therapist might design an intervention that parents can deliver at home, or the SENCO might adapt or select online learning materials.

Schools are expected to provide printed resources for pupils who do not have suitable online access.

---

## Devices for disadvantaged students

The government has provided laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers to local authorities and academy trusts to loan out to care leavers, children and young people with a social worker, and disadvantaged Y10 students.

Sheffield has received 1,700 laptops for children with social workers. There are around 3,000 children with social workers in Sheffield, so the council has gone through a process of prioritising children according to need and family circumstances. At the point of going

to print (end of July), these devices were still being distributed.

In addition, the government has allocated a number of laptops to Y10 students, most of which have been distributed by the academy trusts operating within the city.

Local authorities and academy trusts will continue to own, and use, these devices from September. They will be responsible for loaning them out in the event that a school has to close temporarily.

**Low-income households may be able to get a grant for a computer or tablet from the Family Fund:**

**[www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk)**

**Families eligible for the Short Break Grant can use it for a tablet or laptop this year:**

**[www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/social-care/short-breaks](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/social-care/short-breaks)**

---

## Post-16 providers

From September, all college students with SEND, with or without EHC plans, should experience the same return to their setting as their peers without SEND. This includes those for whom an individual risk assessment had previously concluded that their needs would be more safely met at home.

The government has asked post-16 providers to:

- Provide a full programme of study and training offer for learners of all ages from the start of term in September 2020, including those with SEND.
- Ensure that appropriate support is made available for students with SEND, for example in deployment of learning support assistants and in enabling specialist staff to work with young people in different cohorts.
- Make careful preparations for a return to full-time attendance for students with SEND. This might include visits to the college site and social stories.
- Decide on the appropriate mix of face-to-face and remote delivery.
- Assess the gaps in learners' knowledge and skills early in the autumn term, focusing on the most important content and prioritise this to help learners to catch up.
- Put in place additional support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, including identifying if they need support to access any remote learning.
- Use the 16-19 Bursary Fund to provide devices and internet access for young people who are unable to access online learning. See [www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund](http://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund) for more information.

---

## Sheffield College

The Sheffield College is planning to offer a mixture of face-to-face lessons on campus, face-to-face lessons delivered remotely, and self-directed study during the first term. The balance will depend on the subject studied. Most of the infection control measures outlined on pages 5&6 will also apply in college.

Young people with SEND who are moving from school to college are advised to:

- Email [als-sendadvice@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:als-sendadvice@sheffcol.ac.uk) and arrange to discuss their needs before they start their course (unless they have already done so). The college will also contact the schools previously attended by new students to request information. This information will be shared with the college staff team so they can prepare resources and equipment.
- Contact the College if they are worried or want to ask questions about starting college – email [als-sendadvice@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:als-sendadvice@sheffcol.ac.uk) or message **07876 843268**
- Take a look at the virtual campus tours on [www.sheffcol.ac.uk/campuses](http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/campuses)
- Watch the transition video that the Foundation Learning team have prepared for their high needs students. This video will be sent out to students when they have enrolled.
- Join in with any activities the college staff are arranging.
- Read the coronavirus information on the college website: [www.sheffcol.ac.uk/news/coronavirus-q-a-health-advice-what-you-need-to-know](http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/news/coronavirus-q-a-health-advice-what-you-need-to-know)

---

## Early years providers

All children in nurseries and other Early Years settings are now allowed to return to their provision. Providers must continue to group children into bubbles and keep these apart as much as possible. Most of the infection control measures outlined on pages 5&6 also apply to Early Years providers. This includes not allowing parents into the setting, unless this is essential.

The government has asked providers to give special consideration to supporting children with SEND to settle back into their setting. Providers will need to ensure they have the staffing needed to support children with SEND at safe ratios. They should be alert to the fact that there may be children with additional or

worsened social, emotional and mental health needs as a result of the pandemic, and also children who have fallen further behind their peers during lockdown.

Most routine assessments of young children have been suspended this year because of the pandemic. These assessments are important tools for identifying children who may have additional needs. However, providers will still be able to make referrals for additional support and advice, and Health Visiting Teams are also re-starting their reviews. If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your health visitor, GP or childcare provider.



# Government announces funding for catch-up support

The government has announced funding worth £1 billion to ensure that schools and colleges have the support they need to help children and young people make up for lost teaching time. The funding is separated into two blocks:

- £650 million catch-up funding will be allocated for schools to use as they wish to help pupils catch up on learning.
- £350 million will be used to create the National Tutoring Programme to provide tuition for the most disadvantaged pupils.

## Catch-up funding

This funding will be available for all state-funded mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provisions for the academic year 2020/21. Mainstream schools will receive £80 per pupil and special schools will receive £240 per place. Schools will have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances. They are likely to focus on literacy and numeracy but can also target other aspects of learning, such as behaviour or social and emotional needs.

For pupils with complex needs, the government is encouraging schools to spend their catch-up funding on support to address pupils' individual needs, such as travel training, input from speech and language therapists or educational psychologists, small group and individual interventions, or access to technology or summer schools.

## National Tutoring Programme (NTP)

This funding will be available to state-funded primary and secondary schools and colleges (mainstream and special). It will be targeted at those who are eligible for the pupil premium (generally, children on free school meals, adopted children and children in care). Schools will be able to access subsidised tuition from an approved list of tuition partners. Schools in the most disadvantaged areas will also be able to employ academic mentors to provide intensive support to pupils.

Many children and young people with SEND will be eligible for NTP support, and school leaders and teachers will be able to determine if tutoring is the right support for each pupil.

## Shielding guidance paused

As part of the initial response to the pandemic, several thousand children and young people were advised to shield (avoid any interaction with people from outside their household) because their pre-existing health conditions meant they were thought to be at the highest risk of severe illness from coronavirus.

On 1 August, shielding advice for all adults and children was paused. This means that most children who had previously been advised to shield will be able to return to school in September.

A small group of children who receive specialist care in hospitals may need to carry on shielding following a consultation with their doctor. This includes those receiving cancer care or those at risk of severe infection due to an immunodeficiency.

Most other children who were initially identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable will no longer be considered at highest risk. In particular, children who are cared for just by their GP are very unlikely to need to continue to shield in the long term. This includes children with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and kidney disease.

Children can only be removed from the shielded patient list by their GP or specialist doctor following consultation with the child and their family. Specialists and GPs have been asked to contact children and their families to discuss

this over the summer. Children who are removed from the shielded patient list will not be advised to shield again if there is a spike in transmission.

Children who have family members who are shielding can return to school, nursery or college. Where possible, these children should maintain social distancing and try to practise good, frequent hand washing.

If rates of the disease rise in local areas, some children and adults from that area may be advised to shield during the period when community transmission rates are high.

If a child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, their absence should not be penalised and schools should immediately offer access to remote education.

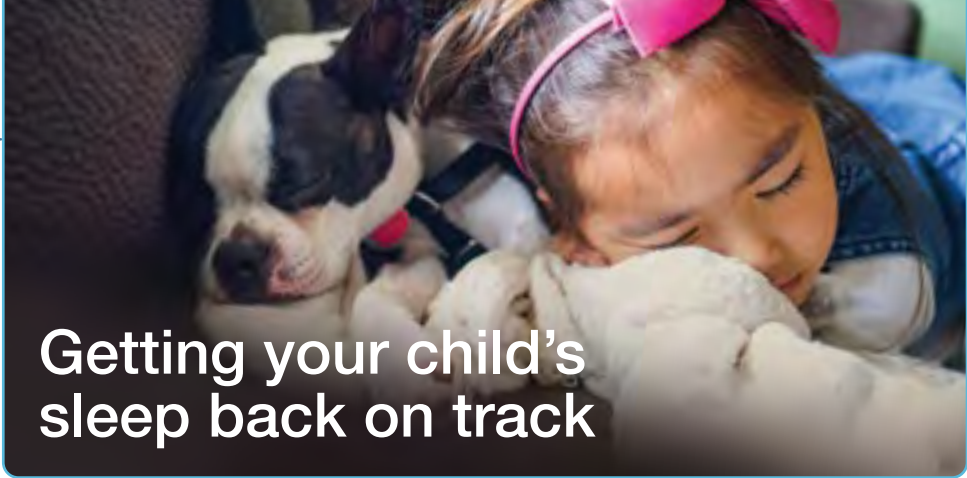
### More information



Advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health:  
<https://tinyurl.com/ya5awudc>

Government advice on shielding:  
<https://tinyurl.com/s5pc7wh>





# Getting your child's sleep back on track

Lockdown has hit us all hard – routines are harder to manage, no one knows what day it is, bedtimes have crept later and it's harder to get up in the morning, plus we're all feeling a little more anxious than normal.

A survey by The Sleep Charity, The Sleep Council and Sleepstation found that children under 16 have been:

- **going to bed later (70%)**
- **waking later (57%)**
- **sleeping longer (33%)**

**76%** of parents also felt that lockdown had affected their ability to maintain routines, enforce boundaries and remain patient. All of this indicates that it will be hard for children to get back to previous sleep routines when they return to school.

The same survey showed that **74%** of children were using electronic devices (TVs, tablets, game consoles and phones) more during lockdown. High exposure to blue light from screens, especially in the evening, can make us more alert and less sleepy.

The Children's Sleep Charity offers advice to anyone whose child is not sleeping well. Call them on **01302 751 416** or visit [www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk](http://www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk)

**To reset sleep patterns for the return to school you need to start now – it can take up to two weeks to readjust. Here are some tips that might help:**

- If bedtimes / wake times have drifted, start to move them slowly by about 15 minutes every few days until they are back on track.
- Put all electronic devices away an hour before bedtime. Use this time as a family to play a board/card game, colour or do a jigsaw.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine and fizzy drinks close to bedtime.
- Try to get out in daylight for at least half an hour every day to help reset body clocks.
- A bath (if they enjoy one) followed by a warm drink and reading a book will get children relaxed and ready for bed.
- Try to find time to talk about worries away from the bedtime routine. Bedtime should be positive and relaxing.

The Cerebra Sleep Advice Service has useful guides to download and also offers one-to-one telephone support. <https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/sleep-advice-service/>

## FEATURE

# Visual Resources

to help your child as they prepare to go...



# Back to School

Going back to school, nursery or college will mean a big change in routine for many children and young people. Using symbols is a great way to make the new routine predictable and easier to understand.

We are grateful to the Sheffield Speech and Language Therapy Service for providing the resources on the next few pages. We hope you find them useful.

## Create your own morning routine schedule!

Visual schedules or timetables help break an activity down into smaller steps. We have provided some symbols you can use to make a simple symbol sequence for getting ready for school, nursery or college in the morning. Cut out the symbols that you need and put them in the order you want your child to do them. You can use

Blu-Tack to stick them onto some card or a surface. Talk through all of the steps. Once they have completed one of the steps, remove that and show them what is next.

Cut out and keep the symbols on pages 19 and 21

## “Back to school” easy read social story

You can use this social story to prepare your child for going back to school. It explains what is going to happen and how things might look. It is based on government guidance that was correct at the end of July. However, there is a possibility that this guidance might change,

or that your child’s school might do things a bit differently. Please check the information provided by your child’s school before using this social story with your child.

Find the social story on pages 23 to 25

# Create your own morning routine schedule



Wake up



toilet



change



get washed



get dressed



breakfast



feed



medicine



brush teeth



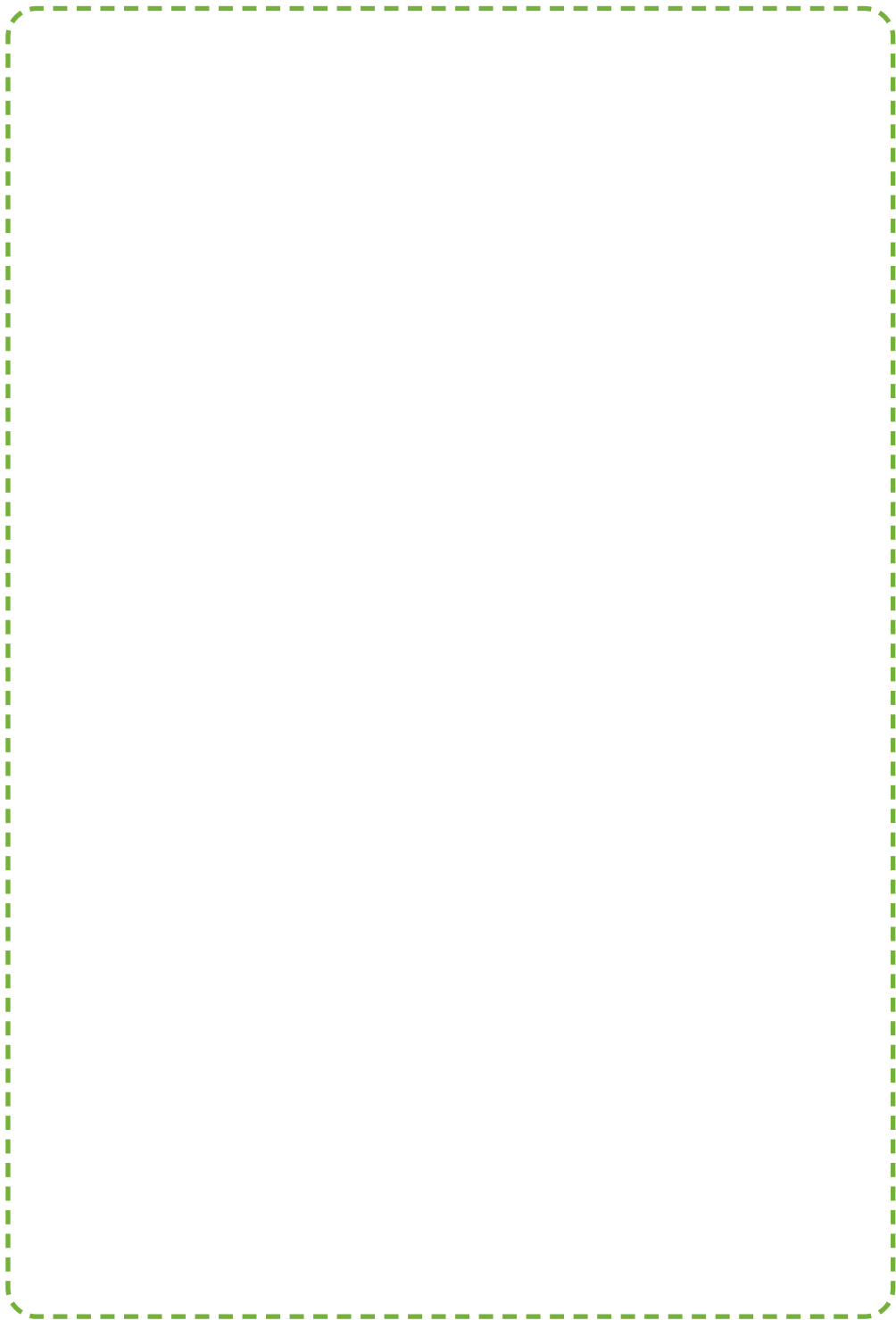
brush hair



TV



tablet





play



shoes



coat



bag



wait



goodbye



bus



taxi



walk



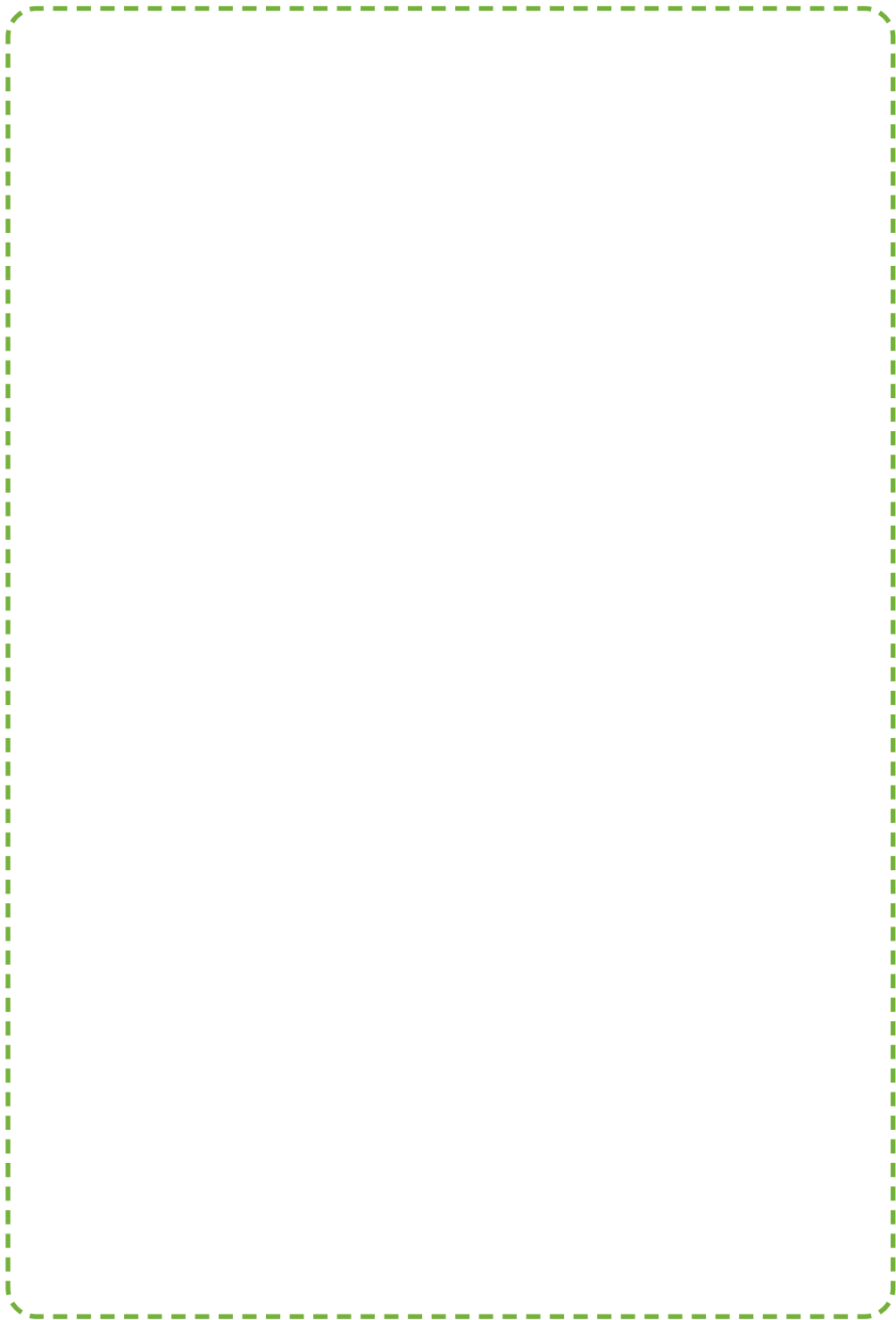
car



school



college



## Going back to school



I have been at home for a long time.



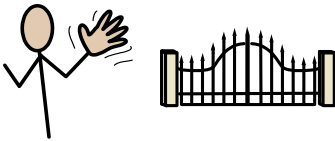
Soon I am going back to school.



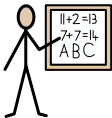
Some things in school will be different. This is to keep me safe.



We might start school at different times.



My grown up might say goodbye at the school gate.



I might have a different teacher.



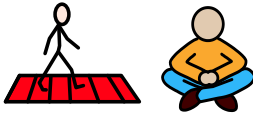
I might be in a different classroom.



I will stay with the same children all day.



I might eat snack and lunch in my classroom.



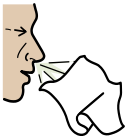
There will be lines around school to show me where to sit, stand and walk.



My classroom might look different.



I will wash my hands lots.



I will cough and sneeze into a tissue.



I will put the tissue in the bin.

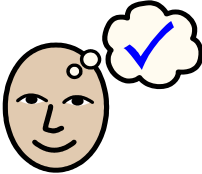


I will wash my hands.





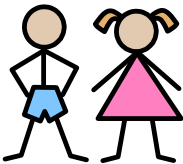
Some of these changes might feel difficult at first. The changes are to keep us safe.



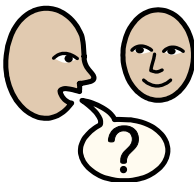
Lots of things will be the same.



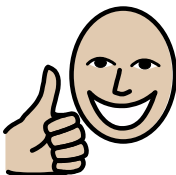
My teachers will look after me.



I will see my friends.



I can ask my teacher if I don't know what to do.



School will be fun!

# More Widgit symbols and social stories



## Widgit symbols are used widely across education, health and care in Sheffield.

These are simply drawn, colourful symbols which illustrate words and concepts in a clear way. They help children and young people with communication, learning and sensory challenges to understand and communicate, by making spoken language visual.

Widgit have produced free accessible resources related to coronavirus, including a toolkit for schools and symbols to talk about coronavirus: [www.widgit.com/covid19.htm](http://www.widgit.com/covid19.htm)

They are also offering 30 days free access to Widgit Online. This enables you to create your own symbols resources to use at home: <https://mailchi.mp/widgit/wo>

Sheffield Children's Speech and Language Therapy Team have created a range of resources using Widgit symbols, to support children and young people through the pandemic. This includes easy read social stories for going back to school, being in a "bubble", PPE, washing hands and explaining coronavirus. These can all be downloaded for free from the website

[www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/coronavirus-resources-for-children-and-families](http://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/coronavirus-resources-for-children-and-families)



# Sheffield Parent Carer Forum

## Application for Full Membership

Full membership is free and open to all parents and carers of children and young people (aged 0-25 years) with special educational needs and/or disabilities who live in Sheffield or access services in Sheffield.

### About you

First name  Surname

Street and house number

Town/city  Postcode

Email address (please print)

Home phone  Mobile

Your ethnic group (optional)

### About your disabled child/children

#### Child 1

Date of birth

Main disability

Other disabilities

School (name)

#### Child 2

Date of birth

Main disability

Other disabilities

School (name)

#### Child 3

Date of birth

Main disability

Other disabilities

School (name)

### Please tick as appropriate :

- Please add me to your email list.
- Please add me to your text messaging list.
- Please add me to your postal mailing list.

I am happy to take part in consultations:

by phone  by email

by post  by SMS

I am interested in volunteering with the Parent Carer Forum.

Signature

Date

Please note: By signing this form you consent to the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum storing your information. We will not pass any of your details on to any third parties. Members of our postal mailing list will receive a regular newsletter. Members of our email list and text messaging list will receive news updates and events information. You are free to opt out of this service at any time.

Tear along here

2

Freepost RTBJ-SHTR-RRGJ  
Sheffield Parent Carer Forum  
St. Mary's Church Community Centre  
Bramall Lane  
SHEFFIELD  
S2 4QZ

Fold along here



**Positive Change for our Children and Young People  
with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs**