

Sensory Inclusion Service - Information for families

22/05/2020

General Notes

Hello everybody. We hope you are all well and coping during this challenging time. We are moving toward half term which seems a strange idea at the moment. Over this time we are trying to work as normal with the majority of the team on leave. If you have an emergency please ring the central number on 01952 385269 and the duty member of staff will contact you.

Health Appointments

The situation around health based appointments and equipment is unchanged and was in the last update. If you have any particular issues regarding your child's hearing or vision the first point of contact is your Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) or Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired (QTVI) who may be able to signpost you in terms of actions to take. Also if you have any equipment issues please use the contacts above. This seems to be working well at the moment. We have weekly online meetings with the Audiology team to discuss cases and try to resolve issues that arise.

We are able to consult with Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Consultants and Ophthalmologists around particular cases and this is working well. We are ensuring that any new referrals are supported as best we can at the moment.

Contact with families and support for learning

As you are aware we are trying to keep in contact with families as well as schools. This is through a variety of methods such as phone calls, texts and emails. We are also using Microsoft Teams to allow a more interactive way of supporting children and families. For some of the children we support on a more regular basis this may include support with school work that has been sent home. For this group, if you have documents you want to share with the SIS staff member they will let you know how you can do that. It may be a piece of work your child has been asked to complete. We are also in contact with schools to offer advice on any work that is sent home to try to ensure it is appropriate and accessible.

Children going back to school.

As you are aware there is a move toward schools reopening for certain year groups from June 1st. If any of your children are likely to attend it would be useful if you could contact your QTVI or ToD to let us know so we can see how we can support the school in that process. At the moment it is not clear what access SIS staff will have to homes/ schools and settings. It is a developing situation and we will give you updates when it is clearer. We will continue however to support children and settings in the way we have been doing during this time to offer support and guidance. We will also continue our ongoing contact with homes as well.

Hearing aid equipment in schools

In the short term as children return to schools will be advising school staff not to test hearing aid systems in schools in the way they did before the lockdown, until it is clearer how we manage issues around social distance as well as infection control. We will support settings in their risk assessment of these activities. We will let you know when this situation changes. We will be asking therefore for families to continue testing equipment at home before children go

into school each day. All families should have access to a hearing aid testing kit at home and would have been given support in how to check hearing aids and other systems. It will be important to carry on checking these daily. If you have items you need (not batteries – see below) that are urgent please contact Mark our Technician. If you need support with checking please contact your TOD who will be able to give you support by phone / forward documents that illustrate how to check. Schools will also have access to their SIS support staff member for advice. Batteries – families are encouraged to get through their GP through their brown books or online <https://www.sath.nhs.uk/wards-services/az-services/audiology/battery/>

If you are concerned about how to clean your hearing aid device in light of the current situation ask your ToD who will be able to supply you with information from manufacturers.

Information Update

NDCS

Below you will find a link to the latest 'blog' from NDCS:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/coronavirus-and-support-for-deaf-children-information-for-families/>

Below you will find a link to a resource for families who are relatively new to hearing loss:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/our-events/online-events/supporting-parents-new-to-hearing-loss-online-event/>

For families who use sign language to support the communication of their CYP NDCS have some online support. They have created 12 free weekly lessons especially for families of deaf children. There are different lessons in each of the nations. Lesson 1 and 2 are already available.

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/our-events/events-for-parents-carers-and-families/online-events/family-sign-language-course/>

These are in addition NDCS online events during the lockdown to support families:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/our-events/online-events/>

RNIB

RNIB have been looking into producing guidance for learners and schools about managing the specific needs of children with VI in settings during coronavirus and, in collaboration with Hab VI UK and Guide Dogs, recently published a response - initially aimed at parents - on the Sight Loss FAQ website. Full details are here:

<https://www.sightadvicefaq.org.uk/coronavirus-information/CV-inschool>

Please all continue to follow the national guidelines and stay safe - best wishes.

Graham Groves / Theresa Robinson
Joint Team Leaders – Sensory Inclusion Service