**NASS Update (1st June 2020)**

Hello everyone and welcome to the brave new world of slightly relaxed lockdown rules!

We hope that things are manageable for you in the short-term whilst we try to get DfE to think about ’Test and Trace’  and how it can be deployed in thoughtful ways which won’t result in schools and homes having to close due to lack of staff! I am attaching a flow chart from the Test and trace launch-pack, setting out how it is envisaged that the process will work. It will be clear to you that this likely won’t work for schools! This is why we are pushing for clearer guidance for schools, colleges and children’s social care.

On Friday, as expected, DfE put out a statement that it is extending the changes to SEND Law which were initially introduced for May only. These changes will now run until at least the end of June. This will be an unpopular move for parents and carers, who feel that the changes significantly weaken their rights to have EHCPs developed and delivered.  In an attempt to address this, children’s Minister, Vicky Ford, published an open letter to children with SEND and their parents/carers. This attached to this email. The revised order is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modification-notice-ehc-plans-legislation-changes> and the guidance is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus>

For Academies and Free Schools, the DfE also issued amended exclusions guidance on Friday: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion/changes-to-the-school-exclusion-process-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak> This guidance does not apply to independent special schools and non-maintained special schools but you may wish to take note of it. It is intended to give schools greater flexibility around exclusions during the pandemic - particularly where young people behave in high risk ways. However, this should not be routinely used by special schools as a way of managing young people with behaviours that challenge, such as spitting. Equalities law still applies and the expectation would be that you made visible efforts to manage behaviours and mitigate against risks before considering exclusion.

Our friends at Hettle Andrews are running a free webinar at 3pm on Wednesday 3rd June aimed at Special Schools & Colleges on factors to consider when risk assessing for wider reopening. They will be following this up with a further e-bulletin to issue a copy of their updated template risk assessment for special schools and colleges. You can find the latest e-bulletin and details of the webinar here: <https://hettleandrews.createsend1.com/t/ViewEmail/r/790B6226CE13FB5F2540EF23F30FEDED> For anyone who isn’t able to attend the webinar on that date/time, they will be able to access a recording of the webinar by clicking on the same link after it has finished, and so will be able to watch at a time to suit them.

We’re thinking of you this week and around to help think about and manage emerging issues. Wishing you all well!

Claire, Kate, Karen and Jenny