**FGB 18th May Heads Report**

**Covid -19**

Lockdown began on March 23rd 2020. We as leaders of CTPS felt well prepared for the challenges ahead and successfully led staff and families through some challenging moments. Staff were fully supported in ensuring no one was put at risk with all necessary medical questions being asked prior to lockdown, this ensured staff wellbeing was at the fore of our decision making. Staff meetings were held pre-lockdown and staff were fully informed regarding pay and an initial timetable of duties was given out. This included expectations for teachers in the early stages of lockdown. Workload was, and continues to be, minimised to reduce stress. Staff who reported feeling overwhelmed were granted complete off site working as were those with underlying health conditions or young families.

We have worked closely with the LA and followed advice to ensure local consistency. This was especially true with regard to release of the key worker information as there was a lack of clarity initially from central government. Families have reported feeling well informed as well as supported, both prior and post lockdown.

As many of you will be aware parent evenings were cancelled and staff informed prior to lockdown that annual reports would be generated should a lockdown commence to ensure pupil progress was duly reported to parents in a timely manner. Reports have now been completed with comments from children and parents being received from Tuesday 28th April, all of which are very positive. Our forward planning has without doubt ensured that families and staff have been well informed, supported and listened to.

**Support provided through the LA**

Staff have been informed of all the additional support provided at this challenging time from the LA. Cath sent out the information below immediately to all staff:

*Council recognise more than ever, with the additional stress of COVID-19, the importance of supporting employee’s physical, emotional and mental health in times of need.*

*Therefore, with immediate effect, an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) will be available to Bracknell Forest council school employees, for the months of April, May and June.  This will be through Vivup and offers a range of services to better support all staff during this challenging time.*

*Importantly, the EAP provides a confidential telephone counselling service which is available 24/7, every day until the end of June 2020. To access this service, staff can either register online at:*[*www.vivup.co.uk*](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA0MDcuMTk4NDMyOTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy52aXZ1cGJlbmVmaXRzLmNvLnVrLz9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmc291cmNlPUdvdkRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.YmaRf64rgV9fHu0jM0TMIhTivuknnRgCDNz9EBbD-ic%2Fbr%2F77107441744-l&data=02%7C01%7CSarah.Hunter%40bracknell-forest.gov.uk%7C4506ba12ff1f4b0f199e08d7daf2bdbc%7Cf54c93b70883478fbf3d56e09b7ca0b7%7C1%7C0%7C637218608407950122&sdata=qKbfBij9BjXUjobV9LAemHMao5iUma5I4m0Y%2BkAiNJU%3D&reserved=0)*and select Bracknell Forest Council from the list, or call 0330 800 658.*

*The Vivup website also provides downloadable health and wellbeing resources, as well as an online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) programme and an extensive range of CBT workbooks.*

The workload for head teachers and leaders has been recognised with the increased pressure on schools to undertake much of the work of social care. Following an announcement from the government this has remained a high priority with constant calls and visits to our most vulnerable families. However, the work of our school has been recognised by the LA. Our work demonstrates that safeguarding is a strength and stands up to any test which is very reassuring. During our telephone conversation we were able to provide an accurate and informative picture for every child on our list.

**For your information:**

**Vulnerable children**

Gavin Williamson will also be writing to all schools over the coming days. He has written to Local Authorities asking for support to ensure that more vulnerable pupils are in school. “*Educational settings remain open and safe for vulnerable children and young people. Being at an early years setting, school or college can be an important lifeline for many vulnerable children and young people, particularly where their needs cannot be met safely at home or where they may be at risk of harm.* *So I want to place a special emphasis on the importance of continuing the efforts you and providers are making to ensure as many of these children and young people attend educational provision as possible, where it is in their best interests to do so.”*

The guidance on vulnerable children was updated over the weekend. This clearly states that*“decisions on attendance will be based on finely balanced discussions between education providers, parents/carer, and others including social workers, local authorities, and other relevant professionals, where applicable. In making these decisions, providers will need to consider the balance of risk, including health vulnerabilities, family circumstances and the child or young person’s assessed special educational needs. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker (where appropriate) and education setting should explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.”*

With this in mind, Children Social Care with Education colleagues will be arranging meetings with schools who have a significant number of vulnerable children to look at which have been attending school. They will also work in partnership with you to discuss the children who should be in school.  Social care do need to ensure that parents with a child who has a social worker know that provision is available to them. Debbie sent out emails last week regarding social workers calling families.

*“Education providers, social workers, local authorities and other professionals will want to work together to ensure adequate and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep in touch with vulnerable children and young people (whether they are attending provision, or not attending for an agreed or non-agreed reason), such as by letter, phone or visit.”*

**During the meetings discussions can be had with professionals on the best approach for achieving this moving forward.**

**The refreshed guidance on vulnerable children and young people and guidance on social distancing set out the DfE expectations regarding attendance, as well as the steps education settings should take to support safe provision for these children.**

In summary the DfE expectations for who should be encouraged to attend and how we recommend providers follow up on non-attendance is summarised below:

* *Children and young people who have a social worker – should be encouraged to attend provision, unless their social worker decides that they are at less risk at home than in their placement, for example, due to underlying health conditions. Any unagreed absence should be followed up with the parent/carer, as well as the social worker/ local authority where appropriate.*

* *Children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) whose needs cannot be met safely at home – we expect that many children and young people with EHCPs can remain safely at home. However, we are asking local authorities to work with educational providers, families and the child or young person to carry out a risk assessment to judge whether this is the case. If not, they should attend the educational setting and any absence should therefore be followed up with the parent/carer, and social worker/ local authority where appropriate.*

* *Children and young people who are otherwise vulnerable – education settings, including alternative provision, should use their discretion by working with relevant partners to encourage the attendance of children and young people that they – or other local services, such as local authorities (including children’s social care services) or the police - feel would be safer attending a setting. Absence should be followed up with the parent or carer, and other partners where appropriate.*

**Pupil Premium – FSM Families**

The school has maintained regular contact with the families of children entitled to FSM. While we were awaiting the Government initiative of supermarket vouchers we offered packed lunches for collection (or delivery) and then cash payments to cover the Easter break. Following the launch of the Edenred vouchers, they have been supplied to all eligible families. There have been well documented and continuing issues with the Edenred website however all families have been supported if they have experienced problems and the school continues to monitor the Edenred website to ensure families are receiving and redeeming their vouchers without difficulty.

**COVID 19 Testing arrangements as of April 28th 2020**

I am sure you will now be aware from the Government briefing yesterday that testing is now available for school staff.

We have put together the following information which I hope will answer queries regarding this and give you all the advice you need should you have staff requiring a test.

Who can be tested:

To be eligible for testing, staff must meet **all three**of the below criteria:

1. A key worker performing essential and critical roles;
2. Those who are currently required to perform their role face-to-face, or, those who support frontline staff carrying out a face-to-face service;
3. Have experienced or shown symptoms (a new, dry continuous cough and/or a high temperature) **for the first time** within the previous 24 to 96 hours.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to submit applications for candidates who do not meet all of the above criteria. The test providers will not accept them.

Key Workers Household Members

Members of key worker’s households can be tested, if they are symptomatic. If the staff member meets the first two criteria above, and a household member meets the third, they may be eligible for testing and an application for them to be tested can be submitted using the form below. The application should be completed with the symptomatic candidate’s information.

Only a person experiencing symptoms can be tested and therefore if the household member (including children) is experiencing symptoms but the key worker is not, then only the household member with these symptoms can be tested.

How to submit an application for testing:

To submit an application the following form should be completed, [Staff Covid Testing Application](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=t5NM9YMIj0e_PVbgm3ygt7eNo--YXhBCk3A0hTafqH5UNDg5S1dEWlI5S1BIOEc4UTVXNVNHSjQxMSQlQCN0PWcu). Please note that if an individual completes an application on behalf of the test candidate (e.g. a manager), they confirm that they have obtained the candidate’s consent to be put forward for testing. **Therefore, if this is done, please ensure consent is obtained prior to submission.**

We will then collate information on all viable candidates and submit an application to the test providers daily.

The testing provider will contact approved candidates directly to arrange a time and location for testing, and to provide instructions on what to do at the testing site. This could be on the same day as we submit the application, or the following day. The testing provider will inform the candidate what form of identification they should bring to the site. If this is not clarified, a form of personal identification should be taken confirming their role. Eg. School ID Badge

Timescales

The candidate will be notified only if they have been approved for testing. This will be within 36 – 48 hours of them submitting their application through the form. If the candidate does not receive a response, they are not eligible for testing at this time.

Once tested, the candidate should expect to receive their results in 36 – 48 hours. Further details on how the candidate will receive their results, will be given by the test provider at the testing site.

I hope this is helpful to you, however, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Testing coordinators at Bracknell Forest Council via the following; testing.covid@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

**Moving forward – COVID 19**

**Feedback from LA on Recovery:***What is the remit from the LA on advice and guidance for when schools do start to reopen?*  There was a lot of discussion around this question, with suggestions being made that the DfE would probably open Y10 first, then Y5 and possibly Y1, i.e. a staggered approach.  When pushed, however, LA had to agree that there was little clear direction from the DfE and it was only their supposition that there would be a staggered approach because it would seem to make sense.  What has been decided is that the LA will set up a Recovery Group for any interested head to try and see what the best course of action might look like and then LA *may* take it to the DfE.

It looks highly likely that schools will remain open on bank holidays and half term in May, although it is hoped, but not confirmed, that summer holidays will hopefully go ahead.

Recently at a Head teacher’s conference with the LA the additional workload of Headteachers was raised. The following was the response:

*Headteachers have not had a break over the Easter holidays – is the LA going to possibly authorise paid leave at another time?*  All the LA participants were very quick to thank headteachers and to recognise the amazing work that schools have done, but said that any leave would be up to the governing bodies. Paid leave would probably only affect headteachers as most other staff would be on a rota and could take their leave during their days not in school.  Governors should consider giving headteachers who have not had any time off paid leave at another time.

Thank you for everything you are doing during this challenging time.  We are very proud of our schools in Bracknell Forest and the commitment everyone is showing in ensuring our critical workers can go to work and our most vulnerable children avoid harm.