



SEND Advice Surrey's support during COVID-19, Government guidance and Tribunal information

As a team we are all working from home. You are still able to call us on **01737 737300 and leave a message 24 hours a day** – we will be calling in to listen to these throughout the day and evening.

We also have our **contact sheet on the website** – www.sendadvice.surrey.org.uk and this is sent directly to our inbox, we will then be able to call or reply via email.

We are also **receiving and replying to emails** when we are able to log onto the system. The team will be working throughout the day and evening to ensure we can advise as quickly as possible. Our email is **sendadvice@surreycc.gov.uk**

Where possible **do leave a landline number, a mobile and your e-mail address**. When we can access the emails we will be able to text out (only) but with the mobile reception under pressure sometimes we can't hear so a landline is the best number for us to call you on.

We are **updating the front of our website** when we have something new to share, as well as **twitter** – **#SENDadviceSurrey** so do follow us!

Please remember that our number comes up as withheld when we call.

Government Guidance:

New Government guidance states, *"After schools shut their gates on Friday afternoon, they will remain closed until further notice except for children of key workers and vulnerable children, as part of the country's ongoing response to coronavirus"*.

A list of Key workers can be found below and include NHS staff, police and supermarket delivery drivers who need to be able to go to work to support the country's fight to tackle coronavirus.

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). Children who do not fall into these groups should remain at home with appropriate care.

Where schools are unable to look after these children, local authorities will work with the Department for Education's regional teams to ensure an alternative option is available in the same area. Schools may not be able to look after children when staff numbers have reduced due to COVID-19 meaning there aren't enough to meet a safe ratio of staff to children.

The guidance states “can” and it is not a “must”. If you child has an EHCP you can send them in, you do not HAVE too. If your child shows signs of COVID-19 then you must not send them into school and follow the guidance on self-isolating. **You will not be fined for not sending them into School.**

List of “key workers”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

The link above is to the guidance for Schools, Colleges and Local Authorities on maintaining education provision during this time. It also includes a list of who are classed as “key workers”.

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. That is why the government has given clear guidance on [self-isolation](#), [household isolation](#) and [social distancing](#) (click on the words to see the links).

IPSEA update on COVID-19, school closures and SEN provision

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/news/ipsea-update-on-covid-19-school-closures-and-sen-provision>

Written by IPSEA and correct as of 19 March 2020. It includes answers to the following questions:

- **What are children and young people with SEN's entitlements when schools are closed?**
- **What if I don't want to send my child to school, for example because they have a weakened immune system?**
- **If my child has an EHC plan, doesn't the LA have a legal duty to deliver that provision?**

- **Will residential schools close?**
- **If my child was out of school before the school closures were ordered, do I still have an entitlement to alternative education?**
- **How long are schools likely be closed?**
- **What about home to school transport?**
- **Do the LA still need to carry out EHC needs assessments?**
- **Will SEND Tribunal appeals continue?**
- **Will annual reviews still need to be carried out?**

Information regarding Tribunal

Following the announcement from the Senior President of Tribunals, all hearings in the First-tier Tribunal Special Educational Needs and Disability will move away from face to face hearings and make use of the technology available.

From Monday 23 March 2020, the Tribunal will use technology to enable hearings to proceed for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hearings will be on paper or by telephone and where possible video, where the technology permits. The arrangements for your hearing will be confirmed at least 2 days before the date on which your hearing is listed, and it would assist if you could check whether you are able to access telephone and internet services either in your home or locally. You will not be required to travel to the hearing venue if you have either telephone or internet video facilities.

If parties do not have a reliable telephone or internet service available in their homes, it may be possible to arrange to use the IT equipment or telephones at your nearest Courts and Tribunals hearing venue.

There is no need to contact the Tribunal to obtain the details as the administrative team are working to issue those details to you in time for your hearing.

Please do not contact the Tribunal helpline because at present, the Tribunal's own resources are reduced due to self-isolation and social distancing and it is at the point two days before your hearing, if you haven't received correspondence from the Tribunal that you should contact the office.

If we can be of any further assistance please email the Tribunal send@justice.gov.uk

Video Hearings

All video hearings will be accessed by using the following link:

<https://join.meet.video.justice.gov.uk/default/>

The team will send out these log in details in advance of the hearing. These will be issued when Notice of Hearing is issued instead of a physical venue you will see dial in or video dial in details. However, as things have moved at such a fast pace over the last few days this means there will be an overlap for those hearings scheduled next week and we will try and get instructions out as quickly as possible for those hearings, however after next week details should be appearing in the Notice of Hearing letters.

Tribunal are also looking at:

- Shared Dropbox/Egress type of shared folders for all to drop bundles into.
- Phase Transfer, Post 16 and Post 19 transitions will be held on a 12 to 14 week period and everything else will be listed on a 20 week timetable due to the uncertainty we do not want to add more cases into the already busy case lists.