

# Equality Unit Update

As EA continue to plan and manage our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have introduced a number of initial, short term, important measures in order to continue to deliver essential education and support services for children and young people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in our society.

We have included links to the various activities and programmes. All Covid-19 related guidance and advice can be found on our website:



COVID-19 Advice: <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/health-safety/guidance-documents>



Free School Meals: <https://www.eani.org.uk/getfsm>



Equality Homepage: <https://www.eani.org.uk/about-us/equality>

For further information on any of the services available or for additional advice / support please contact us on:

Tel: 07919505255

Email: [equality.unit@eani.org.uk](mailto:equality.unit@eani.org.uk)

EA website: <https://www.eani.org.uk/>

## For Children, Young People and Schools:



### Support and placement of Key Worker Children

EA officers are continuing to work in partnership with DE to support the placement of Key Worker Children in schools for supervision purposes. Schools are encouraged to facilitate their own children where possible and can do this independently or through a cluster arrangement with neighbouring schools. EA Link Officers support school principals in this endeavour. DE publish a list of schools and clusters of schools which are open for the educational supervision of vulnerable children and key workers' children on their website daily:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/guidance-schools-cluster-arrangements>

In support of key workers, EA have also created an online school placement process for key workers to request supervised learning for their child in an available school setting, if their normal school is not open. This can be accessed here: <https://www.eani.org.uk/key-workers>

### Support the placement of Children in Special Schools

EA continues to work with special school principals to support those which are open to pupils and those who are continuing to support pupils remotely. There has been engagement with colleagues in Health and Social Care to explore communication pathways and collaborative work for particularly vulnerable children and young people in this sector.



An email address, [SENHelp@eani.org.uk](mailto:SENHelp@eani.org.uk) has been set up to facilitate timely responses to queries and exchange of information as part of the statutory assessment process. Please use this email address where possible and avoid using the postal service. Your correspondence will be forwarded to the EA officer dealing with the relevant statement, who because of Covid19 may not be your school's usual officer. Should you need to speak to a member of the team urgently, please telephone the SEN Helpline Number **028 95 985960**.

### **EA Youth Service: Stay Connected, FLARE, START and Eat Well Stay Well Programmes**

EA Youth Service developed the Stay Connected Service in response to the closure of youth facilities and generic youth services due to Covid 19. It allows young people to stay in touch with youth workers through online methods or by phone, to talk or highlight their support needs. If the young person requires more specialist support, we make onward referrals to EA services or external agencies. The Service is for any young person aged 9 – 25 and operates Monday to Friday from 11-2pm and 3-7pm. <https://www.youthonline.org.uk/>

EA Youth Service has a targeted programme to support young people who experience mental health difficulties and this service is called **FLARE; Facilitating Life and Resilience Education**. This service continues using online platforms and young people who have already been identified to maintain contact and support. The 'stay connected' initiative can also refer young people to FLARE based on need. For more information contact [Deirdre.bradley@eani.org.uk](mailto:Deirdre.bradley@eani.org.uk).

Supporting Teenagers Away from Recurrent Trouble (**START**). This service is funded through the Fresh Start Agreement Executive Action Plan (Department of Justice) which targets young people at risk of harm through paramilitary involvement. For more information please email Michael Hogg: [Michael.hogg@eani.org.uk](mailto:Michael.hogg@eani.org.uk).

EA Youth Service **Eat Well Live Well** programme is for young people registered with EA Youth Service aged 4-25 years who need access to a 5-day food box providing breakfast & lunch Monday -Friday as part of a safety net to the provision of free school meals during Covid-19.



Find a Centre Near you:

<https://eani.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=aa4b38a3358c4255a220633d54fa4eb0>



Get More information:

<https://www.youthonline.org.uk/eatwelllivewell/>



Register for support:

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/EAYouth/stayconnected>



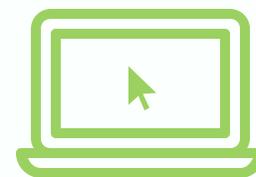
EA are continuing provision via remote mechanisms and regular contact in supporting young people including Child Protection Support Service, Education Welfare Service (includes School Aged Mothers Programme), Exceptional Teaching Arrangements, Primary and Post Primary Behaviour Support and Provisions (including EOTAS), Looked After Children Service and the Independent Counselling Service for Schools.

### For Parents:



We have pulled together in one place some resources to help parents who might need additional support at this time. There are resources for children with special educational needs, to assist parents for which English is not their first language, information in sign language and resources in Irish.

As there can be a lack of affordability when purchasing additional home schooling apps for some parents, and as some families may not have access to devices and laptops, we have encouraged schools to support parents by supplying devices where possible.



We also have help videos for parents on how to log your child into C2K and google classrooms in various languages including sign language.



<https://www.eani.org.uk/sign-language-videos>

### **For parents who may need extra support to their child's education whilst at home:**

The Education Authority's Literacy Service provides support for pupils, schools and parents in the area of specific learning difficulties in literacy (SpLDs)/dyslexia is available to help:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/pupil-support-services/literacy-service>

### **For parents who have children with special educational needs:**

DE have a resources available that you might find helpful:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/resource-support-children-special-educational-needs>



## EA SEN teams can also be contacted for support:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-educational-needs-sen>

## Other useful SEN resources:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-educational-needs-sen/useful-publications/a-resource-to-support-children-with>



## For parents for which English is not their first language:

Education resources in other languages can be found at:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/education-resources-in-more-languages>

You may need support via translation/ interpreting service. This can be done by contacting the Intercultural EA Intercultural Education Service:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/intercultural-education-serviceies/newcomers/resources-available>

The Intercultural Education Service can also help with resources and queries around **traveller education, new comers and vulnerable person's** relocation scheme:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/intercultural-education-service-ies/vulnerable-persons-relocation-scheme-vprs>

The school C2K system continues to provide dedicated support for IM learners, including the Irish Language Newsdesk, Seomra Nuachta, which is available to all teachers and pupils. The IM Newsdesk feature is being further developed in response to the need for additional home learning support in Irish. Le a thuilleadh eolais a fháil ar deasc na nuachta agus acmhainní gabh chuig (for more information on the Newsdesk and resources in Irish, please go to):

<https://www.eani.org.uk/education-resources-in-more-languages>



### **For parents who are deaf or sign language users:**

EA have highlighted some of the most frequently asked questions for parents and these can be accessed on the EA website with sign language and transcript available on issues such as home schooling, free school meals and videos to assist parents on logging in through C2K to Microsoft Teams and Google classrooms:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sign-language-videos> (BSL/ISL)

**Action Deaf Youth (NI)** are sharing resources for deaf children registered to their service. <https://actiondeafyouth.co.uk/>

There is information and resources available for parents on the EA Sensory Service web page for children who may need extra support:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/pupil-support-services/sensory-service>

## Support for provision of free school meals and admissions:

As a result of school closures due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the Minister for Education and Minister for Communities has agreed to make payment to families who have been assessed as eligible for free school meals. All the information on Free School Meal Provision can be found at:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/getfsm>

The admissions procedure for Pre-School, Reception and Primary 1 concluded on 28 April 2020. Further information and FAQs can be found here:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/digitaladmissions>



## Support for provision of free school meals and admissions:

As a result of school closures due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the Minister for Education and Minister for Communities has agreed to make payment to families who have been assessed as eligible for free school meals. All the information on Free School Meal Provision can be found at:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/getfsm>

The admissions procedure for Pre-School, Reception and Primary 1 concluded on 28 April 2020. Further information and FAQs can be found here:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/digitaladmissions>



## New Sign Language Videos and Relay UK Service

We are committed to ensuring all members of the community are able to access important information and contact us during these challenging times. EA's Disability Champion, Board Member Oliver McMullan has been working with officers to put in place appropriate measures members of the deaf community can access information. This has included the development of new sign language videos and the introduction of the Relay UK service.

Speaking about the measures that have been put in place, Mr McMullan said,

“The EA have arranged for temporary measures to be put in place to enable our deaf community to get in touch during the COVID-19 pandemic. If a deaf member of the community requires information or needs to contact an EA officer, they can text our Relay UK App on (18001) 07918695322. Once a request for a conversation with an EA staff member comes in, it can be organised through a video call with a qualified interpreter remotely.

We also have a range of videos online explaining this process and relaying other information such as using C2K, Google classrooms, school closures, school meals, home schooling and COVID-19 information. These videos are in British and Irish sign language.

As an organisation, we are committed to making sure all our services are accessible to the entire community”.

A representative from the British Deaf Association said,

“At the onset of Covid-19, BDA (NI) was contacted by local Deaf parents with school children who were concerned about the lack of accessible information available. One of BDA (NI)’s Advocacy Officers contacted the Education Authority (EA) and explained that printed information is not suitable for all parents, as written English is a Deaf person’s second language after British/Irish Sign Language (BSL/ISL). The EA were very understanding and were keen to work with BDA to discover ways to ensure all parents had full access.

BDA (NI) and members of the Deaf community are very grateful to the EA for the efforts they have made to ensure vital information is easily available during this time.”

