

01 April 2020

Dear Seashell families,

Recent times have been difficult for all of us, especially with regards to those children and young people who require additional support, such as our students and residents at the Seashell Trust.

It seems that over the last few weeks, the guidance has changed as much as the weather, with the future just as difficult to predict. We will of course continue to update you accordingly as the situation unfolds.

With this in mind, we would like to assure you that our primary aim is to ensure that our children, young people/adults, our Seashell families and our staff are kept as safe as they possibly can be. We are working to achieve this by closely following the latest government guidance, and constantly reviewing the situation regarding staffing levels, site access and the support we can provide.

As a specialist provision that offers school and college education in a residential care setting, we are entrusted by the government to continue to provide care for a limited number of children/young people who are deemed vulnerable by their additional and complex needs (EHCPs) and whose parents 'key workers' are critical to the COVID-19 response.

We are also closely following the latest government guidance with regard to 'self-isolation' 'household isolation' and 'social distancing' as well as taking appropriate precautionary infection control measures around hand washing, anti-bacterial gels and use of personal protective equipment PPE as required

In reality, what this means is that some of our students will be required to stay at home, some will be required to stay on site and some will need bespoke arrangements to ensure that we are able to meet their needs as best as we can.

There are additional protocols and a home stay agreement in place for those very few that through necessity maintain direct family contact

We have been in contact with parents/carers of those children and young people presently at family/carer home to gain a good understanding of the family's needs and challenge at this time to establish views on how best we can support within the current circumstances.

Our staff are working flexibly to ensure that we can meet as far as possible essential requirements, but, this does mean that we have had to make difficult decisions about the level of services we can provide and what services we cannot provide, at this moment in time.

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To ensure a consistent approach in working with you as families and carers we would like to reaffirm some of the key messages

Visitors must:

- not come on site unless 'absolutely necessary'
- use technology instead
- call first before visiting
- not enter the home/house
- drop medication etc at the inner (outer) gate
- Visitors are advised that the Family Flat is closed.

With regards to the Home Stay Agreement, parents/carers must:

- read and sign the agreement
- abide by current government restrictions on households
- not return if any member of a household shows symptoms
- remain, and isolate, at home if unwell
- use infection control measures/protocols on return

With regards to our Day Service:

- It is only available to a limited number of risk assessed students from school and college
- It will only operate if we have available staff in place to support
- It operates entirely independent of the residential service in the school building, school playground and forest school
- It is staffed by a separate dedicated team of our school/education colleagues to minimise cross infection
- The college building is to be used only by the residential service

As always, we very much appreciate your understanding, patience, co-operation and continued support in these uncertain times.

Kind Regards

John McCaffrey

Interim Director of Care

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