

# COVID 19 – Addendum SEND Policy

## **Introduction**

From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 parents and carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend, or vulnerable children. Then definition of vulnerable children includes any child with an EHCP. As per previous stages of this on-going pandemic, it is highly likely that new challenges will emerge. However, we must ensure that our robust systems to ensure the provision for our children with SEND including those with an EHCP continues to be of a high standard.

All staff and volunteers have a legal responsibility to address the special educational needs of the children they support (SEND Code of Practice 2014),

## **Vulnerable children**

As per DfE guidance, vulnerable children include those who have a social worker, children and young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plans, and children who have been identified as otherwise vulnerable, by the school or local authorities (including children's social care services), who could benefit from continued full-time attendance.

There is an expectation that children with an EHCP will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. At HCAT we will endeavour for as many children as we can with an EHCP to attend our schools.

If children with an EHCP do not attend, our schools will:

- work together with the local authority to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests
- work together with the local authority and other relevant partners to encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision.

All schools across our Trust will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed. We will also consider if a child does not have an EHCP but the SEN need makes them more vulnerable whether the school can offer a place, which will be undertaken in consultation with parents/carers.

## **Risk Assessment**

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents/carers, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home. The risk assessment will be RAG rated and shared with the local authority. If children are assessed as red (ie provision not in place) the local authority will deem this as a significant concern. The school will work with the local authority to put the right provision in place.

## **Children attending school in class bubble**

The SENCO will ensure that all staff working in individual 'Class Bubbles' are made aware of their children with an EHCP and on the SEN register – this is essential if the teacher is not the usual class teacher for that year group or class. The SENCO will ensure that the ongoing assessments, support plans and EHCP provisions will continue for the children attending school in the same way as before as much as possible within the current guidelines. Any provision that is not being provided must be noted in the risk assessment. SENCO and class teachers must be aware of what is being missed to be able to catch the child up when lockdown ends.

If a child requires close contact the risk assessment (on the Covid Recovery plan) must be updated with any changes that have come into place since the lockdown.

### **Children not in school**

#### **Remote Learning**

Each school will have procedures in place to check that children with an identified SEND need are able to access remote learning, support with access (as far as possible), and regularly check pupils are doing so. Furthermore, our schools will work collaboratively with families, putting in place reasonable adjustments as necessary, so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education alongside their peers. Remote learning needs to include targets identified on their ongoing assessments in order for children to continue to work on these bespoke targets. For children with an EHC Plan provision from Section F in the plan needs to be considered and put in place as much as possible within the remote learning.

Class teachers will undertake regular check-ins with children with an identified special educational need making sure they work with parents and carers to provide work that is accessible throughout the time the child is at home. The SENCO will check-in with children with an EHCP. These checks-in will continually update the risk assessment in consultation with parents and carers and consider the targets and provision stated on the plan and make all reasonable steps to put this in place.

#### **Attendance**

If children offered a place during the crisis does not attend, then the school should follow up their absence with the parent/carers. If the child continues to not attend the risk assessment must be updated and Sam Bullen notified through the EHCP risk assessment register in the shared area.

It may be necessary for the school to agree a supportive strategy to help either engage or re-engage the family into their child attending school. All other systems currently in operation, for recording daily attendance, should continue throughout these exceptional times.

If schools are unable to make contact with families, and all available avenues have been exhausted (telephone calls, home visits, checks with known sibling schools and emergency contact numbers etc), schools should refer the matter to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service, as per the locally agreed protocols for Children Missing in Education.

As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they **should not** be marked as **Code X** if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent

should let the school know and the absence recorded as **Code C** (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

### **Staffing Ratios**

Where possible it is desirable that a child with an EHCP who has 1:1 support is supported by the same person or people if they attend school. It is acknowledged that this won't always be possible and if staffing becomes an issue please refer to the SEN contingency flowchart in Appendix A.

### **Social, Emotional and Mental Health**

Pupils and staff mental wellbeing may have been severely affected during to the Coronavirus outbreak due to various reasons. This may lead to children who are not already identified as having a special educational need demonstrating behaviours or emotional distress that needs extra support. Children will be identified in the same way through the assess, plan, do, review model and support put in place. Please see the SEN Policy.

In times of uncertainty, it is vital that we support, encourage and guide one another, plus look out and care for everyone in our school community. Each school has dedicated staff to support children, and staff, if they needed.

As children and staff return to our settings, it is important that they are provided the opportunity to talk openly about how they feel, or are feeling as we adjust, plus offer strategies of how manage any worries or anxieties.

The Department for Education (DfE) have suggested additional ways of how we can support mental wellbeing, which include:

- opportunities for children to talk about their experiences
- opportunities for one-to-one conversations with trusted adults where this may be supportive
- some re-focused lessons on relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or staying safe
- pastoral activity, such as positive opportunities to renew and develop friendships and peer groups
- other enriching developmental activities

If staff have concerns for the wellbeing of any child, they must inform either the school Emotional Wellbeing Officer, or Designated Safeguarding Lead, if they believe that the child is a significant risk.

### **Monitoring and review**

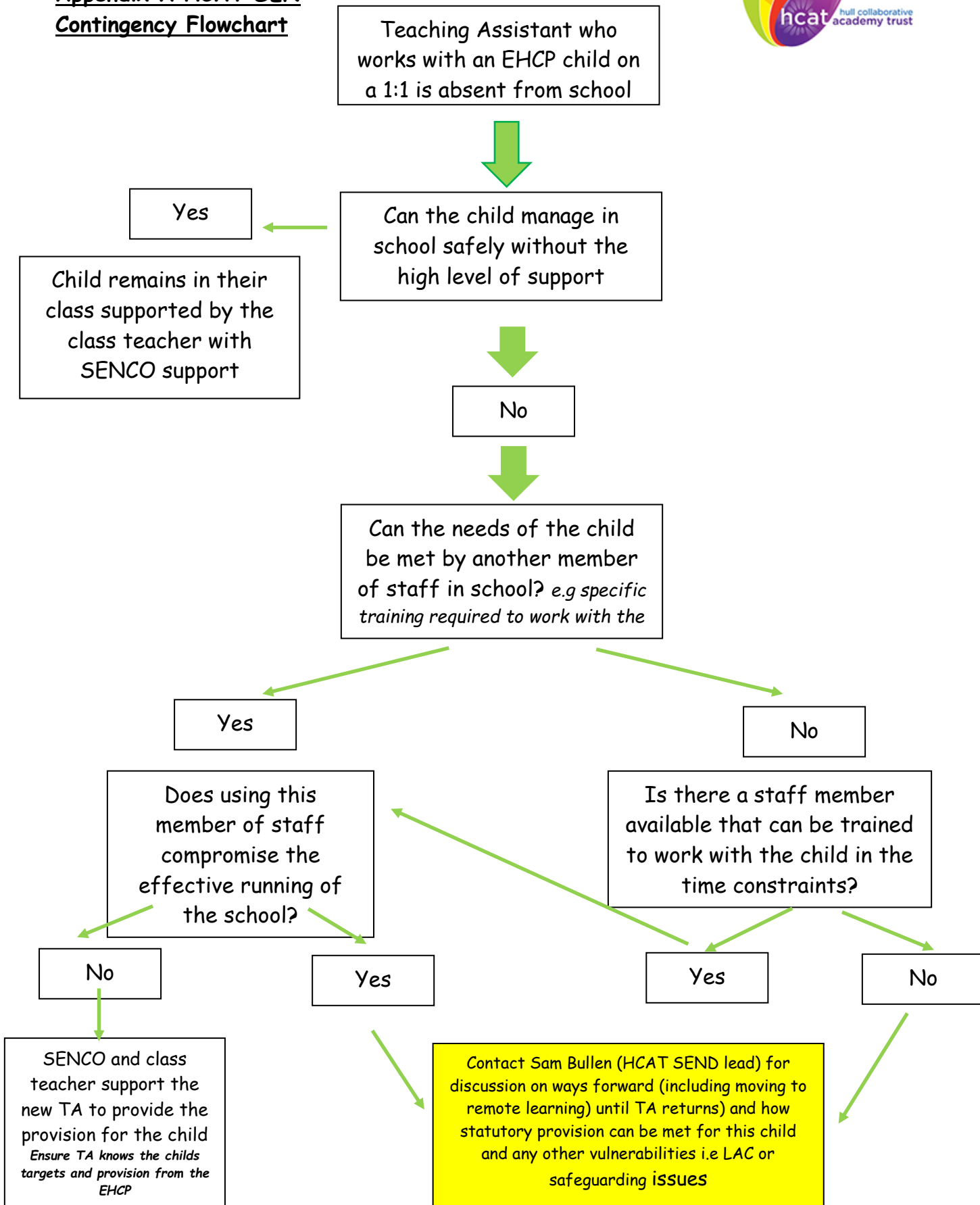
It is highly likely that these interim procedures will evolve over the coming weeks and months, as new guidance is issued by the DfE and Local Authority. Your designated staff and leaders will update you, as and when needed.

### **Other related policies**

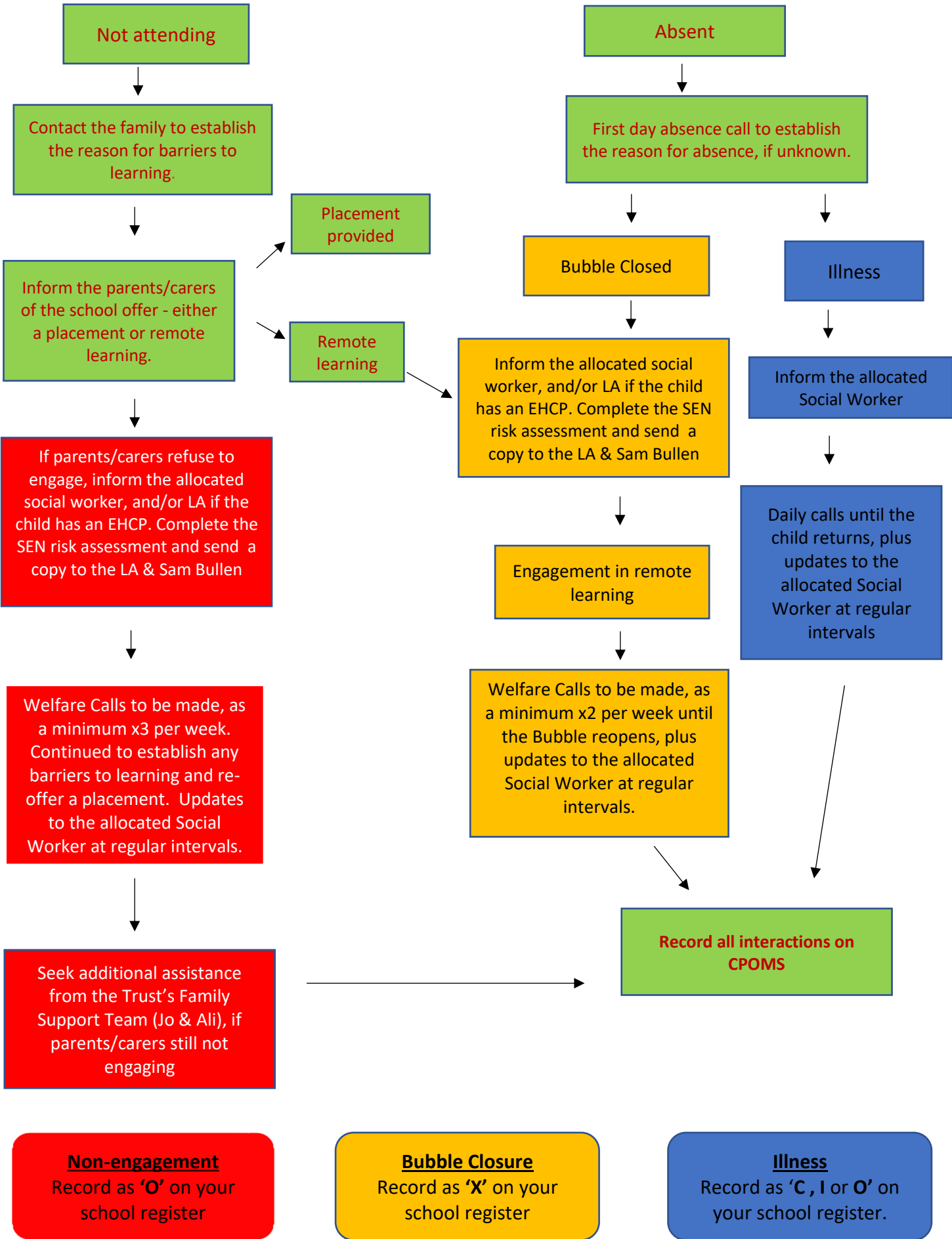
The addendum policy must be used and read in conjunction with policies such as: Anti-Bullying, COVID 19 Behaviour, Covid 19 Child Protection Policy, Bereavement, Health and Safety, Intimate Care, Physical Intervention, Special Educational Needs, plus any associated risk assessments.



**Appendix A HCAT SEN Contingency Flowchart**



# High Risk and Vulnerable Pupils Non-Attendance Flowchart



**Appendix C****Contact details**

<b>Key Staff</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>Email</b>
Headteacher			
Designated Safeguarding Lead			
SEN Co			
Senior Leader (1)			
Senior Leader (2)			
Trust Safeguarding Lead	Suzanne Wilson	07702 511877	<a href="mailto:suzanne.wilson@hcat.org.uk">suzanne.wilson@hcat.org.uk</a>
EHaSH		01482 448879	
LADO	Jacque Edhouse	01482 613372	<a href="mailto:Jacquie.edhouse@hullcc.gov.uk">Jacquie.edhouse@hullcc.gov.uk</a>
LA Education Officer for Safeguarding	Phillip Painter	01482 614552	<a href="mailto:Phillip.painter@hullcc.gov.uk">Phillip.painter@hullcc.gov.uk</a>