

Edinburgh EIS - Special School Members Bulletin 30 March 2020

Hi folks

I hope you are well and are managing to stay safe.

We are living in an extraordinary unprecedented emergency situation. There is nothing normal about this. In terms of our jobs, we have to keep these facts in mind. To quote from the guidance document that was sent out to special school HTs **"In all of our planning we must remember that the single most important thing we are trying to do is to minimise the spread of the virus; to look after our families, ourselves and our communities"**.

Balance and realism should govern what we can do whilst in this setting, which is particularly demanding on those of us in the special school sector, as we try to support children and families who have profound needs. This balance needs to include what headteachers are asking you to do, whilst remembering that HTs are also having extraordinary requests made of them and, like all of us, are trying to work things out as they go along. The main expectation for what you are being asked to do in the weeks ahead is to be a support and a resource to the families whom you work with. I have been in correspondence with Anna Gray about this and you should have the choice of using online methods or phoning. **If you are not comfortable with phoning then use online methods.** There should be guidance from your headteacher about what the expectations will be when you are contacting parents. This guidance should be balanced and fair. It may involve sending on details of online resources to be used by pupils. There might be a range of resources you can send to your families. You may be asked to record your dealings/attempts to get in touch with your families and send this onto your headteacher. This should be kept to a minimum. I understand that the reason for doing this is to keep an eye out for families who might be struggling and those who are not wanting to engage. You will know your families best and can judge what is reasonable and practicable.

Every person's situation is going to be different. You may have caring responsibilities, you may have periods of being unwell, you may have times when the reality of what we are doing and why comes crashing in and overwhelms. This is why we all have to be realistic and to seek balance and realism in what we can and can't do. If you feel that your headteacher is being unrealistic or over-ambitious in what they are asking you to do I would ask that you get in touch *and* send in a copy of the request - please email me at edinburghlapresident@eis.org.uk and copy in Alison edinburghla@eis.org.uk.

As I have said this is a completely new and unsettling time. We don't know all of the answers and we don't even know some of the questions. Feel free to get in touch if you have any questions. We might not be able to answer them straight away, but we will try our best.

If you have volunteered to work in either of the special school hubs, I would be keen to hear from you and to get your views on how it is going.

Further updates will be forthcoming. In the meantime, "**remember that the single most important thing we are trying to do is to minimise the spread of the virus; to look after our families, ourselves and our communities**".

Take care and stay safe

Tom

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