

Waltham Forest Parent Forum Parent Consultation on Covid 19 and the Return to School - October 2020



Consultation

Parent carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) were consulted via an online survey about their experiences of the return to school following the summer holidays. The results below come from 80 responses from 6th-19th October 2020. Considering the additional demands on families' time, energy, and priorities currently, this is an excellent response. This is a follow-up to the lockdown survey we undertook in May and, although the questions in this survey are different to the previous one, themes are consistent across both surveys. We will also complete another survey in the Spring term to see if parents' thoughts and concerns change over time.

Background

Waltham Forest Parent Forum) is a collective of parent carers from almost 1,200 member families across Waltham Forest. In addition to this, WFPF has an online community of over 1,500.

WFPF is a member of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) The NNPCF is a network of over 150 Parent Care Forums from across England. As a network we come together, working to effect local, regional and national service improvement through participation and co-production with parent carers.


WFPF has been the strategic voice of parent carers working in partnership with Waltham Forest Council (LBWF) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other health partners since 2008. It is funded through a direct DfE grant (administered through Contact) and by LBWF.


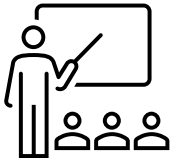
Questions

Parents were asked a series of questions. Some were multiple choice and some simply required parents' thoughts.

Below are the questions, the responses in terms of the % of parents who responded and the number of parents that equated to. All quotes are anonymous.

The summary findings are below:

	<p>High levels of stress and anxiety: Covid19 is still clearly causing a high degree of anxiety and worry to both children and young people with SEND and their parent carers about a wide range of issues such as: contracting the virus, keeping their family safe, the child's anxiety about returning to school after an extended period, not being able to support their child with learning, even if schools have to close for a short period, the child's worsening mental health or behaviour, worrying about loss of income/employment if schools close and they have to self-isolate.</p> <p><i>'The Covid restrictions severely don't agree with his needs. Fourth day back he pulled off his own toe- nail, as was so anxious'</i></p> <p>Some parents report that their child had coped well with the lockdown as it took away the stress the child faced whenever they went to school. Home schooling has been considered by many families due to Covid 19. Many families have reported that they would never cope with home schooling, but others</p>
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	<p>have seriously considered it as their child had thrived during lockdown. However, for some it is not, financially, a viable option for them currently.</p> <p><i>'Desperately want to but financially can't manage at the moment. Could manage if we received some teaching hours and support at home'</i></p>
	<p>Worsening of child and family mental health and wellbeing for most:</p> <p>Having CYP with SEND at home 24/7 during the lockdown was exhausting and challenging for many families, especially without access to other support services, and the thought of having to endure long periods at home again is causing great anxiety. This is impacting negatively on many children's (and their parent carers') wellbeing and behaviour. This is coupled with anxiety about how children are re-integrating back in school after the summer, many for the first time since March. Some parents have said that schools cannot fully meet the needs of some children due to restrictions imposed on them(TAs not always available due to 'bubbles' for example) , causing deterioration in behaviours and further strain on families who are already exhausted.</p> <p><i>'School closures coupled with withdrawal of other support services, and the reduction in human contact, whilst 24/7 dealing with poor sleep, challenging and demanding behaviours and difficulty in doing as normal a thing as having a bath, let only running a home (due to care demands) - a never ending miserable pressure pot..... Catching Covid is the least of our worries.'</i></p>
	<p>Transition back to school</p> <p>Whilst some schools have been praised by parents for measures they put in place for children to transition successfully to school- virtual tours of the new 'look' to the school, social stories, increasing quiet time out of the classroom to help to readjust , small group social skills work to rebuild relationships- many parents said they did not get the support they needed from their child's school . Many families report they were not involved in any risk assessments that were carried out and many do not even know if one has ever been done. In some cases, support indicated in EHCPs or SEN support plans is still not fully back in place. Many children are struggling to cope with the changes to the school environment and rules around social distancing. One family reported that their child had already had a fixed term exclusion.</p> <p><i>'Transition booklet with photos was excellent'</i></p> <p><i>'With the COVID restrictions in place my son is not able to take part in the enrichment classes, sports and intervention clubs that were previously available. This has changed his experience at school, and he is really struggling in the restricted environment. I am currently very concerned for his mental health. He has started refusing to go to school and having very upsetting meltdowns at home'</i></p>



Other concerns:

Communication

Good communication with families lies at the heart of a successful return to school. Experiences have been very varied with some families getting little or no communication from schools and the local authority and others praising the contact they have had.

'The school has given my child a book which allows us to communicate to the teacher which also makes us aware of what is happening at school.'

'The communication with the school hasn't been great, so I am not aware of everything they have done for a good settling back'

'SEN Officers need to be more in contact with families'

Remote Education

Families are also raising concerns about the provision of remote education during any school closures and local lockdowns. The importance of a differentiated curriculum in future lockdowns is critical. Schools need to have robust plans in place to better support individual needs. Many parents are already exhausted meeting their disabled children's daily needs and would not be able to follow a school's educational programme over an extended period again. It has been suggested by some parents that EHCP funding should be used more creatively to support families by providing tutors/support workers to implement educational programmes if schools are closed.

'The school expects parents to deliver online classes when parents struggle to just meet the basic needs, especially when child has a severe disability'.

Transport

Some parents are concerned about transport arrangements. Even those who do not use transport are concerned that children are mixing outside of school bubbles on transport, increasing the risk of their child's exposure to the virus. Parents are also concerned about the number of children on buses which does not allow for social distancing, and the lack of PPE used by staff and children.

'The buses are not cleaned daily; this is very clear. All bags are put in one place. The driver doesn't wear PPE.'

Lack of respite

Whilst many parents appreciate that they have been allowed to use their short breaks funding more flexibly, there have been concerns about the lack of support for the most complex and challenging children, which still continues after the ending of lockdown. Some families report that they have had little support since the beginning of the year when the respite centre changed venue

'Overnight respite is unavailable to him/us for over 2 years, as locally were unable to meet his needs, even though he was assessed for this many years ago. When we asked for support re this 2 years ago. We were repeatedly ignored. It seems the most tricky of kids to care for are the ones the LA doesn't bother with. Respite funds for last 6 months have almost entirely gone on carers who roam the streets and parks with him for hours, as this is all there is.'

FULL SURVEY QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS BY INDIVIDUAL PARENTS

1. What kind of setting does your child attend?

Type of provision	% of responses	Number of responses
Early Years	2.50	2
Primary Mainstream	33.75	27
Secondary Mainstream	20.00	16
College -Mainstream	3.75	3
Special School	33.75	27
Specialist College	1.25	1
PRU	0	0
Home Schooled	0	0
EOTAS	0	0
Other- including NEET, Day Centre	5.00	4

2. Has your child returned to school/college since the summer?

Options	% of responses	Number of responses
Yes, back full-time successfully	46.25	37
Yes, back full-time but I'm concerned	38.75	31
Part time- no other teaching	5.00	4
Part time in school and some online teaching	1.25	1
Child/young person refused to return	0	0
No, I've chosen not to send them back	3.75	3
School has told me they can't go back	0	0
Remote learning only	0	0
No education, no placement	1.25	1
Other	2.50	2

Comments

1. My child has ASD & ADHD, my concerns are that the school claim they are unable to provide him with ANY of the supportive measures he requires, due to the bubbles they have created. In turn this poses a distinct problem for my child's progress and development
2. Not enough adequate support in place
3. My child has underlying conditions and a sibling at home who as per government advice should be at home.
4. School have said that due to covid risk assessment, they cannot meet the needs of my child
5. Have had numerous days of school refusal, school anxiety, not wanting to go.
6. J has compromised lung function and requires 1:1 assistance with all aspects of his care. I do not believe he will be safe at school.
7. He did not cope. The Covid restrictions severely don't agree with his needs. Fourth day back he pulled off his own toe nail, as was so anxious. He then missed a week off and went back

part time. He then got a cough and, as no testing available, stayed at home for another 2 weeks. He is now back again mornings only

8. My granddaughter is finding it extremely difficult with social distancing comes home upset has mood swings. Keeps saying she don't like it that she can't touch her friends feel s lonely, she has several outburst at home. The school has looked i to it and made some slight changes which seem to be working this week.
9. Staffing is an issue, he has a support assistant but if that support assistant is not in there is no support, child is in mainstream with a provision and the last two weeks while his LSA has attended university on Tuesday afternoons My son had just been given you tube on an iPad while the teacher teaches the class. He also cannot handle the noise of the playground and used to have access to other spaces, now he doesn't. He spends all day in class
10. She's back full time but she's not getting the help she needs.
11. I am concerned that he is not getting the full support that he needs. He was meant to transfer to a special school, but the process has been so hard due to the fact that we were not able to view the schools and no availability. The one we have chosen is still being put into consideration.
12. Already struggling and received fixed term exclusion
13. Doesn't want to go back because got use to of staying home and has some bad days
14. The first two weeks of going back, my daughter was always very sad to go to school. She was not enjoying school. The new way was very strange for her. She said she doesn't have friends anymore. Probably felt she was not allowed to make friends because they are put in bubbles. She complained always about the teacher. Said the teacher always shouted it hurts her ears. On the third week she started to settle as she got used to the new system.
15. I am concerned about my child returning to school full time as the cases of COVID-19 are increasing more and more daily, which could increase a risk of catching the virus. Also many young children especially in my child's special school are not aware of safety hazards and their surroundings (maintaining social distancing)
16. She is struggling at school
17. My son Is finding it hard to go back to school he has lots of anxiety and melts down
18. With the COVID restrictions in place my son is not able to take part in the enrichment classes, sports and intervention clubs that were previously available. This has changed his experience at school, and he is really struggling in the restricted environment. I am currently very concerned for his mental health. He has started refusing to go to school and having very upsetting meltdowns at home.
19. Had place at Mencap but he has refused to go
20. Due to the lack of social distancing in school, my daughter has instead been doing her schoolwork in the school's SEN unit. All of her schoolwork is uploaded onto Google Classroom and she does it on a Chromebook. She may as well be doing this at home, to be honest - and I am aware that even in the unit, they are not enforcing social distancing, as she caught a cold. Attending school is posing a physical risk to our family, as her father is asthmatic and over 50, and I have an autoimmune disorder.
21. She was forced to have 4 days off because her sister had Covid symptoms.
22. Homework not being differentiated, and he is feeling pressurised. Re-starting school and settling back in has been hard enough!
23. Full time but I am not sure all his EHCP is being implemented now. Having a meeting with school next week to discuss. It is much harder to talk to teachers and the head of provision now as we do not have conversations at school gates. Transition back to school was tough - my son tells me daily that he wants to go back to home school.

24. His behaviour has got worse during lockdown and school have noticed
25. He started a nursery from 16 September for 1-1.5 hours while he was settling. Next week after the first week he was staying 2-2.5 hours. After that they closed the nursery for 2 weeks for quarantine, because someone from staff was positive for kov.19. We will have online live sessions now, not sure how often it will be.
26. It does not feel safe. I am worried as my child has CP. No one anywhere seems to care about these more vulnerable children. On top of that kids are coughing unchecked in school. Behaviour and learning is way below standard. It feels that school is now just childcare with the added bonus of being able to catch COVID.
27. Although back in school, with very recent EHCP in place. Very changing times with teachers being off, bubbles and areas to keep in, lack of sporting activities allowed, no outside run activities allowed in school-no music clubs, sent home if can't keep in bubble
28. Son has started a new Special school in September as secondary age. Not going well
29. The school has opened an inadequate unit for all disabled children with little formal learning and teacher input and not 1:1 as specified in EHC plan. School did not consult at all and have refused to consult to date. It is an unsafe unit and my child is often tearful. Also treated differently to all children in year group, isolated from lunch and is a very gentle and passive child. Not all children in this unit are and they are all older from different year group. Disappointed with local authority who refused to assist with a simple letter confirming funding. Child is in a unsafe environment and local authority managers have assisted.
30. About his fragile mental health
31. I'm still in discussions with school around how they are supporting my son.
32. She has found the changes in school routine disrupting.
33. Am concerned as son will not wear mask or adhere to sterilising hands after touching things.
34. The school staff do not have PPE despite many of the children being classed as vulnerable. The class have not been prepared with physio equipment or SALT. My son has been moved to a different class without me being consulted. He is getting only sensory activity and very little progressive learning. He has had his 121-support removed and I'm having to fight for it again
35. There has been no risk assessment done, last year or this year. She had already had academic assessments, despite the talk being about a recovery curriculum. Also, her EHCP provisions are not yet in place. No interventions, no therapists' involvement, no group work.

3. Did school/college do a risk assessment for your child before they returned?

Options	% of responses	Number of responses
Yes, with full consultation with us	12.50	10
Yes, but we had NO input	21.25	17
Had one previously. Don't know if it has been updated	3.75	3
Never had a risk assessment	31.25	25
Don't Know	26.25	21
Other	1.25	1

Comments

1. During Covid times During lockdown, but not since we returned

2. Yes, copy emailed to me for input but need professional guidance to assist with this
3. Our son is not high risk for Covid - but he is unable to follow guidelines without total support (ie. the hands, face, space)
4. Not sure you could call it full consultation, they sent us the form they had completed and said do we want anything Changed
5. Not consulted on what was put in place other than a 20 min earlier finish
6. They did not do a risk assessment until I threatened to withhold her from school, and the current arrangements were set up at my insistence
7. We saw the risk assessment the night before readmission. It was produced without us. it seemed to have been a very rushed and unclear process
8. Plan was reviews weekly for first 4 weeks but won't continue to be reviewed weekly from now on. Some confusion from staff with regards to this. One member of staff wanted to keep sending him home. Only plan we had was in regards to getting him in to school as this was a struggle. Didn't ever ask or suggest a part time plan.
9. Asked for details and were not given. Parents not involved although specifically asked. School SENCO needs training on Equality Act. Practices are outdated and discriminatory.
10. I asked SENCO and was told they didn't have to do one. I was concerned because no contact since July and the only emails I had were the generic ones sent to all parents. I didn't know what support staff my son would have (had requested he didn't have the last one due to serious safeguarding concerns we had and still have) or how the changes would impact on my son

4 What has your school done to support your child's return and help them settle in?

Comments

1. My child's class teacher has been incredibly attentive and supportive to help him settle in
2. Sent out some info leaflet/booklet on returning to school but nothing else
3. Staggered starting times, bubbles
4. Open days, virtual tours
5. Nothing
6. Employed a new one to one TA
7. Provided ear defenders, going in before other children, quiet time prior to entering classroom, phone call to me at break and lunch
8. Initially unsure. Now allowing more outside breaks & part time transition back to as much as he can cope with.
9. They have created the appropriate bubbles, wearing mask in class, washing hands, tell kids no contact with others etc..
10. After we wrote to inform then some changes have been made
11. I don't know
12. Nothing outside of what would normally happen, his support has been reduced from 1-1 to 2-1
13. Nothing. Support she was getting before lockdown is not there anymore.
14. Nothing in particular.
15. Zero
16. They are trying their best
17. Nothing that I am aware of

18. Emails and letters to use daily communication with us in the home-school book; program is normally very person centred so they have been able to adapt; had a zoom meeting with parents to give info and answer questions
19. No idea. Not notified
20. The school has given my child a book which allows us to communicate to the teacher which also makes us aware of what is happening at school.
21. Visual timetable and pictures of the classrooms
22. Zoom transition sessions
23. Staff at front to show the student the way. Make sure all students had masks and social distancing. Making sure no pupils who are not well are provided help.
24. They put the sen kids in a bubble.
25. They have given him extra time with a one to one and are now looking at some breakout times for him to cope in the school environment.
26. Taster days in July, Various correspondence pertaining to re-starting school
27. They have bubbled the children and are very friendly and supportive with my son
28. They have provided her with a room in the unit, allow her to use the staff toilet, and have given her a Chromebook so she can do the work set for her on Google Classroom.
29. Got in touch before term started to review her profile (doc which goes to all teachers) and follow-up call a few weeks in.
30. Had a meeting, updated plan and discuss on a regular basis to check if all is ok
31. One phone call advising what they'd be doing
32. Transition booklet with photos was excellent. Week 1 meeting with teacher, TA and head of provision to set expectations after a very bad year last year.
33. Photos of new class. Explained about Covid and hygiene
34. Pictures of setting due to new class and distance rules
35. On the phone, SENCO from the school listened to my child's fears before returning to school and therefore knew what to prepare for her (Camhs also in this helped us a lot)
36. Regular reviews for first 4 weeks but reviews weekly won't now continue as he seems to have settled in now and coped fairly well with change to teachers being present.
37. good contact, opportunities to chat informally with school staff at collection time and telephone calls/email contact.
38. Earlier day start - end of day de brief - chill out room - google classroom
39. We don't actually know. We are trying to support school and our son but it's difficult when communication is not clear. Even getting a visual timetable was a fight.
40. No support on what PPE they would have why his class was changed and his 121 very unorganised had a relaxed attitude to kids being back like they didn't even care so disappointing
41. The communication with the school hasn't been great, so I am not aware of everything they have done for a good settling back. However, he was assigned to a new class with a new teacher. His old teacher didn't contact me to inform me of this. Prior to school start I noticed the new class name on the paperwork we received to do with the school's new policies. And that was that. So to begin with, it must have been very stressful for my son, not only to go back after 6 months but to a new class and teacher. Needless to say, his difficult anxiety related behaviours presented themselves straight away. I didn't have any communication from his teacher etc. For the first week of school. I initiated contact and after few attempts now communicate with his teacher via email. We are still due to talk over the phone to discuss how my son is settling. I must underline that he uses CT plus transport and probably the communication is somewhat difficult due to the lack of daily contact and presence.
42. A social story over the summer. A 1:1 in place. Other than that, I have no idea as they don't really communicate properly

43. Increasing quiet time out of the classroom to help her readjust and will be starting some small group social skills work to rebuild relationships
44. We had a power point about my child's new class.

5 If your child has an EHCP/SEN Support Plan, are all their provisions, including therapies, back in place as they were before lockdown?

Options	% of responses	Number of responses
All support is back in place	12.66	10
Some of the support is back in place	21.52	17
I am not sure if it is back in place	20.25	16
Support is being delivered remotely	0	0
Very little support is back in place	11.39	9
None of the support is back in place	6.33	5
Support is in their EHCP/SEN support plan but has never been delivered anyway	1.27	1
Not applicable	11.39	9

Comments

1. Unfortunately the SENCO at his school didn't think it was necessary to apply for an EHCP and also supported this by stating that it would be difficult to put any of the provisions in place due to the new bubble structure. I have since personally requested an EHCP via the SEN team at Waltham Forest
2. EHCP out of date anyway so support is not reflective of needs. All needs cannot be met effectively due to covid regulations e.g. lack of access to physical exercise
3. J should see a physio and a speech therapist regularly but has not done since March. He has also had no medical review and not seen any doctor since before March. I don't see how he can go into a hospital setting or have these people close to him without exposure to risk.
4. In school therapies are not being delivered the same as pre-lockdown, due to "bubbles". Nearby SEN provision for our son is almost absent and was very limited to begin with. Overnight respite is unavailable to him/us for over 2 years, as locally were unable to meet his needs, even though he was assessed for this many years ago. When we asked for support re this 2 years ago we were repeatedly ignored. It seems the most tricky of kids to care for are the ones the LA doesn't bother with. Respite funds for last 6 months have almost entirely gone on carers who roam the streets and parks with him for hours, as this is all there is. CAMHS support is patchy and unreliable, as they seem to be overburdened, but has been available and has helped
5. No SLT
6. As of today, none of the SEN support is back in place. I had a discussion with the SENCO two days ago and she said they are working on updating her support plan and putting them in place.
7. We have had no contact from anyone since the Mencap placement has fallen through
8. Still waiting on speech and language therapist to assess and EP carried out a remote assessment by talking with parents only. Has never met with child.
9. Not all support is as was previously.

10. It's mostly back in place, but her external therapy is still a little precarious. It is currently being delivered outdoors, but I have been told if we want to go indoors all the adults will have to wear masks. I don't think this will meet her emotional needs so we will stay outdoors until defeated by the weather and then set up parent calls so the OT can support me in supporting my daughter. It's not ideal but the best I could negotiate.

6. What are your concerns, if any, about the return to school? - school closures, risk of catching Coronavirus, how to manage if school is closed, mental health of child/family etc?

Comments

1. School closure and associated impact of my son being home
2. Catching Covid
3. Too many parents in playground, too busy after 6 months of isolating, not enough distancing
4. Risk of catching Covid, as school bubble is 240 student strong, lots of mixing in corridors, support from TAs in class is inappropriate as not being allowed to work next to him for a longer period of time, have to go to the back of the room to access TA support, which is totally against the EHCP advice/request that his kind of singling our support is not helpful
5. School staff not following the advice of social distancing and not wearing face masks. Bubbles are mixed some days. Speech therapy has not started
6. Schools closing again, late decision made
7. Catching Covid, travel, family health and wellbeing
8. EHCP support being fulfilled and my daughter's needs being met
9. Constant exclusions due to school not being able to meet the needs of my child under the new Covid regulations and his risk assessment, is having a major impact on the mental health of my family and financial issues due to having to take time off work.
10. My child is very very anxious about the virus and I think this is the main reason for the school refusal and school anxiety, everything has changed, everything is different and he is finding it hard to cope.
11. If J gets Covid he is very likely to die. He has already been hospitalised for pneumonia twice and diagnosed with it 3 times. He has no speech and a lot of dystonic involuntary movement. He is hard to care for and if I get Covid there is no-one to look after him.
12. Return to school - cannot fully meet the needs of some children due to restrictions imposed on schools, causing deterioration in behaviours and further strain on family who are already exhausted and jaded. School closures - presumably coupled with withdrawal of other support services, and reduction in human contact, whilst 24/7 dealing with poor sleep, challenging and demanding behaviours and difficulty in doing as normal a thing as having a bath, let only running a home (due to care demands) - a never ending miserable pressure pot. I would be surprised if there had not already been suicides and abuse as a result. Catching Covid is the least of our worries.
13. Child needs regular stress breaks, these are not always possible now, and de-stress room has been changed to a sickness waiting area.
14. My concern is like everyone I suppose that he can catch the virus and pass to us so all family has to be isolated. Also if school is close how to manage with him at home 24 hrs when he loves his routine of going to school plus that is winter coming so less chances to go to the park.
15. School closures, risk of catching Covid 19
16. how to manage if school is closed

17. Very concerned that school doesn't have to disclose the year group of a positive Covid test. My husband is high risk and shielding. Very concerned about the possibility of Covid being brought home.
18. Effects of new behaviour policies, effect of the new normal on my child's mental health, his anxiety has gone sky high since returning
19. My daughter has autism. She has EHCP, but it's not being followed at all. She's not getting any support from her one to one. She doesn't eat her lunch at all. She has become sick three times since school reopened. All I get is complaints about her behaviour.
20. It's just been too overwhelming. trying to settle in year one and just as we think we have it was the lock down. We went back now, and he developed a temperature and again had to stay home. Pretty much one step forward 2 steps backwards
21. If schools close again I hope they still open like before for certain children.
22. Mental Health if school closes
23. Mental health of my child as it's confusing for him when we had to self-isolating for few days until the results my son doesn't understand he needs his routine back
24. It's the mental health that I find difficult. Both of us have struggled with the transition. I'm not sure if the school is safe, but they do keep me informed.
25. It's important that school remains open but at the same time I am scared of my child contracting the virus or someone in the school contracting it and thereby causing the school to close. I am worried that if such happens, we will probably not recover from the mental stress. I have three children all under 7 years and the emotional trauma we went through during the lockdown was too much. We are gradually trying to recover and will be a huge setback if we were to undergo another lockdown
26. School closed the second week when there was a case of Covid; school closures are difficult to deal with as both parents are key workers
27. As with any parents we are concerned about our child catching Covid. We do not know how the school is managing the risk. Eg. Sanitising, smaller groups, staggered breaks etc
28. Concerns of son getting no support at all. My son wouldn't be bothered if there was to be another lockdown as it is school that stresses him.
29. My concerns are if he will ever enjoy school like before it feels like I have gone back to step one lockdown has really affected him
30. Risk of Covid
31. Managing if school closes
32. School closing, child sent home without any support. Also, who will look after child if parent get ill.
33. As my son struggles with going to school anyway, the closure of school has a big impact on him returning when open and we are not able to provide home education at home because he finds to hard to engage in a home environment
34. mental health of child, how to manage if school is closed.
35. My concern is mainly they have already been sent home for 14 days due to a Covid case in his bubble. The on and off of school is too much for him to handle. Also the mixture of children travelling on school buses
36. The forced self-isolation after her sister had a temperature, and until we got her negative test result. she was extremely anxious about missing out and falling behind. School tried to get her teachers to email her work, but not all of them managed it(on top of their classroom teaching and adjusting to new routines in school
37. Our son needed to go back due to sibling arguments and parents having to return to work. COVID is a huge concern as it is for everyone - I wish we could keep our children at home but husband is also a teacher at secondary school so isn't much point as he would still have to go to school too. Financially I couldn't not work either albeit from home. The kids need

to be back for their well being but as parents we are more worried than they are about COVID

38. Concerned my son is unable to social distance - he needs to hold onto people for balance. Communications with school significantly diminished. Pressures on school more generally so it feels like SEND is an afterthought. SEND wasn't even mentioned in school wide risk assessment. Concerns about funding throughout the school means the school seems to be cutting teaching assistant hours for many children which is having a knock on affect to my child. My son wasn't given any home work for home-schooling that was relevant to him - I am worried that would happen again if school closes.
39. Worried about bringing Covid home to vulnerable family members
40. My son got the medication which need to be given during the school time. The problem is the care plan has to be signed by nurse but because of Covid it takes ages!! It's ridiculous that the school can not do it quicker
41. My child is autistic and suffers with anxiety, I am terrified he will catch Covid and spread it to my family
42. Maintaining the distance and not being able to understand as to why
43. Hardly coping. The school expect parents to deliver online classes when parents struggle to just meet the basic needs, especially when child has severe disability. No input from school when its closed
44. If they will be closing nursery every time when someone will be tested positive for kov.19, then all education will be lost, no progress just regression of my child ,he wont be ready for school next year. I can't even start looking for job or start working from home as I don't know when they will close it again.
45. School is not a Covid secure environment and very little education is able to happen. There's no plan other than to submit to the chaos of this random virus
46. Home schooling
47. Returning to school had been difficult for all my children, additional needs or not. My worry is not so much the lockdown but the effects following this!!! Children don't seem to understand that what has happened is completely out of the ordinary. They have just normalised these changes. They also don't understand that if the risk is still there why they are allowed back in school.
48. Not worried about that - child is better away from school and thrived during lockdown. If we could manage financially to home school him we would do that like a shot
49. College closure again would be absolutely detrimental to child and parent mental health. Don't know if I could manage again!!!
50. School closure and end of all the support as it happened before
51. Mental health of child being placed in an unsuitable unit and discriminated being because of his disability. School act with no impunity and local authority does little to assist. SEN Officer is out of their depth and struggles to understand issues and how to address them.
52. Her mental health was affected. A staggered return would have helped.
53. I am very concerned re my son contracting Covid as he will not wear a mask or keep extra cleanliness. I wish school would help him more with this and more help re getting him to wash his hands etc.
54. I am worried that the changes in the routine school day and classroom setting layout have impacted his anxiety around transitions and management of expectations. After a difficult start of last academic year he was finally settling in his new school, and now it seems we are back to square 1. It is also quite worrying to know that if a child test positive the whole family has to isolate, and just thinking about the 2 weeks where he'll get used to home again and going back will be hard.
55. Child's anxiety that school life is not "normal".
56. Mental health and school anxiety. Lack of provision.

57. Mental health of child, how to cope if school closes or class has to isolate, the general disruption and uncertainty causing so much havoc in our already difficult lives
58. School closures, catching Covid

7. Have your child's/young person's needs changed since lockdown? How has the school/college/local authority responded in meeting them?

Comments

1. My child's anxiety has risen; however, his class teacher has been proactive in helping to soothe and alleviate this
2. Needs appear to be more significant - possibly due to changes. School have arranged an emergency child in need meeting and a referral made to the virtual school
3. Yes, a lot more anxious and worried, the school are trying their best to reassure him I'm trying my best to reassure him, but I do get the feeling it's all about him being in school and that is their main concern.
4. The school has probably done what it can. Over the last decade or so, the LA seems more interested in saving face and ticking boxes. They usually ignore us unless we raise complaints, which you can't spend your life doing on top of everything else, and they know this.
5. Badly behind educationally, but lots of interventions being put in place.
6. Well we need help with child. Psychologist in put for her and siblings and ourselves we have had no help
7. She is leaving school in 2021. The local authority is doing a good job with transition but I'm not sure how much will be in place by then
8. Yes, higher anxiety, nothing done to help with that, no access to mental health professionals
9. No change, but before lockdown she was getting support but not anymore
10. Mostly we are having issues with the dinners. He takes packed lunch and is not eating at all. I have been told there is no dining hall system they have lunches in class and was not getting any support because that's when his assistance goes for lunch as well. So they will try work out something.
11. CAMHS hasn't opened for assessments or therapy. She needs it.
12. My son seems to have regressed, I think. Lockdown has been difficult. I don't know what the school are doing about it.
13. My daughter's sensory issues has heightened since lockdown. She cringes at any noise or sounds. Her craving for trinkets is higher. She complains that the class is too noisy and the teacher shouts that she had to close her ears. I have discussed this with the SENCO, she promised to look into it.
14. School still isn't doing anything, and I've not even had any contact with them concerning my son since school has returned
15. He has developed anxiety, and no one has responded in meeting them
16. He is not adequate accessing his community
17. I think his needs have increased. We are progressing with his EHCP application
18. Broadly speaking, she has enjoyed lockdown, as not leaving the house suits her. She lost the skills she had gained about interacting with the world, but these appear to be coming back better than before, so it seems that months without pressure has given her chance to grow in peace.

19. Yes, my son has done well in homeschool. Borough still says it is too early to do his annual review as he has been out of school so likely not progressed which is not my view at all.
20. The needs remain the same. School should be more engaged if they can't keep their sites open. E. G. EHCP funding to go towards additional hours of direct payments /short breaks. So the carers can help with online/remote learning when school is closed, thus giving a bit of break to parents
21. Needs have changed. School etc doesn't know how as there's been no opportunity to discuss this.
22. have changed, in my opinion, my child has "stepped backward" during the lockdown, next week we have an annual review EHC Plan which will be discussed together
23. Yes, he came on leaps and bounds during lockdown as my husband was furloughed and I WFH. He returned to school and has regressed back to 2017 behaviours
24. Yes, school does not acknowledge changes, pretend that he is in a safe environment despite children coming home tearful and tales of witnessing violent acts. Intervention is needed before a child is harmed. The local authority has been made aware and it is negligence at this point. My toddler is affected by seeing the changes in his older sibling, who used to enjoy school.
25. Yes - mental health acute - we are on a waiting list
26. Son has been more anxious and found completing online work hard. Would have been good to have one on one zoom sessions offered to complete work
27. She is much more prone to school anxiety and refusal, but I have seen no concrete measures being put in place to address it
28. There has been a lot of regression. The school has been responsive where they can but little support from LA
29. More anxiety

8. If your child has Home to School transport, do you have concerns about how they are travelling to school? - lack of bubbles, numbers on buses, PPE, did you choose to drive your child instead etc

Options	% of responses	Number of responses
Yes	12.50	10
No	15.00	12
Not applicable	61.25	49

Comments

1. We are concerned that our son will run out of the back of the bus and be killed but transport insist on seating him by the back door, albeit now with a carer but he does still get opportunity to run out if he were in one of his more non-compliant excitable phases.
2. No PPE
3. A bit because of catching the virus
4. My son doesn't go on the bus, but this concerns me as children in his class do and the mixture of children and schools on the busses are unacceptable
5. I took my child to school for a few weeks. Now he's on the school bus. But it's a concern as other students on bus don't wear masks
6. Children need to wear mask where it's possible
7. I personally drive my daughter; by public transport (fear of infection scares us, we try to be careful)

8. He is using school transport. The buses are not cleaned daily, this is very clear. All bags are put in one place. The driver doesn't wear PPE.

9. Have you considered home schooling due to concerns about sending your child back to school/college?

Options	% of responses	Number of responses
yes- have already made that decision	1.25	1
No, I couldn't cope with it	50	40
Have thought about it but decided against	15.00	12
Have thought about it, but haven't made up my mind yet	15.00	12
Already home school my child/young person	0	0
Other(mainly comments)	18.75	15

Comments

1. Already doing so due to no placement and it's not right for us as a family or to meet child's needs
2. I would love to as this would suit my child, but I work full time and therefore, cannot supervise
3. Difficult to cope at home as he loves to go to school it's hard for us and him to stay 24/7 together, hard to cope
4. I work can't do home schooling
5. I would honestly prefer it if the school would make remote learning an option for parents in my position. I have homeschooled before, and I know I am capable of doing so, but I prefer my daughter to receive the same education as her peers.
6. no, my child needs contact between people and children
7. I feel that homeschooling would be detrimental to my child/children as they don't have the same working environment at home. Home is their safe place and school is where they have to go. Mixing the two doesn't work well. It takes them out of their comfort zone.
8. Desperately want to but financially can't manage at the moment. Could manage if we received some teaching hours and support at home
9. I believe for my son being with other children and adults to help him socialise is a huge benefit. He was learning more at home but was lacking the social interaction. It's difficult to get the right balance.
10. Have a newborn at home so not suitable

10. Any other comments?

1. Thorpe hall primary school hale end road e17. They have done everything the right way. They are trying as hard as they possibly can. Thank you, teachers, and let's beat this virus together!
2. I feel that schools are in a awkward position and some parts of the return need to be better organised The mental health of children needs to be priority.

3. Support at secondary schools is very tricky at the moment as safety beats all the other needs, which is understandable, but it also means that our kids do not get appropriate support
4. I am now having to consider specialist schools which is worrying as this is the reality of post Covid consequences
5. J is 19 next month and in his final year at Whitefields I do not think he will ever go back now. The risk of him getting Covid is too high and the probable outcome too severe to take the risk
6. It's been 5 weeks since he went back to school and until now we're happy how everything is going, hope can be like this for the rest of the course.
7. It would be beneficial for special needs children n families to be contacted to ask how they coping and offer support of some sort by video link. We desperately need some training on managing her behaviour outbursts she has started hit herself when frustrated her siblings and cousins are shocked and upset to see this. We need help so does she herself.
8. I would like to meet my daughter's teaching staff somehow, to see what they look like and also to catch up on her progress
9. Sen officers need to be more in contact with families, if we complain to school they threaten us to take the child to another school
10. My son used to have great teacher who told me a lot about what happened in the day. I don't get the same level of support. I would have liked contact from the people in my son's class, to let me know what I should do with him while isolating.
11. I think it has been hard for everyone, Parents have been very quick to criticise schools rather than support which has made things harder in my opinion
12. I feel we are now in a void and he is regressing. Mencap was not adequately supported for start and huge anxiety around travel training as had previously not been successful
13. My main concern is the children on the busses not being distanced and all mixing bubbles.
14. I feel that the school has been very much constrained by the insistence on school attendance being mandatory. All of the lessons are being uploaded on Google Classroom by default, and there is no actual difference between my daughter doing her work on a Chromebook on her own in the SEN unit and her doing it at home on her own PC. The attendance policy needs to be changed.
15. We are lucky to have space in the home for us all to work separately, a garden, and money enough to buy her own laptop. Without this, lockdown would have been extremely stressful
16. The threat of funding cuts to SEND provision is really concerning me. The school talk about lack of money a lot - I am worried that is a barrier to my son getting the support he needs - and the support he needs is really important to deal with the pandemic education gap and increasing uncertainty about future lockdowns
17. I already discussed my concerns with Whitefield Academy. When school closed it's Margaret Brearley site because of one child testing positive with Covid, I've been sent long emails with online lessons/activities for my child. I asked Whitefield school to come up with some emergency plan/plan B/backup plan in supporting children and parents if school will close again and again. I asked them to take into account that many parents exhausted of meeting their disable children daily needs and wouldn't be able to follow the school's educational programme. The parents already suffer from stress, fear and isolation having their children home for over 5 months. The school had enough time to think about contingency plan if they have to close again. I asked them to consider sharing some of EHCP funding with other services (such as Short Breaks, direct payments), so parents can get a support from carers, thus can deliver the academic learning to their children. Our children had no services (such

as SALT, physio, OT) delivered since school closed its doors. I believe that EHCP funding which wasn't spent on Services, can be used to support children if another lockdown or school closure happens.

18. Schools, nurseries or any other education places should not be closed no matter what
19. If we are forced to home school there should be support and funding from the EHCP to help us with this. The needs of our children are being failed.
20. I have 3 children at 3 different schools so can see how all schools have taken to the rules differently. Some different views are evident. However, appreciate how hard they have all worked to ensure that schools have been kept open to as many children as possible and for that I am grateful. Would really appreciate it if more activities could be encouraged in school settings. My eldest in yr7 hasn't been able to play any sport at break or after school and is sports mad and would be able to socialise with more people by taking part in sport. School have 3 table tennis tables inside that 80+children wait to use yet they can't use Astro pitches outside within year group bubbles. My yr5 hasn't been able to continue with rock steady band practice or sports clubs in school, whereas my yr. 1 has been able to attend dance club and craft clubs held after school by outside groups within the school setting. Also struggle with change to school timings where there are siblings. Particularly as mine are also at different schools.
21. Local authority need to check schools follow guidance. Children are not being kept safe and claiming ignorance is no legal defence. Children are being failed by school with inept SENCOs. Thoroughly disappointed by school and Local Authority failure to keep children safe in all schools. Parents should not be ignored in any assessments involving their children, this is never acceptable or good practice
22. I was surprised how easily my child went back to school after so long not leaving the house or seeing other children. It's a good school and he must have missed it. He was not motivated to learn at home.