



South West Herts Partnership ISSUE 179 - JULY 2020

YOUR FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

The team are all extremely busy as we fast approach the end of what has been a challenging term.

As a year round service, rest assured that your families will continue to be supported throughout the summer holidays and our School Family Workers will be busy preparing them for the new school year and what that might look like in these unprecedented times.

We have included within this issue details of how we continue to work & support you and your families and how we plan to deliver our service for the coming academic year ensuring that we are following your policies & procedures and any safety measures you may have in place.

You will find our Summer Planner attached detailing local free or low cost activities and events that your families can access over the summer holidays. Please feel free to send on to your parent/carers.

We would like to thank all our schools for their continued support and wish you all a wonderful summer!



Family Support Service 2020/21

All invoices for our 2020/21 service have now been sent to all of our schools with an explanation of how the service will run as from September 2020.

Please note that we have extended our payment deadline to the 31st August, 2020. However, we would ask that you confirm your intentions with buying into the service .



Many thanks to those schools that have already made payment and to those that have kindly confirmed their intention to buy in. This helps us enormously when planning our staffing levels and allocating family workers to schools.

SPORTS PACKS

South West Herts Partnership have liaised with Herts Sports Partnership and obtained 36 primary aged sports packs for our families.

The packs contained a hula hoop, skipping rope, French skipping rope, ping pong ball, tennis ball, foam ball, balloons and chalk along with 60 second challenges such as catch and clap.

Our family workers delivered the packs direct to door steps. This was a fantastic way to connect with families and get some face to face interactions whilst maintaining a safe social distance.





Covid-19 Update Statement – Current working plans

The team here at SWHP have continued to work and provide our family support service to schools and families. Not only are we receiving the same level of referrals, the team are also providing telephone/video support and guidance to families that schools have identified as needing those extra welfare checks during this unprecedented time.

As a result of Covid-19 we are not able to make our face to face home visits, but we are making doorstep visits where needed to drop off essential items, such as food bank parcels and resources or a welfare check – to show a friendly face and see how the family are doing. This is of course whilst maintaining social distancing and ensuring that any private conversations remain for the telephone/video platforms for confidentiality.

As a priority and over the coming weeks, we will be looking at putting measures in place for delivering our service from 1st September to maintain staff, schools and their families safety. We realise that these plans may be changeable, dependent on Government guidance.

Whilst we look at these plans, please can we also ask that you provide your allocated School Family Worker with any policies/plans you put in place so they are fully compliant of these for the new school year.

In the meantime, we will be delivering our service as follows up until, 31st August, 2020;

- We continue to take new school referrals and will conduct planning/review meetings remotely over the phone or via video link.
- All home visits and support for parents/carers will take place over the phone or via video link. This is taking account of current government advice and will remain in place until at least the 31st August, 2020. All necessary procedures, risk assessments, training and protective equipment will need to be in place before these can resume.
- Information/Resources for schools and families will be sent via email. For those that do not have facilities to print, we will ask that the school print and send or we will post/deliver to the family home.
- All meetings that would normally take place in schools and or other settings will be offered to take place over the phone or via video link
- Our team will continue to work from home

We want to continue to provide you and your families with the best support possible in the safest way. We will be reviewing our current development plan to incorporate our future way of working for our 20/21 service. To enable us to do this, we would welcome feedback from our schools in the areas and ways they feel the service could be even better and to ensure we are taking on board the areas that this pandemic will affect our families the most. We are mindful of how busy you all are but if you have some time to spare please email us at:

admin@swhp.org.uk or contact Carly Maddison, Business Manager on 07872 991558.

Stay Safe & Well!

From all the team at
South West Herts Partnership



FAMILY SUPPORT TRAINING

Whilst supporting schools and families through this turbulent time, our team of School Family Workers are also continuing to update their skills and knowledge through online training.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF SELF-HARM

This course offered lots of ideas and information when supporting a child who is self-harming. It looked at the best ways to provide support and the use of a safety plan to provide the child with a clear structure to follow when they feel they are in crisis. It's about looking beyond the injuries and really seeing the child. By doing this we are able to offer the best support as sometimes seeing injury along with our fear of not knowing how best to help, can act as a blocker.

By identifying the need that is being met by self-harm, we are taking the first step along the way to supporting the child to move to healthier coping strategies. For example, if you can identify the self-harm is helping calm a child's anger or anxiety then we can prioritise working with them to develop less harmful approaches to calm and emotional regulate.

Managing crisis moments with a Safety Plan is beneficial when supporting children as it gives them a clear ongoing plan to follow in times of crisis when their mind is not able to focus on much more than crisis. Having it written down ensures they are able to tap into managing their safety.

Some useful healthy coping strategies and self-harm alternatives are:

- Venting big feelings
- Ideas for distraction
- A list of things to do when feeling alone
- Strategies to work through confusing thoughts and feelings
- Ideas to give a feeling of control
- Strategies to cope that won't be noticed in busy situations

Thriving in the New Normal

'Thriving in the New Normal' is the 100% online training day for your staff this September. Expert trainers have put together a comprehensive programme combining their most popular training sessions, and the urgent issues you need to consider to adapt to the current situation.



UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

This course has developed my knowledge of helping parents to understand the anxiety that impacts on children's performance and their ability to learn. Key points included:

- Anxiety is a Master of Disguise: it affects performance and ability to learn or be engaged
- Some anxiety is good - when shared with peers it can be an important learning opportunity
- Predictability and consistency helps everyone – it makes children feel safe
- Are they getting good quality sleep and are they getting enough?
- Anxiety is a cycle so break the cycle by making the experience that causes the anxiety positive or Neutral - AVOID AVOIDING!
- Plan for a crisis when in times of calm - what would we do if ...?
- Children need an adult around them to be like a swan - calm, supportive and caring
- Teach them some silent strategies to help themselves so they don't always need an adult
- Aim low - build on small baby steps and celebrate every success however small
- When all goes wrong (inevitably) - be curious, learn something, what could we do next time, forgive yourself and move on

SUPPORT A SAFE & SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO SCHOOL

"Support a Safe and Successful Return to School" is a topic that is particularly relevant now, we as family workers will be supporting many schools and families in helping the children, parents and carers in making this transition back to school a calm and happy experience. A lot of the strategies discussed we already know and use, however I am always ready to learn more. I like the acronym used: SWAN

- S – safe
- W – welcoming
- A – all together
- N – nurturing

Remember – the swan looks like they are gracefully gliding across the surface, whilst in fact they are frantically paddling beneath the water. Right now, our children need us more than ever to be the swan, calm on the surface! This helps us understand a lot of the work we do as Family Workers will be with the parent/carer in helping them stay calm in these particularly difficult times.

One thing that was emphasised was the importance of families and schools working together and building positive relationships, if the parent feels safe and secure it is easier to role model this to their child! We as Family Workers can help identify any concerns and put in place strategies to support parents and their children.

LOCKDOWN POSITIVES

We are all very aware that lockdown has presented families with many issues and worries so, we thought it would be nice to share with you some of the POSITIVE comments we have received from parents and schools throughout this period...

A single mum I'm working with has said she's actually been better off financially as less outgoings at the moment due to not going out, spending less on the children when out and less costs of travel

School Family Worker

I would say the fact I haven't given the girls enough credit for how amazingly clever and understanding they are, staying in for 13/14 weeks and not seeing their friends, and being on the whole really good, we've spent some real quality time having meaningful conversations.

Parent

Best thing....ummm that's tricky. I'd say our little walks we have had over the field or Woods. Exploring our local area a little bit.

Parent

The best thing about lockdown is having an amazing bond with my boys as it's been just us.

Parent

My family has said they have enjoyed spending time as a family and mum has felt less pressure with managing the children as Dad is around more to help

School Family Worker

Thank you for all your help with this family. I feel you have a good understanding of their needs, have worked really hard to support them even though this has been made very difficult as you were not able to do this face to face. You used technology, regular contact and gave lots of good practical advice and you regularly followed up with the family to make sure they were using it. You have a good way of coaching them but also holding them to account and have also sent some useful resources for them to use with both boys. Also thank you for keeping me up to date, communication between us has been good and is appreciated.

School

Thank you for all of your help with this family. The support that you have provided has been gratefully received by the family. The family and school are really pleased that the strategies put into place are having an impact on behaviour and learning at home.

The school has had some difficulty with communicating and working effectively with parents to support their child. However, your support working with the family has provided parents with more confidence with working with the school. You have worked with the teachers to ensure that the school's goals with the child were met and you were able to communicate this effectively with parents. As a result of your support, the child has met some of his targets at home and the family are willing to work with the school to meet their child's needs.

School

MORE POSITIVES...

More family time, with no outside pressures

Being able to have the time to walk and enjoy the countryside

School refusers have been less anxious

Being able to relax and re-discover simple pleasures such as cooking and gardening

Developed a greater understanding of child's needs and have been able to adapt learning to make it more accessible to the child and to focus on areas the child was struggling with

Child with autism is engaging in learning in a way they did not do before and their speech is developing

Gives more time to play board games and walk together as a family

Able to get into a routine with consistency which was hard to do before due to work commitments

Baking together and cooking meals together and enjoying them together round the dining table has made us closer





BACK TO SCHOOL

With all the changes it is very hard to predict what school will look like in September. Many schools are adjusting to life with Covid in different ways and your child's school might implement different things to another.

Here are some of the things you might expect (at both Primary and Secondary) and can discuss with your children to help prepare them for any changes. As a parent or carer you may need to think about the logistics of some of these things in preparation. Much of this will apply if your child gets the opportunity to return before the end of term.

- Staggered start and finish times
- Possible days on/days off or weeks on/weeks off to accommodate numbers
- Adults not allowed on site (for older year groups) or asked to leave immediately after dropping off and picking up
- Siblings not allowed in the playground
- All pupils will remain in 'bubbles' or 'pods' – that means they will remain with the same children and adults throughout and not be mixed with others – at high school they may be moved from teacher to teacher but not as frequently as they have done before.
- Schools might require your child to bring packed lunch in, even if they normally have hot meals, or they might insist that they provide a packed lunch. Hot meals are unlikely
- Lunches will be eaten in the classrooms – maybe outdoors on fine days
- You may have to all around school 'one way' – this could apply to outdoor spaces too
- You are likely to be asked to supply a hand sanitiser and basic equipment for your child as sharing school equipment won't be possible
- Schools bags might not be allowed – children will need to leave items such as pencil case and hand sanitiser at school
- Some schools will relax uniform or ask the children to wear their own clothes. These will need to be washed daily.
- Some schools might suggest face masks – these may need to be used on school transport
- Face coverings (at the moment) are mandatory for pupils travelling on public transport to and from school
- Lockers and cloakrooms may not be used
- PE kits might need to remain at home and PE taken in uniform
- No assembly's/ lunches in shared spaces
- Children may have outgrown uniform in lockdown ; if you need to order more allow a bit of extra time for deliveries as post is delayed

FIT, FED & READ

Herts Sports Partnership are offering Fit, Fed and Read Hertfordshire this summer across 10 venues within Hertfordshire.

Monday to Thursday for children aged 8–11 years old that are eligible for free school meals.

For more information please visit fitfedread@herts.ac.uk or visit their Facebook page Fit, Fed & Read Hertfordshire.



Fit Fed & Read Hertfordshire

TOP TIPS

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS & ADVICE FOR FAMILIES

Get into and maintain a consistent routine at least 2/3 weeks before returning to school, bringing bedtimes/wakes times earlier gradually

Prep equipment needed, you may need extra equipment that your child usually keeps at school due to Covid –19 so ensure you read through your school requirements

Order and get ready new uniform, children grow quickly

Take time to talk to your child about how the school will be for them (this may be different at each school, ensure you are aware of your schools procedures, visuals may help remind you and your child how school will look and what they should/shouldn't take into school, timings of the day may have changed)

Walk/drive to school during the holidays

Emphasise the importance of washing hands

Younger children may benefit from visuals to help them understand the changes when they go back to school i.e. you will have your own desk, you will eat your lunch in your classroom, there will be bubbles of 15 children

Results from the SWHP Family Support Service

Evaluation Data Results

SWHP Family Support Service 2018-2019

As can be seen below, our evaluation results show some excellent outcomes in removing barriers to learning.

- ◆ 80% of schools have seen improved behaviour around the school and in lessons
- ◆ 72% of schools have seen an improved attitude to learning
- ◆ 87% of schools have seen an improved relationship between parent and school
- ◆ 77% of families have increased family involvement, including help with homework
- ◆ 82% of parents feel they are now able to put in and follow through good routines and boundaries
- ◆ 93% of families have increased networks with community organisations and other support

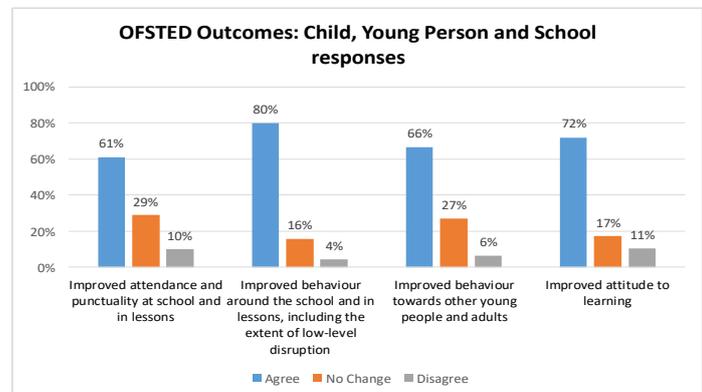
This information has been taken from the 516 evaluation forms completed in 2018/19

Of the 87 schools within the local partnership area, 64 bought into the SWHP Family Support Service for 2019/20—that's a total of 74%

"Our School Family Worker has been fantastic for this family and it has helped mum to be stronger and firmer in her parenting at home - clear boundaries for homework. Thank you very much!"

School

Last year we supported 414 families



"I attended my first session of the family support session today; I found it incredibly helpful. It can be very difficult being a parent, especially when things do not go smoothly with your children. It is highly valuable to receive advice and support from professionals. It is also good to be able to share our issues with other parents. Today we received some sound advice from the School Family Worker and shared experiences from other parents. I think the service is highly valuable in helping us support our children's emotional and educational development. The schools participation in this scheme is much appreciated"

Coffee Morning - Parent



SKILLS and TRAINING

All our School Family Workers have been trained and can lead on the EHM Families First Assessment.

They are continually updating their knowledge and skills through training, to ensure the support they are giving their schools and families is always current and relevant.

Some examples of courses they have completed or networking/forums attended include;

- * ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Awareness
- * Anxiety—What Lies Beneath
- * Attachment and Trauma
- * Breaking the Chain - Knife Crime Awareness
- * Building a Resilient Community
- * Child/Parent - Violence and Substance Misuse
- * Disguised Compliance and Avoidance Families
- * Engaging Perpetrators
- * Raising Awareness of PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance)
- * Self-Harm and Emotional Wellbeing
- * Spot the Signs Suicide Awareness
- * Understanding & Identifying Neglect with a focus on Early Help
- * Universal Credit
- * Working with Parents with Mental Health issues
- * Youth Crime Awareness
- * Attendance at County Lines Conference



These courses are funded by Herts County Council and are open to residents of Hertfordshire only



Calendar

JOIN THE TEAM

ADD-vance ADHD and Autism Trust
Registered Office: Foundation House,
2-4 Forum Place, Hatfield, AL10 0RN
Helpline: 01727 833963
Email: Herts@add-vance.org
Web: www.add-vance.org



JULY

10AM

13

**ON-LINE
COURSE**

UNDERSTANDING ADHD AND AUTISM

This introductory course is designed for parent/carers of children aged 5 to 14yrs with a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis of ADHD and/or Autism.

Courses will be delivered online **via Zoom** with a maximum of 12 participants. They will run as a series of 12 x 1 hour sessions or 6 x 2 hour sessions over six weeks. All sessions must be attended.

Six separate courses will be running on the following dates:

Mondays and Wednesdays 13th July to 19th August 10 – 11am

Tuesdays and Thursdays 14th July to 20th August 10 – 11am

Tuesdays and Thursdays 14th July to 20th August 7.30 - 8.30pm

Wednesdays and Fridays 22nd July to 28th August 1.30 – 2.30pm
(parent/carers of girls)

Saturdays 18th July to 22nd August 2 – 4pm Saturdays 18th July to 22nd August 2 – 4pm (Dads only)

For more information and to book your FREE place please see <http://add-vance.eventbrite.com/>

Bookings open on Friday 3rd July 2020 at 1 pm.

JULY

10AM

20

**ON-LINE
COURSE**

UNDERSTANDING TEENS WITH ADHD AND AUTISM

This course is designed for parent/carers of children aged 12 to 15 yrs with a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis of ADHD and/or Autism. A basic knowledge of ADHD and/or Autism is assumed.

Courses will be delivered online **via Zoom** with a maximum of 12 participants. They will run as a series of 12 x 1 hour sessions over six weeks. All sessions must be attended.

Two separate courses will be running on the following dates:

Mondays and Wednesdays 20th July to 26th August 10 – 11am

Tuesdays and Thursdays 21st July to 27th August 1.30 – 2.30pm

For more information and to book your FREE place please see <http://add-vance.eventbrite.com/>

Bookings open on Friday 3rd July 2020 at 1 pm.



Promoting Strong Family Relationships

Fully Funded By Herts County Council



SEPT

14

8PM

ON-LINE
COURSE

SEPT

15

8PM

ON-LINE
COURSE

SEPT

15

10AM

ON-LINE
COURSE

SEPT

16

8PM

ON-LINE
COURSE

Calendar

JOIN THE TEAM

Courses are open to parents and carers living in Hertfordshire
To check eligibility and book a place, please contact
Supporting Links: www.supportinglinks.co.uk
Email: bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk Tel:07512 709556
Quoting the Course ID Pre-booking essential.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR IN YOUR CHILD WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

A **FREE** 6 week course for parents and carers of children aged 2-19 years with a recognised additional need. We will help you to:

- Understand your child's behaviour
- Find strategies that really work
- Understand conflict : why it happens and how to handle it.
- Manage anger effectively
- Motivate, encourage and support your child.
- Manage the different needs within your family

TALKING TEENS

FREE 6 week course for parents and carers of children aged 12-19
10 -11am - **quote course ID 394**

- The Teen Brain: Recognising the physical and emotional changes taking place during the teenage years and why their behaviour changes.
- The link between behaviour and communicating difficult feelings.
- How to maintain your relationship with good communication.
- Understanding risk taking behaviour around drugs, alcohol and gang culture.
- How to negotiate and reduce conflict.

TALKING FAMILIES

FREE 6 week course for parents and carers of children aged 0-12
10-11.15am - **quote course ID 389**

- Manage challenging behaviour with consistency
- Encourage positive behaviour
- Build your child's self esteem
- Set and maintain boundaries
- Respond to tantrums and difficult feelings in children
- Develop a strong parent/child relationship now and for the future

TALKING DADS

Dads, Step-Dads, Stay at home Dads, Working Dads...

Dads play an important role in a child's life. This **FREE** course will help you be the Dad you want to be! Over 6 weekly sessions, fathers and male carers of children aged 0-19 will be supported to:

- Increase confidence in your parenting
- Develop your dad/child relationship, now and for the future
- Improve listening and communication skills
- Develop strategies for dealing with anger and conflict
- Learn how to enforce boundaries.



Families In Focus CIC

Enabling families to be stronger together

DSPL | Delivering Special
Provision Locally
Achieving quality outcomes

SEPT

08

12.15PM

ON-LINE
COURSE

SEPT

09

6.30PM

ON-LINE
COURSE

SEPT

15

4PM

Otley Family Centre
Otley Way
Watford
WD19 7TB

SEPT

28

9.30AM

Otley Family Centre
Otley Way
Watford
WD19 7TB

Calendar

JOIN THE TEAM

FREE Support, information & learning groups for parents caring for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and chronic health conditions – no need to book just turn up unless stated otherwise. Delivered by experienced, trained facilitators with over 25 years of personal experience and professional knowledge to share in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.

For Bookings please visit www.familiesinfocus.co.uk

All our Parent Networks are continuing throughout lockdown, reaching parents of children with additional needs online **via ZOOM**.

HANDLING ANGER IN YOUR FAMILY

Quality, evidence based 6 week course providing proven & practical strategies to reduce anger in your family

FREE for parents living in Hertfordshire and caring for children from 5 years to 11 years.

Book via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/handling-anger-in-your-family-primary-aged-children-in-watford-tickets-74265067817>

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO PARENTING CHILDREN WITH ALL SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

FREE for all parents living in Hertfordshire and caring for a primary aged child inclusive of those awaiting diagnosis or with a diagnosis of all Special Education Needs, Autism, ADHD & related conditions.

Book via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/complete-guide-to-parenting-children-with-send-aged-2-11-years-st-albans-tickets-104322009940>

SIBLINGS FIRST

For siblings aged 6-10yrs of brothers and sisters with additional needs who need support post Covid-19 living in the DSPL9 area.

Tuesdays from 4-5.30pm

Limited **FUNDED** places available

To find out more and book your place:

Email@ Francine@familiesinfocus.co.uk or call 07867 510027

RIGHT FROM THE START

For parents with a child awaiting a diagnosis/with a recent diagnosis of Autism, ADHD and inclusive of all Special Needs and related conditions.

Places are funded by DSPL9 for parents living in Watford, Three Rivers, Bushey and Radlett and must be booked by emailing: bookings@familiesinfocus.co.uk