

My ref:

Your ref:

Tel No: 0121 569 3101

Date: 7 April 2020

Dear Carer,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well. As promised last week, I am writing to provide you with a further update from the service.

We will continue to upload useful information for you on our webpage <https://www.sandwellchildrenstrust.org/fostering/foster-carer-updates/> Please refer to this information regularly so that you are aware of any updates.

Please don’t forget to keep in contact with your Supervising Social Worker for any additional support or guidance you may need at this difficult time.

Our Principal Social Worker and Head of Practice, Carol Singleton has provided us with the below information that we hope you will find helpful:

Covid-19 - Direct work tools/Information for children, young people, parents and carers

During this unprecedented time many children, young people, parents and carers (ourselves included) are anxious about Covid-19 and how to explain it to those children and families we are working with, as well as our own children.

The Principle Social Workers Network and Children’s Social Care Services from the UK are coming up with creative and innovative ideas to help us to explain to children, young people, parents and carers what the Covid-19 virus is, and its impact on each of us in each of our day to day lives.

With some schools, nurseries and child minders closing, whilst others remain open for vulnerable children and children of key workers, it is helpful to have direct work ideas and tools that support explaining to children and young people what is happening and supporting parents and carers to adjust to a new routine.

I hope that you find the range of tools and information helpful and useful, for the children and families we continue to work with, as well as our own children, carers and families.

If you have other ideas or tools that you are using with children and families, then please send them to us and we can share these right across the service.

Please take time to visit the webpage that has been set up for you. <https://www.sandwellchildrenstrust.org/fostering/foster-carer-updates/>

This week there are 12 new documents containing information and advice on talking to children and young people about Covid-19. They include exercising at home, how to control what you can and learn to let go of the things you cannot.

One thing I wanted to share with you, but it’s too large a file for our website is this excellent picture book, written by nurse Molly Watts. Dave the Dog is worried about Coronavirus aims to give children ‘information without fear’ and you can download it here;

<https://www.imperial.nhs.uk/~/media/website/patient-information-leaflets/childrens-services/coronavirus/dave-the-dog-is-worried-about-coronavirus.pdf?la=en>

Don’t forget that we will be closed for the Easter break on Good Friday – 10 April and Easter Monday – 13 April. However, our Emergency Duty Service will be operating as normal throughout the long weekend should you need any assistance. Their contact telephone number is 0121 569 3100.

Throughout the Easter holiday (6 – 20 April 2020) 27 schools will be closed because there is no demand. The remaining 93 Sandwell schools will remain open. Just under 1% of the pupil population will be attending over the Easter break – the majority of children attending have key worker parents/carers. The Virtual School will continue to operate across the Easter period.

Please be reassured that schools have daily contact with Local Authority and with us here at the Trust which includes identifying children that they may be concerned about. Education services staff are completing ‘safe and well’ calls to children where necessary.

You may have heard the news that was also announced on Saturday by the Department for Education, that free school meal vouchers will also be available over the Easter period.

On a lighter note, we are encouraging children and young people to do something creative over Easter – a drawing, colouring or anything art and craft related. We would like them to get involved in creating something including the theme of Easter and linked to Sandwell Children’s Trust. Please encourage children and young people to get involved as there will be prizes available next week for different age groups. Entries are to be sent to the following email address:

participation\_team@sandwellchildrenstrust.org

We will continue to keep you updated on a weekly basis at this difficult time. Please be reassured that we will continue to give you all the support that you need as foster carers during this unprecedented period.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Supervising Social Worker and we will do our very best to provide you with any support, advice or guidance that you need.

As promised, I will write to you again next week with any updated information that we have regarding contact arrangements. I will provide you with further information when the Government has provided their 3-week review update on the lockdown situation.

Thank you again for everything that you continue to do for our children during this time.

Kind regards



**Shanti Eaves**

**Head of Service, Children in Care, Care Leavers and Fostering.**