

### Risk assessments during lockdown

The risk assessment process is how a school works with parent carers and the local authority to decide if a child is as safe or safer at their educational setting than they are at home.

According to government guidance, risk assessments should be done for **all** children who fall into what is called the vulnerable group. This means:

- children who are open to social care
- children with an EHCP
- children who have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities. This means young carers, those at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education, or training) and those with complex needs. This part of the guidance has been left to the discretion of local authorities. If you think your child or young person needs an assessment, please contact your SENCO in the first instance, and if not satisfied, contact the East Sussex County Council Family Information Service, or SENDIASS, for further advice. Contact details are on page two of this factsheet.

Risk assessments should include the parent carer voice and the views of the child or young person.

### The situation in East Sussex

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has sent a risk assessment template to all schools, colleges and settings, which they can either choose to use or develop their own. Whatever format it takes, the risk assessment should cover:

- how being out of school is affecting your child and your family
- the risk to your child if some or all elements of their EHCP cannot be delivered
- the impact of your child not having their usual routine
- the potential health risks to your child from coronavirus
- your ability to meet your child's health and care needs.

This information is then used to decide if a school place can be offered to your child. If a place is offered, it is your choice whether or not to accept it.

## How to find out if your child has had a risk assessment

The person carrying out the risk assessment, for example the SENCO, should tell you explicitly that they are doing so. If you are unclear in any way, contact the school and ask for clarification.

## What to do if you haven't got what you expected

If you are worried about any part of the risk assessment process, for example you feel you and/or your child have not been properly included, your child's circumstances have changed, or your child has not been offered a place and you feel this is wrong, and you have already spoken to the educational setting concerned, call ESCC's Family Information Service on 0345 60 80 192 between 10am and 3pm and leave a message. This is an active line and ESPCF has been assured that messages are checked and responded to quickly. Alternatively, you can send an email to [cs.customerrelations@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:cs.customerrelations@eastsussex.gov.uk).

If your query is not resolved through this route, please let ESPCF know by emailing [info@espcf.org.uk](mailto:info@espcf.org.uk) or phoning 0300 77 01 367.

You can also contact the SENDIASS helpline for advice and support on 01273 772289.

The government guidance is available here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance)

## What happens next?

Schools, working with parent carers and the local authority, should keep risk assessments updated for those children who are remaining at home and to reflect any change in circumstances. The government guidance states that for children who have returned to school, it is up to the local authority and the educational setting concerned to consider if risk assessments for these children continue to be useful.

## Become an ESPCF member

We want to reach out to as many families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in East Sussex as possible. By becoming a member of the forum, you will join your voice with that of other parent carers from across East Sussex. It is very easy to join us: simply complete the short form here [www.espcf.org.uk/become-a-member](http://www.espcf.org.uk/become-a-member) and we'll do the rest.

Please note: where we have referred just to children, and just to schools, this should be taken to include young people, and colleges and other settings, respectively.