



# Bristol Early Years

## Bulletin for Early Years Providers

24th March 2022

### 1. COVID-19 UPDATES

Although testing and other mitigations for Covid have been removed by the DfE, [Actions for Early Years](#) still remains in place and is important to refer to as cases remain high. This guidance includes essential information to support settings which may need to manage temporary reductions in numbers and prioritise children for places due to high staff absences. The DfE also shared additional advice to settings at the start of the year about managing ratios and age groups during periods of high staff absence:

*It remains a priority to continue providing face to face education and childcare, but we know that COVID-19 continues to put early years settings under significant pressure, particularly in relation to workforce absence.*

*Government considers COVID-19 to be an exceptional circumstance in which the staff-to-child ratios set out in the EYFS can temporarily be changed if necessary, for example to respond to COVID-related workforce absences. This relates to paragraph 3.31 in the EYFS.*

*In some cases, providers may choose to respond to staff and child absences by temporarily mixing age groups of children who would otherwise be educated or cared for separately. Ratios should be guided by all relevant requirements and by the needs of individual children within the group. For the purposes of meeting EYFS ratio and qualification requirements, all staff educating or caring for a mixed age group of children can be considered 'available to work directly with' all the children who have been grouped together.*

*In all circumstances, settings remain responsible for maintaining the quality of care, safety and security of children.*

Bristol Early Years advises all providers to carefully risk-assess any temporary changes to ratios or provision and to make sure that they remain in regular contact with families of all children, but particularly vulnerable children, during any period of temporary closure.

Should any temporary reduction in numbers or closures be necessary in your setting, please inform Deb Brown. [deborah.brown@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.brown@bristol.gov.uk)

It is a legal requirement under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework to report any changes to the premises that may affect the quality of childcare to Ofsted, for example if your setting is closed for a significant amount of time, i.e. for three days or more. Please refer to the reporting arrangements specified on page 18 – 19 of [Actions for Early Years](#)

## 2. POSITIVE TRANSITIONS IN THE EARLY YEARS – WEBSITE NOW LIVE

In response to the Local Area SEND Inspection and following a sector-wide consultation, Bristol Early Years have developed detailed guidance to support positive transitions in the Early Years. This guidance has been written to support schools and early years settings to provide all children with a positive transition experience that fosters their wellbeing, learning and development.

It builds on existing good practice to provide clarity regarding responsibilities, processes and strategies that support transition to enable a coherent city-wide approach.

All settings and schools are encouraged to read and share the new guidance. It can be used as an audit of provision for transition and development of actions for all children and children who may need an enhanced transition. The guidance and all the updated transition resources are available on the [Bristol Early Years website](#).

### [Universal Transfer Record](#) Transfer to school 2022

The new Universal Transfer Record replaces the previous version of the form and has been designed in consultation with the sector to support transition and align assessment and processes with the EYFS Reforms.

Bristol Early Years requests that a Universal Transfer Record is completed for all children transferring to reception class in September 2022 and these are delivered by hand or password protected email to the receiving school/s by June 24<sup>th</sup> 2022.

The Universal Transfer Record, completed examples for reference, a letter for parents and instructions for completion, together with useful resources can be downloaded from the [Transitions page](#) of the Bristol Early Years Website. Please ask your lead teacher for support if needed.

## 3. CHECKING PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

From January 2022, all early years providers will be able to check the progress of any child old enough to apply for a Primary School place on the Portal. This will mean that you can see whether a child on your current live register has applied or perhaps needs to be reminded or supported to apply. This new functionality aims to help all providers to ensure a school application has been made for a school place and what stage the application is at.

The progress will show when a school place has been offered and when it has been accepted by the parent. The aim of providing this information is to support early years providers in the transition to school process for children. A child's new school can be identified early (once confirmed and accepted) so plans can begin to be made to start the transition process. A guidance document and instructions of how to access this is attached to the Bulletin email.

### Positive Transitions in the Early Years

- principles, processes and responsibilities.

#### Introduction

Starting school or nursery is a time of change and can be a source of both excitement and anxiety for children and for their parents/carers.

Positive transitions are vital for all children's emotional wellbeing and achievement, and planning for these transitions is fundamental to effective early years practice. Some children, such as those with SEND or those experiencing adverse childhood experiences will need additional enhanced transition arrangements.

This guidance has been written for all Bristol early years settings, childminders, schools and linked professionals to support consistent and effective transition planning for all children, particularly those with SEND and other vulnerabilities. It focuses primarily on transition into school, however many of the ideas will be useful to support any of the transitions that young children experience (e.g. starting at an early years setting, moving between rooms or classes in a setting or school, transitions within the daily routine etc.)



A continuously improving setting will have well qualified and experienced staff who work together with other practitioners and parents to support transition, within and between settings and between early years settings and primary school (pg. 15)

#### Aims of the guidance

- To support schools and settings to provide all children with positive transition experiences that foster their wellbeing, learning and development
- To build on existing good transition practice across the city
- To provide clarity regarding responsibilities, processes, and strategies that support transition to enable a coherent and consistent city-wide approach
- To develop a city-wide commitment from all professionals to improve transition experiences for our young children, particularly those with SEND

#### Key principles for positive transitions

Following a consultation process with the early years sector and linked professionals, feedback was gathered regarding what is important for transitions to work well. This feedback has been used to develop the following Bristol transition principles:

- Transition should be seen as a process rather than an event.
- There is continuity of inclusive child centred provision across early years settings and schools.
- The child's voice is captured and valued as part of the process.
- Parents/carers are valued, informed, included and supported to navigate the transition process.
- Senior leadership teams in schools and early years settings have a commitment to good transition support as well as respect of one another's aims and ethos.

#### 4. SAFEGUARDING NEWS

As discussed in the recent Early Years Designated Safeguarding Leads Network Meeting, under the requirements laid out in Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the duties and responsibilities for education settings in Keeping Children Safe in Education and Early Years Foundation Stage, we request an updated list of key safeguarding contacts for every setting. This enables effective communication and information sharing between education settings and the local authority in order to promote the safety and welfare of children in Bristol.

Please click on the link where you will be able to input the contact details for your setting: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ZAK8T3/>

The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership and the Education Reference Group kindly request that all recognised partners complete the survey in a timely manner to facilitate further multi agency working.

#### 5. SEND UPDATES

##### Free workshops for families of children on the Autism diagnosis waiting list.



Please find a flyer attached to share with parents and carers of any child waiting for an autism diagnosis.

For the first time Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Parent Carer forums have teamed together and are delivering specific workshops to provide information, support and practical guidance. Please encourage relevant families to sign up to the local Parent Carer Forum via the email links on the flyer to get dates and locations for workshops and on-line sessions.

#### 6. WELLBEING

We understand that leading and working in an early years setting through the ongoing pandemic presents ongoing additional pressures for everyone in the sector. Please do take time to look after your own mental health as well as your colleagues and seek out help if you feel like you are struggling at any time.

Useful sources of help

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>

<http://www.bristolmentalhealth.org/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/nhs-voluntary-charity-services/charity-and-voluntary-services/get-help-from-mental-health-helplines/>

<https://www.thrivebristol.org.uk/thriving-at-work-bristol/>

#### 7. USEFUL CONTACTS

All settings are able to contact their link EY Lead Teacher for further support and advice. If you are unsure of who your lead teacher is, please contact your area consultant.

North Bristol – [Kate.irvine@bristol-schools.uk](mailto:Kate.irvine@bristol-schools.uk)

East & Central – [Ali.carrington@bristol-schools.uk](mailto:Ali.carrington@bristol-schools.uk)

South – [pippa.hawkins@bristol-schools.uk](mailto:pippa.hawkins@bristol-schools.uk)

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