

## **Manchester City Council Report for Information**

<b>Report to:</b>	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 9 September 2020
<b>Subject:</b>	September opening of schools and colleges for all children and young people
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Education

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### **Summary**

It is extremely important we support the return of our children and young people to school and college, to enable them to continue their learning in classrooms with their peers and teachers and also to provide them with the chance to socialise with their friends again.

The expectation is that schools and colleges will open in September for all children and young people when attendance for pupils of statutory school age (unless they are electively home educated) will be compulsory. To assist parents in their preparations a great deal of activity has been undertaken to provide reassurance schools are ready, it is safe and in their best interests children attend. In addition, the Council's School Attendance Team have provided a 'hotline' to answer queries and will continue to encourage and support parents and parents have good levels of attendance.

On the 28th August 2020 the Government produced guidance for schools in respect of the Covid-19 Contain Framework: a guide for local decision making. This framework sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks; as we have in place in Manchester. The framework set out four tiers of restrictions for education settings, for use as an absolute last resort. The aim is to ensure all schools remain within tier 1 which in summary is for all schools and settings to be open and children attending.

This report provides an overview of the work that has taken place in Manchester to support the reopening of schools and colleges for all children and young people in response to the most recent Government Guidance which is also summarised in the report.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to discuss the measures being taken by schools and colleges to: reduce the risk of infection within the school community; support all children and young people to return to education; ensure that children and young people receive support to catch up for lost learning and their emotional and mental health and to develop continuity plans. The Committee is also asked to comment on the support provided by the Local Authority to ensure that schools and colleges have the information, guidance and tools to put these measures in place.

**Wards Affected:** All

**Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city**

Through the learning and education system children are informed and understand environmental issues and the negative impact of carbon; promoting safe and healthy lives.

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	It is important we build a safe, healthy, happy and successful future for all of Manchester's children so that they can benefit from and contribute to the sustainability of Manchester thriving, economically diverse and successful. Children and Education Services work with all schools and early years settings in Manchester to promote children's learning and engage with those children and their families who need help, support and protection. The aim is for children to be safe, healthy and make progress in terms of education, training, social development so that they are successful and contribute and benefit from living in Manchester.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Children and young people matter in Manchester. The work of the Children and Education Directorate is driven by a commitment to provide opportunities and achieve positive outcomes; building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for all of the city's children and young people
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Increase the influence Manchester's children and young people have on decisions that impact on them by supporting and enabling their voice to be heard; promoting a fair and inclusive place to live and work.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	A safe and effective children and education system is important to promote the awareness and inclusion of children in the engagement of wider societal issues; which together with a successful education offer make Manchester a place parents choose to visit, live and work.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Continually improve outcomes for all children and 'reduce the gap' against the national attainment average

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

There are no specific background documents.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In Manchester, throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the majority of schools have remained open to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers and all schools and colleges have retained contact and an overview of their pupils/students. This has included a significant number remaining open for vulnerable children and key workers during the school holiday periods with many schools staying open during bank holidays as well. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions in June, Manchester schools safely increased the numbers of children who were able to access school and this offer by 13th July 2020 had increased to approximately 12% of the school population. Attendance however, has not been uniform across the City and as previously reported there were some communities/wards with low take up of school places.
- 1.2 Throughout this time, officers from the Council have been working with education leaders to provide guidance, tools and support on the measures to be taken to reduce the spread of infection in schools. This has included regular communication, virtual meetings with headteachers and school leaders with responsibility for different roles across different phases and partnerships, school governors and Trade Unions. The Council has provided model policy documents, templates for risk assessments, staff risk assessments, step by step guidance on response to infection, regular Workforce and Health and Safety advice and direct support for individual schools as well as distributing PPE, over 3000 laptops and 7500 books to every child in year 6 as part of a City wide transition read.
- 1.3 During this challenging and worrying time, parents/carers in the City have supported their children and young people to continue their learning at home. However, it is important we now support the return of children and young people to school and college to enable them to continue their learning in classrooms with their peers and teachers and also to provide them with the chance to see their friends again. Children and young people who have attended activities provided over the summer have fed back how much they have enjoyed the opportunity to see their peers again and experience a new environment outside of their house. The report this committee received in July also described how those children who were able to attend school at the end of term, welcomed a return to school routines and structures and quickly re-engaged with learning.
- 1.4 From September 2020, Government guidance is clear that all schools and colleges should be open for all children and young people. Our schools and colleges in Manchester are looking forward to welcoming back all of their pupils and are fully committed to ensuring that children return to their school in a well-managed and safe environment - with appropriate support in place where needed so that they don't suffer the long-term effects of not being in school.
- 1.5 The Director of Public Health for Manchester fully supports the statement produced by the four UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) on Sunday 23rd

August 2020, informed by the extensive research article published in the British Medical Journal. The article confirmed that there is an exceptionally small risk of children of primary and secondary school age dying from COVID-19. Furthermore the CMOs stated that there is clear evidence of a very low rate of severe disease in children of primary and secondary school ages compared to adults, even if they catch COVID-19. This information backed up by strong control measures such as good hand and surface hygiene, cohorting (bubbles) to reduce the number of daily contacts and directional controls to reduce face to face contact will benefit pupils, teaching staff and all other staff working in school settings.

- 1.6 The Director of Public Health (DPH) and his Community Infection Control Team will continue to provide bespoke support and advice to all schools on Manchester. The DPH will now have more local control over the Test and Trace Service and outbreak management will have more capacity to support schools
- 1.7 The weekly incidence of positive cases in Manchester is currently averaging 40 cases per 100,000 and access to testing facilities will be improved over the next month. This rate determines whether local authority areas remain under restrictions and are reviewed on a weekly basis. At the time of writing, six of the GM local authorities remain under restrictions including Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Bury, Salford and Tameside. There is complete consensus across GM that the return of pupils to school is now the number one priority, to prevent entrenched health inequalities widening even further and limiting the future life chances of our children and young people.
- 1.8 The Government initially issued guidance outlining how schools would open on 2nd July 2020 and this has been updated over the summer period. Since this time, officers from the Council have been working with schools and over the summer to prepare for this and ensure that our schools can open with appropriate measures in place to reduce the risk of infection for staff and pupils. This report outlines the work that has taken place since July 2020 to ensure that all children and young people return to school or college in a well managed and safe environment - with appropriate support in place so that they do not suffer the long term effects of not being in school.

## **2.0 Government Guidance - updated in August 2020**

- 2.1 The DfE initially issued guidance on 2nd July 2020 setting out the Government's plan for all children and young people to return to school and college in September 2020. The expectation is that pupils attend school full time. Current restrictions on group sizes will be lifted to allow this to happen although COVID-19 secure measures will remain in place to reduce the risk of transmission. This means that schools will be required to keep children in class or year group sized "bubbles". Schools must determine what constitutes a group or 'bubble' within their school and ensure that each bubble as far as possible does not mix with another bubble. For example, in primary this may include a whole class but for secondary pupils especially at key stage 4 because of the need for pupils to work in different groupings depending on

which subjects they are studying, a 'bubble' may include an entire year group. In addition, older children will be encouraged to keep a distance from each other and staff and in secondary schools and colleges, staff are encouraged to teach from the front of the classroom where possible.

- 2.2 Schools and colleges must comply with Health and Safety law which requires them to assess risk and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools and colleges are therefore required to complete a risk assessment and develop a plan for the Autumn term - outlining sensible and proportionate control measures to be put in place to prevent and respond to infection. Employers such as the Local Authority for maintained schools are required to make active arrangements to monitor these controls, ensure they are effective; working as planned and updated as appropriate for example in light of any new advice from Public Health.
- 2.3 Prevention measures may include additional and regular handwashing, enhanced cleaning, minimising contact between different 'bubbles' in school and staff and pupils and reducing the use of shared items. Schools are to avoid large gatherings of children and are advised to use staggered start and finish times as well as staggered breaks and lunchtimes.
- 2.4 Measures to respond when a member of the school community has tested positive for COVID19 will include working with NHS track and trace teams and Public Health who will provide guidance.
- 2.5 School attendance from September will become compulsory again (with the exception of children who are electively home educated). Local Authorities and schools are required to provide clear and consistent expectations over the summer on school attendance and produce support plans for those pupils who are anxious about returning. From September 2020, schools are required to once again record attendance and respond to absence including issuing sanctions such as issuing fixed penalty notices where appropriate. Where a pupil is unable to attend school due to clinical or Public Health advice, they should be able to access remote education and not be penalised for non attendance.
- 2.6 Schools are expected to be delivering a broad and balanced curriculum by summer 2021 which includes implementation of compulsory Sex and Relationship Education in primary schools (postponed from the original date of September 2020). There may be some modification to the curriculum at the start of the school year while schools try to create additional time in the timetable to address gaps in learning. It is also recognised that there will be challenges in teaching of some subjects such as music and PE and additional guidance has been provided for schools on this. Access to remote education should also be integrated into schools' planning.
- 2.7 Schools will be provided with £650m additional funding to support pupils to catch up. Schools are to determine how best to use this one off funding for the 2020/21 academic year to ensure that pupils are able to make up for lost teaching time. This has been allocated to schools as follows:

- 2.8 Schools' allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis:
- providing each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil in years Reception to Year 11
  - providing each special, Alternative Provision, and hospital school with £240 for each place for 2020/2
- 2.9 In addition, the government has directly provided £350m funding for tuition from the National Tutoring programme which will be available for schools.
- 2.10 Schools leaders must be able to account for how this money is being used to achieve the aim of resuming a normal curriculum as soon as possible. Governors and Trustees should also scrutinise schools' approaches to catch up funding and ensure that its use is transparent to parents/carers.
- 2.11 In summer 2021, all primary assessments will resume in line with usual arrangements. This includes:
- Year 1 phonics screening
  - KS1 tests and teacher assessments
  - Year 4 multiplication tables check
  - KS 2 tests and teacher assessments.
- 2.12 GCSE examinations will also resume. However, there will be adaptations to GCSEs and A levels and OFQUAL will be consulting on these. There will be no performance tables for 2020/21 academic year and any judgements will be based on performance in 2019. In addition, there will be an additional series of examinations in the Autumn term in all subjects for any young people who want to sit the exams that they missed in summer 2020.
- 2.13 All schools are to have in place a strong continuity plan by the end of September outlining the remote learning offer they will have in place to ensure continuity of education for pupils if the 'bubble' or whole school needs to close due to infection . This should include access to online and offline resources for pupils and follow the curriculum sequencing that pupils would have accessed while in school.
- 2.14 It is expected that all school staff who need to will return to work in the Autumn term. All staff should be involved in the process of developing the measures of control in the risk assessment and should follow this. Schools can use supply staff and both supply staff and peripatetic staff can move between schools but need to comply with each individual school's arrangements whilst they are on site.
- 2.15 OFSTED inspections of schools will not resume until January 2021 although they will carry out some visits to a sample of schools in Autumn to discuss how they are managing the return to education of all pupils. This will be a collaborative discussion and a brief letter will be published following the visit but there will not be a grade provided for this. The insights from these visits

will be aggregated at a national level to provide a picture of how the education system is getting back on its feet.

- 2.16 On 26th August 2020 the Government issued guidance stating that in secondary schools and colleges in areas where local restrictions apply which includes Manchester, face covering should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around and in areas where social distancing is more difficult to maintain. They do not need to be worn in classrooms or by adults and pupils covered by exemptions. In areas not subject to lockdown restrictions, school leaders will be given discretion over whether face masks should be worn in communal areas if they believe it is right to do so “in their particular circumstances”.
- 2.17 On the 28th August 2020 further Government guidance was published for schools in respect of the Covid-19 Contain Framework: a guide for local decision making. This framework sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks. The framework set out four tiers of restrictions for education settings, for use as an absolute last resort. It is worth noting all areas including those under restrictions, are currently operating within Tier 1. Therefore the expectation is, all Manchester schools will fully reopen to pupils and offer a full timetable. The updated guidance tiers are summarised below:

**Tier 1:** The default position for areas in national government intervention is that education and childcare settings will remain open. An area moving into national intervention with restrictions short of education and childcare closure is described as ‘tier 1’. There are no changes to childcare, and the only difference in education settings is that where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. All nurseries, childminders, schools, colleges and other educational establishments should remain open and continue to allow all their children and young people to attend, on site, with no other restrictions in place.

**Tier 2:** Early years settings, primary schools and alternative provision (AP) providers, special schools and other specialist settings will continue to allow all children/pupils to attend on site. Secondary schools move to a rota model, combining on-site provision with remote education. They continue to allow full-time attendance on site to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. All other pupils should not attend on site except for their rota time. Further education (FE) providers should adopt similar principles with discretion to decide on a model that limits numbers on site but works for each individual setting.

**Tier 3:** Childcare, nurseries, primary schools, AP, special schools and other specialist settings will continue to allow all children/pupils to attend on site. Secondary schools, FE colleges and other educational establishments would allow full-time on-site provision only to vulnerable children, the children of critical workers and selected year groups (to be identified by the Department

for Education). Other pupils should not attend on site. Remote education to be provided for all other pupils.

**Tier 4:** All nurseries, childminders, mainstream schools, colleges and other educational establishments allow full-time attendance on site only to our priority groups: vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other pupils should not attend on site. AP, special schools and other specialist settings will allow for full-time on-site attendance of all pupils. Remote education to be provided for all other pupils.

- 2.18 All schools in Manchester are presently updating their contingency plans in case of increased local restrictions and/or adoption of tiers 2, 3 or 4 as set out above. The aim is to ensure all schools remain within tier 1; extensive limitations on Education and childcare are a last resort. We have outbreak arrangements to respond for schools, test/trace etc and work with schools on contingency arrangements.
- 2.19 As part of the local and GM 'gold' command structures infection rates will be monitored and decisions taken within delegated powers for individual schools where there are outbreaks. This will also feed into national infection control decision making where decisions will be made with regard to moving in and out of tiers for all schools within an area where there is significant spread across the area; noting the public health and consensus it is safe and in the best interests for our children to attend school, where staff are prepared and supported to promote their learning and development.

### **3.0 Implementation in Manchester**

- 3.1 To support schools to implement this guidance and to ensure that all staff fully understand the school's risk assessment and have adequate time to properly put the arrangements in place, all of our schools have been allocated 2 additional staff training days on 1st and 2nd September 2020. Most schools will therefore be closed to all pupils on these days.
- 3.2 Schools may also wish to provide a phased return for different year groups to allow those pupils who are transitioning to the school and those who have not attended since March to have an opportunity to meet their teachers and learn about the new school arrangements. It is expected that all children in the City will return to school during the week beginning 7th September 2020 however, some primary schools are admitting Nursery class children over a longer period of about 3 weeks. A small minority of special schools are planning to be open to all pupils by 21 September. as they are having a staggered intake due to the complexity of some children's needs.
- 3.3 The Local Authority provided a letter to parents/carers circulated through schools in July which outlined some of the measures schools may need to put in place and reminding them that school attendance from September is compulsory.

## **4.0 Supporting pupils to attend school**

- 4.1 Staff from the attendance team have established an attendance helpline for both front line professionals working with families and parents/carers who want to ask questions or have a conversation about school attendance. This is a supportive measure to enable parents/carers to discuss their concern or specific circumstances in relation to their children returning to school. The questions and themes which arise from these calls are being collected so that the Local Authority can target support and information appropriately to address specific areas of concern. Over the summer some frequently asked questions with answers have been translated into 5 community languages and sent out to all schools, community groups, neighbourhood teams and front line services for distribution. In addition, staff from across the Council have been asked to raise awareness with families about children returning to school.
- 4.2 Using the same look and feel as the Welcome back campaign used in the City centre, all schools are to be issued with a “Hi! Good to see you” banner to display on the railings outside, to welcome all children and staff back to school in September. The banners are expected to be delivered to schools w/c 31st August 2020.
- 4.3 In the last week of the summer holidays the Council will promote school attendance through a daily social media campaign which will also include some video clips of school leaders in targeted areas talking about the measures that they have put in place to reduce the risk of infection. Information has also been put on Council’s website.
- 4.4 The Council has produced a model attendance policy for school to use with an appendix about COVID-19 and information and guidance on how attendance at school is to be recorded in registers from September has also been distributed to schools. In recognition of the potential impact of COVID-19 on school attendance, a new category of non-attendance has been introduced – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19). This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:
- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC);
  - prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19.
- 4.5 School attendance across all schools will be monitored and where there are local areas where attendance is lower than expected, a more targeted approach will be developed with schools in the area. Parents of all pupils with Education Health Care Plans are also going to be sent letters reminding them about returning to school or college and outlining some of the measures which schools have put in place to reduce risks.

## **5.0 School operations**

### **Risk assessments**

- 5.1 All schools are required to complete a risk assessment which outlines the measures that schools will put in place to mitigate the risks of infection. A revised template risk assessment was developed with the Health and Safety team for September and sent out in the summer term. All schools were requested to send completed risk assessments back to the Local Authority for review although Academies are not required to do this. By mid August 148 completed risk assessments have been received (126 Primary and 22 Secondary schools). Following a review of these risk assessments, 22 have been considered as requiring additional work and will need to be resubmitted. Guidance and support to the schools concerned has been provided by senior officers. When a risk assessment has been reviewed by the local authority and it is noted that it covers all core elements in the context of identifying and putting in place protective measures to reduce risks, in order to allow for full school opening as per relevant guidance, the school has been sent an email to confirm this.
- 5.2 All outstanding Risk Assessments from maintained schools have now been received and have been reviewed by the Council. There are 5 schools who still need to resubmit their Risk assessments following advice and support.
- 5.3 Ultimately it is the responsibility of the school to assess risk and take action in response to that assessment. However, in order to ensure that maintained schools are implementing their risk assessments, a sample of 10% of maintained schools will be visited in September by the Health and Safety team on a mutually agreed date. This visit is intended as a supportive measure for the school.

### **5.4 Step by step guide**

A revised document outlining all of the steps a school should take if a child or an adult develops symptoms of COVID19 while on site or tests positive has been developed with Public Health, Community Infection Control, HR, Health and Safety and Education teams and been sent out to schools before the Autumn term starts. A flow chart outlining these steps is attached as appendix 3. A series of webinars for schools, jointly led by colleagues from each of the above teams are also planned for September.

### **5.5 Other Measures**

As part of the measures to support social distancing many schools have asked for Council advice on placing temporary markings and guidance signs on pavements , and in some cases, roads outside the school premises. In order to assist schools to undertake these measures the Council has provided all schools with guidance on the type of markings that can be applied on pavements and highways in the immediate vicinity of schools.

5.6 Additional guidance is also being developed for schools on the use of aerosol generating procedures - this is particularly pertinent for special schools.

5.7 A supply of face masks was provided to all secondary schools in the City in response to the Government's decision that children and adults in schools in areas with local restrictions should wear a face covering in communal areas and when moving around school grounds.

## **6.0 Curriculum offer**

As part of Manchester's quality assurance offer, all schools will receive a visit in the Autumn term from a Quality Assurance professional who will focus on:

- Use of catch-up funding
- School attendance
- School curriculum
- The remote learning contingency offer
- Pupil health and well-being
- Safeguarding

6.1 The outcomes from this visit will provide an overview of schools in the City's recovery and return to business as usual and identify which schools may need some targeted support with this.

## **7.0 Continuity planning**

7.1 All schools are to have plans in place by the end of September which outline how they will ensure continuity of education in the event that pupils are not able to attend school due to COVID-19.

7.2 Secondary schools/settings have been supported in planning their ongoing remote learning offer, through a webinar sharing practice from five Manchester secondary and post-16 settings. This webinar also gave schools access to support from the Edtech Web demonstrator offer from Manchester College. Following on from the meeting, slides, a recording of the meeting and collated practice which was in line with the DfE guidance, was distributed to all secondary headteachers. Those who attended were eager to continue the network and a further meeting has been arranged for 25th September 2020. A similar session is planned early in the Autumn term for primary schools.

## **8.0 Mental health and wellbeing**

8.1 Since March 2020 the Local Authority education department has worked with partners from NHS organisations, including CAMHS, Healthy Schools, education psychology and the VCSE sector to share resources and support for schools in supporting our children and young people throughout this period. Resources covered a range of topics, including anxiety, dealing with trauma bereavement, supporting particular groups and communities, including support for children, young people with SEND and children, families and colleagues of BAME background. These have now been compiled into a

Manchester emotional, mental health and wellbeing (MEMHWP) directory. This directory identifies universal support from resources, videos, webinars, advice and access to services both online and face to face. This directory complements the Manchester Thrive in Education offer which will be shared with schools in September.

- 8.2 Manchester Thrive in Education consists of the new thrive model of care from CAMHS, as well as the newly established Mental Health Support Team (MHST), as set out in the NHS Long-term plan. This builds on the work of the Greater Manchester Mental Health in Education pilot (involving 35 Manchester schools) which was concluded in July 2020. Schools and colleges will be signposted to universal, targeted and bespoke support. 2020/2021 sees the rollout of Thrive hubs in North, Central and South locality and the establishment of the Mental Health Support Team. Manchester MHST will locally address the needs of children and young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties by providing evidence based 1:1 interventions in schools and supporting school mental health leads to developing a whole school approach. MHST will work with schools and colleges to link with specialist NHS services. There will be a CAMHS school link clinician in each local CAMHS Team who will be the single point of contact for schools for existing CAMHS cases which aims to improve communication between schools, colleges and CAMHS.
- 8.3 By the end of 2020/2021 the service aims to reach 30% of schools. The service will provide an Education Mental Health Professional (EMHP) and/or a Mental Health Professional (MHP) in targeted schools. This will support approximately 55 schools, working within most of the high schools and a further 20 primary schools. The first locality to open a hub will be the North and will reach 8,000 children and young people.
- 8.4 Support for mental health of children and young people has been recognised as a key priority by the Department for Education. In their guidance for September 2020 it highlights that the Local Authority should have identified clear support for children and young people with anxiety, including those with a history of persistent absence from school. Manchester has prepared an anxiety pathway resource developed in collaboration with partners over the past year which has been shared with schools in July and will be launched by webinar in September. This document reinforces the importance of schools and colleges having whole school systems and processes for mental health. Manchester Healthy Schools also provide a universal service to our schools including an annual health check, followed by bespoke training and resources.
- 8.5 Furthermore, the Department for Education advised all Local Authorities on 6 August 2020 of funding (£65k) to support the rollout of training on mental health for schools and colleges in response to the obvious need during the pandemic and in the light of national delays to the delivery of local MHSTs to ensure that schools can support pupils with their mental health in particular, bereavement and trauma support. Funding will facilitate the local authority in securing a temporary post to provide training and support to schools.

## **9.0 Safeguarding**

- 9.1 Supervision for designated safeguarding leads in schools pilot Manchester is part of a GM pilot which will provide supervision for designated safeguarding leads in schools from an experienced social worker. This will complement the work of the safeguarding in education team to ensure that all schools are supported in ensuring that all children are safe and well.
- 9.2 The Safeguarding in Education Team (SIE) provided additional support during the closure/partial school closure period by introducing weekly virtual drop-in sessions for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and increasing the number of newsletters with updates on resources, sharing good practice and FAQs based on queries from schools, supplementary schools, early years and youth sector. Each year the SIE team provide training and networks for all schools, EY settings, Youth Providers and Supplementary Schools. The team adapted to deliver these virtually and was able to maintain the offer over the period of lockdown. These are scheduled for 2020/2021 with the flexibility to offer face to face/online support to adapt to any changes to the local context. In addition, to provide assurance for the local authority, school governing bodies and trusts, all schools will complete a Covid-19 specific safeguarding self-evaluation to detail actions during lockdown and risk mitigation from September 2020.

## **10.0 School/College Workforce**

- 10.1 During the partial closure period the School HR Business partner provided information and advice to school leaders to enable them to address the workforce issues arising. This information included:
- Regular FAQ documents outlining priority workforce issues such as pay/working arrangements/sickness/infection/vulnerable employees
  - Scenario documents incorporating government advice to assist school leaders to understand options and risks around working arrangements and extremely vulnerable/vulnerable employees
  - HR Update documents which outlined and summarised changes to government advice, provided information on support and wellbeing for the workforce and provided practical advice around issues not covered in the above documents
  - Telephone and email advice and guidance provided to school leaders daily/as required
  - Weekly contact with Unions to discuss concerns arising from members and facilitating communications and resolutions with school leaders where issues arose. These were positive conversations and Trade Unions welcomed the support provided by the Schools Business Partner to schools.
- 10.2 This work will continue to support schools opening in September. An area specific to Workforce/COVID will be developed and maintained within the Schools Hub website to provide easy access to recent information/templates provided. In addition to this the most recent Government guidance will be

regularly summarised and communicated to ensure school leaders are informed and equipped to address current issues such as holidays/isolation periods/local lockdowns and impact on schools/infection and impact on teaching groups etc.

- 10.3 Post 16** Throughout this period, officers from the Local Authority have regularly engaged with all colleges and 6th form provisions. Work has continued to ensure that all young people in year 11 have a destination in September 2020 and those who are identified as being at potential risk of NEET have been targeted through the Career Connect Service who are conducting home visits and young people identified to be at medium risk have received phone calls from the attendance team to check for example that they know enrolment dates and have applied for travel passes etc.
- 10.4 Summer examinations for both A levels and GCSEs were cancelled this year due to the national pandemic. As a consequence of this, results for young people in year 12 were initially awarded based on a combination of teacher assessment, ranking of all students in a school or setting and an algorithm which included the performance of a school/college over the previous three years. A level results were initially published on 13th August and caused a great deal of distress for many of our young people, who found that their predicted grades had been downgraded in some cases by several grades and in particular the disproportionate impact on young people attending state funded schools. Nationally and locally there was extremely strong criticism of the process which resulted in a change announced by Government on Monday 17th August with A level grading and GCSE results which were published on 20th August to be based on teacher assessments. Furthermore, the night before year 11 cohort were due to receive their results, it was announced that the way that BTEC results were calculated was also going to change and that these should not be given out. This meant that not all year 11s were able to receive a full set of results. However, it has been agreed by all post 16 providers in the City that they would be sympathetic at enrolment if students still do not have a confirmed grade but can provide evidence from the school of their provisional grade.
- 10.5 Overall, the whole process has been challenging and confusing for young people, parents/carers and staff in schools and colleges and the full impact of this in the City on future destinations is not yet fully known.

## **11.0 Conclusion**

- 11.1 There has been a significant amount of work that has taken place over the summer term and holiday period to prepare for a full reopening of schools and colleges across the City including support from the attendance team and the establishment of an attendance helpline. It is only once schools are open with all children and young people attending that we will fully understand the impact of the enforced closure on their learning and mental health and wellbeing and also have a chance to review the effectiveness of the COVID-19 secure measures put in place by schools and colleges. However, as the Chief Medical Officer has stated, the low risk of children and young people catching

COVID-19 should be set against the certainty of the long term harm to children and young people not attending school.

## **12.0 Recommendations**

- 12.1 The committee is asked to discuss the measures being taken by schools and colleges to: reduce the risk of infection within the school community; support all children and young people to return to education; ensure that children and young people receive support to catch up for lost learning and their emotional and mental health and to develop continuity plans. The committee is also asked to comment on the support provided by the Local Authority to ensure that schools and colleges have the information, guidance and tools to put these measures in place.