

# SEND Family Newsletter

A newsletter for Croydon parents and carers who support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

## Early Years update

### Apply for a reception school place

If your child turns four years old between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021, you need to apply for a reception school place to begin in September 2021. You will need to do this by **early January 2021**. We recommend that a mainstream application is made for every child. Look out for open days or contact the school directly to book a visit. Find a list of schools at [www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/school-admissions](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/school-admissions)

### Applying for specialised placements

For children that receive Personalised Inclusion Funding in nursery or are undergoing statutory assessment for an Education, Health, Care Plan (EHCP), parents may express a preference for a Specialist placement.

We encourage you to discuss and seek advice from the multi-agency professionals working with your child in order to assess that the school criteria is appropriate for your child's needs. This could be the school nursery teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), nursery SENCO, Education Psychologist working with your school nursery, or the SEND inclusion practitioner attached to your nursery. If your child is at home, the Early Years SEND (EYSEND) portage inclusion team will help you consider your options.

Each of Croydon's specialist schools and Enhanced Learning Provisions (ELPs) has specific admission criteria as they cater for different types of SEND and different ability levels.

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## Get in touch

### Croydon SEN Enquiries

[senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk)

### SEND Local Offer

Services, advice, information and what's on in and around Croydon  
[localoffer.croydon.gov.uk](http://localoffer.croydon.gov.uk)

Email us at

[localoffer@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:localoffer@croydon.gov.uk)

### Feedback and subscriptions

To give us feedback on the newsletter, suggest future topics, or register interest in subscribing to this newsletter by email:

[sendnews@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:sendnews@croydon.gov.uk)

You can read about the different provisions at [new.croydon.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/special-educational-needs-and-disability-support/SEND-support](http://new.croydon.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/special-educational-needs-and-disability-support/SEND-support).

You then need to let your early years support professional in your nursery or your Portage practitioner know your preference. Do **not** put your Specialist educational preference on the mainstream application form.

### **Requesting specialist educational support: what happens next**

The nursery or professional supporting your child's special education needs will submit a request pack to the Croydon Specialist School admissions panel for consideration for a specialist reception year placement.

The packs are forwarded to the Local Authority EYSEND team during the latter part of the autumn term 2020/early part of spring term 2021.

Your Nursery SENCO or professional working with your child will collect evidence to support the request, including your written consent as we are unable to accept any packs to request consideration for a specialist educational provision without signed written consent.

The Specialist admissions panel then meets during the spring term so that all families seeking a special school place can be considered at the same time. This ensures fairness in the admissions process and that places can be prioritised to children with the most complex needs. During the early part of the summer term, you will be sent a letter informing you whether or not your child has been offered a specialist educational placement, and further information on next steps and support will be included in this letter.

### **Further information**

For further advice speak to your Nursery SENCO or manager, or contact the EYSEND team at: [EarlyYearsSendTeam@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:EarlyYearsSendTeam@croydon.gov.uk)

## **Full-time return to school for SEND pupils**

The government has made clear expectation that all children and young people, including those with SEND should return to school full time.

Recent Department for Education guidance also makes clear that any phased return or part-time placement should only be a temporary measure. You should discuss and agree this with your child's school in advance, and keep reviewing it.

### **Return to school plan**

Some pupils and their families have anxieties that make the return to school more difficult.

Where this is the case the school will work with you on a "Return to School" plan. This includes a plan of actions to overcome each concern.

We have produced a leaflet to give you information about meeting with schools and checking on the safety measures and other arrangements in place:

[Download it from www.sendgateway.org.uk/who-le-school-send/find-wss-resources.html](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/who-le-school-send/find-wss-resources.html)

## Secondary school transition

In Year 5, at your child's EHCP review meeting, you should have your initial discussions with your child's current school as to the type of secondary school you wish your child to attend. This could be mainstream, a mainstream school with an Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) or a specialist provision.

After the Easter Break in Year 5, you will be sent a preference form where you can state the preferences that you have for your child for their secondary education. You will be given the option to give 3 choices and the Local Authority will consult with all of these in the Autumn Term when your child is in Year 6.

**The deadline for sending in your preferences has now been moved to the 23rd October** to allow you to visit schools on open days and make an informed decision. After the deadline has passed, the Local Authority will consult with your choices.

The Local Authority will chair panels to discuss placements. There are two panels, one which discusses Special School and ELP placements and the other mainstream applications. The aim of these panels is to place all children with EHCPs and ensure that each child is given the right setting to ensure their educational success.

Following these panels, the Local Authority then has until February 15th in order to issue a new EHCP which names the secondary school for your child, or at the very least, the type of placement that the Local Authority is pursuing. In a very small number of cases, only the type of placement will be named as the Local Authority may not be able to secure a preferred school. In these instances, the Local Authority will continue its conversations with schools in order to ensure that placement is agreed at a later stage.

### Travel assistance

Once a school has been named you can apply for travel assistance. Children with EHCPs are not automatically entitled to travel assistance. Each case is considered on an individual basis. See the travel assistance policy at [localoffer.croydon.gov.uk](http://localoffer.croydon.gov.uk) or call 020 8726 5684.

If you have any questions throughout the process, contact your assigned EHCP coordinator, whose contact information will be stated at the top of the letter that you receive.

## Home school transport

We start with a BIG thank you to parents and carers for working with the team to support children and young people travelling to school in the safest way possible.

If your child has symptoms of COVID19, let us know, and make sure your child stays at home until they have finished self isolating and are well.

In line with government advice the transport team continue to work remotely.

### For cancellations:

[passenger.transport@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:passenger.transport@croydon.gov.uk)

### For urgent enquiries:

Call, Sheela, Melanie, Dave or Celia on  
07874600885  
07874600913  
07874 600887 or  
07874600907

### If you have any concerns about the standard of transport for your child:

Call our Monitoring Officer Marianna on 07592 117658

### For eligibility, applications and personal transport budgets

Contact Samer Adbis on  
[samer.adbis@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:samer.adbis@croydon.gov.uk)  
or 07922 582011

### If your child travels to school on a bus provided by our in-house service:

Phone 0208 604 7081

### Deputy Head of Service

Contact Jackie Wright on  
07742 405439

## Parent Carer Needs Assessment

If you live in Croydon and are a parent carer of a child/young person with a disability and have parental responsibility, you have the right to request a parent carer needs assessment. [Parents in Partnership \(PiP\)](#) is now undertaking these assessments for parent carers of children and young people aged 0-18.

The assessment will consider:

- your individual needs as a parent carer
- things that could make looking after your child easier for you
- your well-being as a parent carer
- the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of your disabled child
- the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of any other children you care for

For more information and to complete a referral form for an assessment go to [www.pipcroydon.com/what-we-can-do-for-you/parent-carers-assessments/parent-carer-needs-assessment-request-form](http://www.pipcroydon.com/what-we-can-do-for-you/parent-carers-assessments/parent-carer-needs-assessment-request-form)

## Update on Young Carers Service

The service has reopened referrals and assessments for new young carers between the ages of 7 and 25 who would benefit from the range of support the service can offer.

In response to restrictions imposed by COVID 19 support is offered by phone, video chats or Zoom meetings. Young carers can also access a range of activities such as games and quizzes via the Zoom platform.

During the half term break the service will also offer a range of respite online activities.

For more information about making a referral to the service and to see what the service can offer go to: [www.talkofftherecord.org/croydon/young-carers-service](http://www.talkofftherecord.org/croydon/young-carers-service).

## Resources for you and your child

### Remote learning: Online learning for SEND pupils

Oak Academy have extended their offer for online offer for SEND pupils with a wide range of lessons and resources at: [classroom.thenational.academy/specialist](https://classroom.thenational.academy/specialist)

## New special school for Croydon

Addington Valley Academy is a new co-educational Special School for children in the Croydon region. It will have 150 places for children and young people aged 2 to 19 who have autism and social communication, cognitive, sensory and social, emotional, and behavioural needs.

This flagship school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been developed and built upon the latest evidence and research. It is currently at our refurbished, temporary site in Canterbury Road, Croydon. In September 2021, it will move to its new, purpose-designed building at Field Way, New Addington.

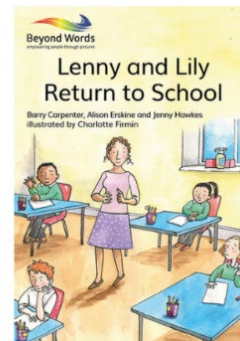
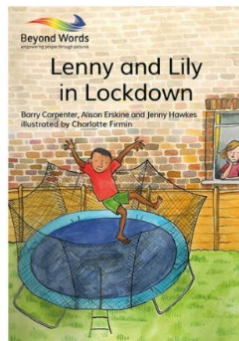
### Find out more

If you would like to hear more of our plans, curriculum and pathways available, visit the [school website \(www.addingtonvalley.org\)](http://www.addingtonvalley.org) or email [enquiries@addingtonvalley.org](mailto:enquiries@addingtonvalley.org) if you have any questions.

## Lenny and Lily: Wordless stories for primary school children

*Lenny and Lily in Lockdown* and *Lenny and Lily Return to School* help children make sense of their experiences during the coronavirus pandemic, communicate their feelings and prepare for more change as they go back to the classroom.

As the stories are told in pictures alone, children do not have to be able to read words to enjoy them – so they are appropriate for children in both mainstream and special education settings.



Download these stories for free: [booksbeyondwords.co.uk/lenny-and-lily-childrens-stories](https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/lenny-and-lily-childrens-stories)

## WellChild Survey: Tell us what you think and enter a £50 prize draw

[WellChild](https://www.wellchild.org.uk/) is the national charity for children and young people with complex needs and their families.

We are looking into the need for a possible new service providing Family Support Workers. As a starting point, we are surveying families and professionals to find out how aware they are of existing services

If you are a family with a child or young person who has complex needs, we would like to hear from you! As a thank you for taking part in this survey you can enter a prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher.

You can take the survey here: [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9RK3K9L](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9RK3K9L)

After this survey is closed, we will hold focus groups to talk about the responses in more depth. You can let us know on the survey if you'd like to take part in these groups.

## Croydon Sensory Support Service (CSSS)

The Croydon Sensory Support Service (CSSS) provides specialist teaching and advisory support for children and young people with a diagnosed hearing and/or visual impairment aged 0-25 years.

The service continues to be open to new referrals and information about the referral process and criteria are available on the [Croydon Local Offer](#).

With audiology and ophthalmology services now re-opening as well as nurseries, schools and colleges, the service is able to offer some face to face interventions where this is essential. The service is also continuing to offer support for families, settings and other professionals virtually. Decisions about service delivery are being risk assessed on an individual basis and in discussion with families and settings.

## Adjusting to changes

Service staff are making sure that nurseries, schools and colleges are aware of the particular impact on children and young people with sensory impairment of the necessary changes within learning environments as they fully open. These include the challenges around navigating new and unfamiliar environments and managing effective communication when face coverings are in use.

Specialist staff in the service are working hard to ensure that risks related to covid-19 are minimised whilst ensuring that children and young people with sensory impairment continue to access specialist input when needed.

## Helpful contacts

Allocated teachers of the deaf, teachers of the vision impaired and specialist habilitation officers are available to settings and families for advice and support via email, 'phone and video conferencing. For general enquiries or if you are not sure who best to talk to, please contact us at [sensorysupportservice@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:sensorysupportservice@croydon.gov.uk) or phone 0208 760 5780.

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is currently offering a number of its family and parent support events online. For more information, please visit [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has information about visual impairment in children and young people via its website [www.rnib.org.uk/advice/children-young-people-education](http://www.rnib.org.uk/advice/children-young-people-education)

## Immunisation Programme

The National Immunisation Programme has recommenced, starting with the Flu programme which will now include students in Year 7. In light of the COVID pandemic, we are keen to increase the uptake of this vaccine and are grateful to schools for their support in its delivery.

For more details of the National Immunisation Programme, please visit our

**Website:** [www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/school-nursing](http://www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/school-nursing)

**Email:** [ch-tr.immunisationteam@nhs.net](mailto:ch-tr.immunisationteam@nhs.net)

**Immunisation Lead:** Sinead Hylton



## Sharing stories

Meet Zach Drolet – a Croydon superstar!

Zach is 15 years old and looking forward to his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday next month. He attends Oasis Academy in Coulsdon.

Zach started 2020 with a bang. He designed a float that he built to represent Croydon and the SEND community at the Lord Mayor's New Year Parade.

In January he also attended the Holocaust Memorial Day in London. He created artwork to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, especially those with special needs and the LGBT community. This received a Highly Commended accolade and he attended the ceremonies, which were also attended by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

"The ceremony was extremely moving, atmospheric and powerful. It's a once in a lifetime experience I will never forget," Zach said.



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"Zach just does it his way and the recognition is the amazing part for me, and that he is happy."

- *Lorraine, Zach's mum*

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And Zach hasn't let the pandemic slow him down!

In July Zach was named as one of 259 out of 28,000 Oasis students around the country to receive a prestigious award recognising his contributions. The certificate calls Zach "a student who has contributed over and above expectations for the benefit of the local and school community" and concludes "you are truly exceptional".

Then in September, after 3 hours of workshops and an interview on Zoom, Zach was named a Jack Petchey Achiever for this coming year. He will attend workshops, take part in voluntary opportunities, have a personal mentor, and attend a graduation – and much more. The interviewers spotted Zach's compassion and how well he presented himself.

Zach's proud mum Lorraine says: "Zach just does it his way and the recognition is the amazing part for me and that he is happy."



This is YOUR newsletter! What would you like to see covered in upcoming editions? Would you like to tell your story, or your child's? Let us know by emailing [sendnews@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:sendnews@croydon.gov.uk)