Dear Colleagues

Welcome back from a warm and hopefully rejuvenating summer.

I would like to start by congratulating our Secondary Head Teachers on achieving another set of very impressive results across the borough both at GCSE and A level. I am sure you have all seen the wonderful spread in Southwark News recently. Over the summer I had the pleasure of meeting some of your students looking to embark upon their university career through the Southwark Scholarship scheme. They are a credit to you.

My utmost admiration and heartfelt thanks to all of our Head Teachers and staff who prepared long and hard and have battled through the difficult and unexplored terrain of the KS1 and KS2 assessments, the results of which have left a nation of Head teachers bemused.

For our Nursery school and Early Years colleagues we have the consultation on the additional 15 hours launched in August and I know some of you have already been looking ahead as to how best to meet this challenge.

I make no apologies for the length of my first letter to you this academic year as it is essential that you have up to date contact details for services across the education directorate and are familiar with the key aspects of their work. I have included a summary of each of the services in appendix 1 and an update on issuing Penalty Notices in appendix 2.

It looks to be another eventful year ahead. A year in which I intend to have a particular focus on ensuring that we have the right provision in the right places for our pupils with special educational needs and those who are disabled. We will be working with our schools, partners in health and children’s social care to prepare for the SEND Area Review - a national inspection regime about which you will hear...
more. A year in which we strengthen our communication and systems with all of our schools, so that every child and young person is safe and receiving his or her educational entitlement and that you know the avenues of support available across the council; work closely with our partners in health and across directorates so that we can provide our children and families with a safe and positive beginning, middle and end to their time in education; look closely at how we engage with students and their parents to motivate them to attend school and achieve well; ensure that our children looked after thrive and achieve as well as their peers, and of course, maintaining high standards and increasing our proportion of schools graded good or outstanding.

We have the commitment of Southwark Council and the Schools Forum to support its schools so that they remain successful and forward looking. As Director of Education I look forward to working closely with you over the next year to make sure we make the best of this investment.

I shall of course update you as national and local directives and policies unfold over the year and how they impact on us in Southwark.

I wish you a positive and healthy start to the year ahead.

Yours sincerely

Nina Dohel
Director of Education
Appendix 1

Standards Team 0-19
Head of Service: Terry Segarty Terry.Segarty@southwark.gov.uk

The Standards 0-19 and School Improvement Team remains a major force in working in partnership with you in setting high ambitions. 92% of Southwark schools are now good or outstanding. This is a tribute to the work you and your staff do to improve the lives of Southwark Children and Young People and an acknowledgement of the expertise and commitment of the Standards Team. So I am pleased to tell you that we now at full strength having appointed Richard Hunter to the senior advisor team. Richard joins us with over six years as a Head Teacher in London. I am sure you will meet Richard at the next heads briefing.

The standards team is comprised of the following services:

- The Early Help Localities team led by Surma Shah
- The Early Years Team led by Georgia Pritchard
- Continuing Professional Development led by Jane Beaumont
- Governor services including training led by John Finch (services) and Ela Cleary (training)
- Music service led by Denise Barber
- Costumes and Artefacts led by Maggie Bullen
- Schools website led by Cara Cahill and Georgia Pritchard – www.schools.southwark.gov.uk

Early Help Localities Team (EHCT)
Localities Manager – Surma Shah Surma.Shah@southwark.gov.uk

The service is organised into four geographical Localities Borough, Bankside and Walworth (BBW), Bermondsey and Rotherhithe (B&R), Peckham, Nunhead and Peckham Rye (PNPR) and Camberwell and Dulwich (C&D).
In addition, there is a Early Help Central Team, which has two Senior Education Welfare Officers (SEWO) One of their roles will be to interrogate and prepare the evidence gathered by EWOs and school commissioned attendance staff for prosecution. They will also be supporting the Inclusion Manager, Ron St Louis, if a child fails to engage with the 6th day education provision provided by the Local Authority following a permanent exclusion. This team will also process Penalty Fines.
The Early Help Localities Service provides integrated support to children, young people and their families. The key objective of the service is to offer practical advice, support and direct case work to prevent issues escalating and requiring statutory intervention. We aim to intervene ‘early’ in terms of the age of a child, and early in terms of an issue arising in the life of a child – from pre-birth to nineteen We work closely with a range of statutory services (including health and children’s social care), voluntary organisations e.g. Solace Children’s Centres, schools and early years settings.

Permanent Exclusions (PEX)
1 September 2016 please ensure that all PEX forms are sent to Early Help and copied into the Inclusion Manager, Ron St Louis. PEX forms are to be sent to:
EarlyHelp@southwark.co.uk and copied into Ron.StLouis@southwark.gov.uk. These forms must be sent to the LA without delay once the decision to permanently exclude has been made.

**Education Access formerly Pupil Access**  
Head of Service – Glenn Garcia Glenn.Garcia@southwark.gov.uk

**Education Access 0-25** is the new name of the team formerly known as Pupil Access from September 2016. This name change has been made to better reflect the range of services the team delivers to Southwark families, schools, children and young people. The Education Access 0-25 team is comprised of the following services:

- School Admissions and Benefits
- Southwark Information, Advice and Support led by Cara Jones
- Early Years and Out of School Children Missing from Education (Pupil Tracking and Licencing, Early Years Quality Improvement, Free Early Learning and Council Day Nurseries) led by Neil Gordon-Orr
- Travel assistance (including school transport and independent travel training)
- School Place Planning

**School admissions and benefits**

- A Fair Access Primary protocol is being developed for use across all of our primary schools over the forthcoming autumn term. A briefing from school admission officers to discuss the new process will take place at the next Southwark Association of Primary Heads- SAPH meeting on Wednesday 21 September 2016 – details of the draft protocol developed by a small working group of head teachers and officers, will be circulated to all primary head teachers prior to the SAPH meeting.
- Southwark’s ‘Starting Primary’ and ‘Starting Secondary’ school brochures for 2017/18 are now available for parents/carers, schools and colleagues to view online and download by clicking on the following links [Primary brochure](#) and [Secondary brochure](#). We will also be posting two printed copies of the brochures to each Southwark school as reference guides so please keep a look out for these in the post.
- As you know, families will only be able to apply online for their child’s school place. Should you wish to book an ‘Apply online’ session to be held at your school with our school admissions officers at hand to help families please email:  
  Sinead Dunphy (Secondary admissions officer) at Sinead.Dunphy@southwark.gov.uk; or  
  Terrie Alfred (Primary admissions officer) Terrie.Alfred@southwark.gov.uk / Jacquie Boyce (Primary admissions officer) Jacquie.Boyce@southwark.gov.uk.

**Early years and out of school team**

**Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) from April 2017:**

- The DfE launched their long awaited proposals on funding for 3 and 4 year olds on 11 August, with consultation due to end on 22nd September. Final proposals will be issued this autumn to coincide with initial DSG allocation for 2017/18. These proposals underpin the funding for the introduction of the
additional 15 hours of free entitlement for working parents from September 2017.

- School and other early years settings are encouraged to respond to the proposals by the deadline of 22nd September with the council making its own response. The link to the DfE consultation is https://consult.education.gov.uk/early-years-funding/eynff. A report to the October schools forum will provide an update on the proposals along with the council's response.

Southwark information, advice and support

- Southwark’s Local Offer has been expanded to include a new Youth Offer page. Please encourage your staff and families to use this resource to find up to date information relating to Special Educational and Disability services along with details of opportunities available locally to children, young people and their families. The Southwark Local Offer can be accessed at www.localoffer.southwark.gov.uk. Should any families/colleagues have queries relating or wish to provide feedback or suggestions, they can contact the Southwark Information, Advice and Support Team by email at localoffer@southwark.gov.uk or by telephone on 020 7525 3104.

Identifying children missing education: changes to regulations

As you may be aware, the Government consulted earlier this year on proposals to improve the identification of children missing education. The consultation followed concerns raised by Ofsted that across the country there are inconsistent practices for recording and reporting cases where children are removed from school. The Government published its response to the consultation in July 2016 and has now amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations in order to improve information sharing between schools and local authorities about children starting and leaving schools. The amended regulations came into effect from 1 September 2016.

Schools (including independent schools) are now required to:

- inform their LA when they are about to delete a pupil's name from the admission register, for any reason;
- record details of the pupil’s residence, the name of the person with whom they will reside, the date from which they will reside there, and the name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information);
- inform their LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school; and
- provide information to their LA when registering new pupils within five days, including the pupil's address and previous school (where they can reasonably obtain this information).

This applies to all non-standard transitions, i.e. whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins the school after the start of the first year.

New guidance

The Government has committed to updating the ‘Children Missing Education’ statutory guidance. Once this has been issued, Southwark will consider whether any further changes to its processes and protocols are necessary. This will include whether we wish to make use of the new discretionary power to request information from schools at standard transition points.

Further information

Southwark Council, PO Box 64529, London, SE1P 5LX
Switchboard – 020 7525 5000   Website – www.southwark.gov.uk
David Quirk - Thornton, Strategic Director Children’s and Adults Service
The outcome of the consultation, including the Government’s response, is detailed here: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/identifying-children-who-are-missing-education

**Secondary and Further Education, Employment and Inclusion team (SAFEEI)**

**Lead officer- Liz Britton Liz.Britton@southwark.uk**

The SAFEEI team is becoming an increasingly critical part of keeping our most vulnerable young people safe, thriving and motivated so I am delighted that Avnee Morjaria has joined us as the new Virtual Head teacher of Southwark Virtual School (Avnee.Morjaria@southwark.gov.uk 020 7525 3623).

The SAFEEI team is comprised of:

- Looked After Children Education and Priority Learners (pupils for whom mainstream education is not appropriate and who attend an Alternative Provision),
- Education Business Links and the team that support young people into Education, Training or Employment and track our young people Not in Education, Employment or Training Setting (NEETS).

We are looking to strengthen support for you and our pupils at KS5. Also Avnee is looking to recruit a capable, tenacious leader to take on the role of Deputy Head Teacher on a one year secondment. The new deputy will be responsible for raising standards for looked after children across the borough through the leadership of a team of well qualified educational advisors. This would be good experience for a middle or senior leader that would like to develop senior leadership skills in a supportive, developmental environment. Please do get in touch if you know anyone that fits the bill.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Team (SEND)**

**Head of Service – Yvonne Ely Yvonne.Ely@southwark.gov.uk**

The SEND team is comprised of the following services:

- SEND Casework team (0-14)
- Preparation for Adulthood casework team (14-25)
- SEND business management (finance and data)
- Inclusion and Monitoring Team (specialist teachers supporting SENCos and the Early Help Child Protection (EHCP) process)
- Visual Impairment Team
- Hearing Support Service
- Early Years Autism Support Service
- Autism Support Team (school aged pupils)
- Educational Psychology

The SEND reform timetable continues. We are 2 years in and are on track with the transfer timetable and our completion rates for new EHCPs are continuing to improve. We are now just below the England average for completion in 20 weeks (57% with England average at 58%). The timeline continues to be a challenge for us but is something we are determined to continue to improve.
We would like to extend a huge thank you to schools for all their work on reports for new EHCP, plans and reports for transfers and getting to grips with the new annual review system. We still have almost 2 years to go on the old and new systems until the end of the school year 2017/18. It will be good to just have one system from 2018 onwards.

The LA is in the process of preparing for the SEND area review which could come at any time in the next 5 years with 5 days notice in term time. All the information about this will be on the Local offer and in the Local Offer newsletter which comes out termly.

You and keep up to date or provide us with feedback on the SEND reforms through the newsletter or local offer websites:
Appendix 2

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence in Term Time Code (G)

As you know there has recently been a decision regarding attendance in the High Court in the case of Isle of Wight Council v Platt (2016) EWHC 1283. The court addressed the issue of ‘regular attendance’ as referred to in Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (the ACT).

This decision does not change the law but will have an impact on Southwark’s use of Penalty Notices (PN) for term time holidays.

Nick Gibb MP has also written to all head teachers on this matter, reinforcing that the issue of school attendance is an important one and has been further supported with the commitment to financially support the Isle of Wight in lodging an appeal against the High Court judgement.

Southwark will continue to consider referrals for PN’s where a school decides to code an absence with a (G) code and is in line with Southwark’s PN protocol. However at present those codes alone will not be sufficient in the issuing of a PN. Before making a referral schools, along with their Education Welfare Officer (EWO), will need to consider and evidence why they consider the pupil’s attendance is not regular. This consideration cannot focus narrowly on the (G) codes but must consider the wider period of attendance. Unfortunately at the current time it is not possible to say how long this wider period should be. For guidance please consult with your EWO.

A school will need to provide information and evidence about the circumstances with their referral. Again this is something the EWO will assist with.

Unfortunately it is not possible to be any more specific than this given there is not a percentage figure which indicates that ‘regular’ attendance has not been achieved. A figure of 90% (the government’s definition of persistent absence (PA)) would be more supportive of attendance but it does not mean that attendance is ‘regular’ if the attendance is above that figure. Clearly the lower the percentage, the more likelihood that there will not have been regular attendance. If evidence cannot be provided to support the proposition that attendance has not be regular then it is unlikely a PN will be issued.

The decision in the recent case has made it clear that the contents of the schools absence request form can play an important part in the courts consideration of whether or not attendance is regular. As such Southwark recommends that all schools who wish to use PNs to address term time holidays should use a standard request form, a copy in booklet form of which is included in this letter. We recommend that this form is used from September 2016.

Schools should also review their literature to ensure it is consistent with DfE policy, especially regarding PA. As you are aware the DfE expects 100% attendance and considers a child PA if attendance falls below 90%. The Whole School Attendance Policy (again something your EWO will be happy to review with you) should have PN information that is consistent with Southwark’s PN Protocol – for example that the issuing of a PN is at the discretion of the Local Authority.

The DfE has clearly indicated that it does not agree with the decision made by the High Court and is currently financially supported the Isle of Wight to challenge the decision. It may also consider amending the law in this area. If the law changes
Southwark will of course review its enforcement policy and provide you with an update if necessary. We will continue to work with schools to build on the improvement in school attendance.