SEN Services Southwest Protocol for working in schools during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In order for us to ensure the safety of our consultants as well as the safety and well-being of staff, children and parents that we support, SEN Services Southwest has developed protocols for working safely in schools at this time. This set of procedures has been developed using information from The Association of Educational Psychologists’ documents, “Transitional Period Guidance” and “Working Remotely with Children, Young People and their Families.” (see links at end of document). Whilst we are not affiliated with this organisation, their guidance is relevant to our way of working. We have also used information from the British Psychological Society, of which we are members, to ensure that our practice is in line with their guidance for members.

Working remotely:

There will be occasions when it is not possible or is not necessary to visit a school in order to carry out a face-to-face assessment or training. This might include situations when:

1. The required assessments are questionnaire-based and can be sent electronically by secure email.
2. The school has assessment information that is suitable for analysis and recommendations.
3. A request is made for advice regarding a group of pupils/students rather than an individual.
4. The school has the resources to allow online “live” observations in the classroom.
5. A staff meeting training session is booked.

1. SEN Services Southwest uses Egress Secure Switch to both send and receive confidential information, which can be used to email questionnaires to school staff and receive completed forms. All such information is stored either electronically on laptops and memory sticks with 2 layers of security, or as

paper-based versions in a locked filing cabinet, in accordance with GDP regulations.

2. Where SEN Services Southwest cannot complete an assessment face-to-face, the school may be able to provide useful alternative data using their own assessment kits. This may include Dyslexia Screening Tests, British Picture Vocabulary Test or Wide Range Achievement Test, which many schools use regularly. Again, the results from these tests can be shared securely using Egress Secure Switch.

3. and 4. SEN Services Southwest can observe a lesson using Zoom. We have a private account with additional security that will allow us to ensure no other users can access the video link. This will require a member of staff to use a suitable device, such as a smartphone or tablet, to observe the child in class or around the school whilst the SEN Services SW consultant is watching. The recording function will NOT be used in these cases, to ensure no breach of GDP regulations. Notes will be made for later reference, as is usual when observing a lesson.

5. SEN Services Southwest is able to provide some training courses online using Zoom. This can be pre-arranged with the school in question. We have a private account that allows us to host a large number of guests, meaning that whole school training is possible. Resources can be sent to the school in advance, and a recording of the training can be made available subsequently for absent staff to access.

Visiting Schools:

SEN Services Southwest consultants may be asked to visit schools in order to carry out assessments. This is at the request, and therefore the responsibility, of the leaders of the school in question. Our consultants are fully prepared to make school visits and will follow the protocols set out below in order to minimise any risk relating to Covid-19.

* Consultants will ask for the policy regarding visitors to the school during the pandemic. We will comply fully with all requests. If we are unable to do this, we will postpone the visit or attempt to find an alternative way of working to ensure that requests are fulfilled.
* Consultants will ask which entrance to use, what measures they must take when entering the school and ensure that a separate room for working is prepared for the time of their visit.
* The Parental Permission form includes a clause relating to Covid-19, ensuring that parents recognise any additional risk relating to the pandemic and that they are willing to proceed with assessment.
* Consultants will restrict the number of schools they visit each week during the pandemic, in order to minimise contact with individuals. Where possible, visits will take place at least 3 days apart.
* On the morning of the visit, the consultant will contact the school to check that the child/children being seen are present and that no known cases of Covid-19 have been detected in the school. If anyone within the school has tested positive, the visit may be re-scheduled.
* Consultants will carry hand-sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes with them at all times. They will regularly wash their hands. They will provide their own refreshments for the day. No equipment will be required from the school, other than things the child may use that the school provide, such as pencils and paper.
* Consultants will wear a face covering if there is a need for closer contact with an individual, however it is expected that most face-to-face work can take place at the required 2-meter distance. Where the school’s own policy differs from this, the consultant will adhere to the school’s requirements.
* Feedback to school staff and/or parents will not take place in the school. Consultants will be happy to arrange a Zoom meeting with school staff and parents subsequently, should this be required, or a phone call if preferred. However, a full written report of the visit, findings and recommendations is always provided within 2-3 weeks.
* Pupils/students should not directly touch any materials required, however we recognise that with very young children and some children with additional needs, this may still occur. Consultants will endeavour to minimise any such contact and will ensure that all test materials are sanitised and remain untouched for 72 hours, in order to reduce any bacteria/virus that may have been transferred.

Any queries regarding these protocols should be emailed to [senservicessw@gmail.com](mailto:senservicessw@gmail.com)

References:

1. British Psychological Society: *Psychological Assessments Undertaken Remotely* May 2020. <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Psychological%20assessment%20undertaken%20remotely.pdf>
2. Association of Educational Psychologists: *Transition Period Guidance*  May 2020

<https://www.aep.org.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alId=11912>

1. Association of Educational Psychologists: *Working Remotely with Children, Young People and their Families.* May 2020

<https://www.aep.org.uk/aep-guidance-on-remote-working-with-children-young-people-fam/>