

Dear Parents and Families,

### **Team Around Schools (TAS) Pilot, Phase Two**

You will be aware that, both locally nationally, there have been some difficulties accessing some services for children and young people, to ensure that they receive the right support, at the right time. You may also be aware that the Department for Education will be releasing a paper shortly that outlines their expectations of inclusive practice in mainstream schools. Across Bedford Borough, we have listened to your feedback and have joined with local partners and worked in coproduction with *Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum* to explore ways to address these challenges so that we can effectively meet the needs and changes within our community.

Over the last academic year, Bedford Borough and partners piloted Phase One of the *Team Around Schools (TAS)* model. The feedback was positive and the learning we were able to take from this has enabled us to offer this model to more schools to continue testing this approach as we move into Phase Two of the pilot this academic year.

**We are writing to inform you that your child's school has agreed to take part in Phase Two of the *Team Around Schools (TAS)* pilot taking place this academic year.**

The *Team Around Schools* pilot tests an inclusive approach that brings together a range of practitioners from key services to work with schools to discuss a pupil's needs. This 'Team around the School' then work collaboratively to identify individual needs and implement support strategies to address the identified needs with the intention of improving the wellbeing and outcomes of the child.

*Team Around School* meetings will take place either half-termly or monthly, depending on the size of the school. The core 'Team' will include practitioners from the school, Early Help, Education Psychology, Speech & Language Therapy, Mental Health & Emotional Well-being Services and School Nursing & Community Paediatric Teams.

On occasion, other services may be invited, where possible, if it is felt the specialist guidance, they can provide is relevant to the child's presenting needs i.e. Hearing Service / Autism Advisory Service. This approach is part of the *universal and targeted support* offer within the *graduated approach* of support and will better inform the school's *Assess, Plan, Do, Review* cycle of support for your child, should this be something they require.

Children and young people who do not attend the cohort of schools in the pilot will continue to have access to the wider services as necessary, via the referral processes currently in place across Bedford Borough.

### **Early Support & Intervention Screening Tool (ESIST)**

As part of the pilot, we will also be evaluating the use of an Early Support & Intervention Screening Tool. Staff across schools and services will be trained to use this screening tool as a way of more accurately identifying a child or young person's needs. The toolkit screens for strengths across nine developmental areas and highlights where further support may be needed.

The ESIST is completed in partnership with parents and the child to ensure their voices remain central to this approach of support and any interventions that may be needed.

### **Early Support & Intervention Form (ESIF)**

Schools will continue to work closely with you as parents to best meet your child's needs and discuss with you if they feel it may be helpful to seek further advice and guidance from the *Team around the School*.

To understand how best to advise and guide schools, the school will be asked to complete an ESIF. Information shared may include how the child's needs are presenting and support that has already been provided alongside the impact this has had.

**Parent and child views and consent must be gained by the school before discussing at child or young person as their TAS meeting**, to ensure the families are fully involved in the process and understand the purpose and rationale for the discussion clearly.

If you do not wish your child to be discussed in a TAS, please contact the Headteacher to inform them of this as soon as possible.

### **Monitoring Impact and Evaluation Feedback Opportunities**

The TAS Steering Group meet regularly throughout the year and all stakeholders across the pilot are represented.

For the duration of the pilot, each TAS will also have a strategic lead and case coordinator to support with the learning and feedback from the pilot. This feedback, along with the data measures collated throughout the pilot, will inform discussions as to how this new approach can be expanded across the Borough and support an increased number of children, young people, and families.

Progress updates for the pilot will be shared regularly with services, schools and parents and families throughout the duration of the pilot. The TAS pilot is also being evaluated by an independent organisation, *Spark the Difference* and copies of their findings can be found alongside our TAS Pilot and Change Programme information on the Local Offer.

***Thank you to the schools and services involved, to everyone making this pilot possible, and to you as parents and families for your support as we test this new and exciting model.***

If you have any questions regarding the pilot, at any stage, please do contact the Headteacher at your child's school or, Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum, who will be able to share feedback in our regularly scheduled meetings.

Kind regards,  
*Team Around School Pilot Partners*