

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your patience and continued dedication whilst we have awaited final clarification from the Minister of Education, regarding how schools will operate in the coming months.

We are all facing challenges both personally and professionally that just a few months ago were unimaginable. As you know, together, we form the largest workforce in Northern Ireland working in schools and providing services to schools across a wide range of locations and settings.

We have been preparing and planning for how we will operate as Government restrictions intensify and now is the time to implement the first phase of these changes.

***From today we are implementing some initial, short term and important changes that will take immediate effect. These will enable us to focus on further developing our phased Business Continuity arrangements.***

With immediate effect we will focus exclusively on delivering only the following critical services in this short term phase:

- Supporting the schools, the services they need and those working there, in order to offer provision for children of key workers. This includes:
  - Continued Learning
  - Catering & Cleaning
  - Free School Meals
  - Youth hubs
  - Future transport arrangements
- **Corporate services**
  - The Critical Operations Centre in Clounagh
  - Payroll
  - ICT support and infrastructure
  - C2K
  - iFS
  - Counselling Services
  - Post Primary Transfer & SEN
  - Procurement
  - Critical Minor works
  - Supplier payments
  - Communications

Our other services will be temporarily restricted. This will enable us to develop longer term plans and ensure that the Government's essential guidance for Covid-19 is adhered to.

**From today the following working arrangements will now take place:**

**All staff, where possible and able, should work from home.**

We know that many of you cannot do the important job that you do from home, or do not have remote access to work from home. Furthermore many of you will now have additional caring responsibilities that mean you will be unable to work.

**All staff will continued to be paid normal pay, regardless of the circumstances.**

**For now we expect you to:**

- ✓ Follow the government guidance on Covid-19, symptoms, social distancing and vulnerable groups.
- ✓ If you are able and available, we need your ongoing support to deliver our essential services as listed above. Therefore please expect that your job may be diverted to where we will need you most.
- ✓ Ensure that you provide your contact number to your line manager so they can be in contact with you.
- ✓ Let your line manager know if there is a time in the week that you could come into work to cover on a rotational basis. Please also consider weekend and evenings. Our next phase of plans will require a rota system in some areas covering key functions with skeleton staff. We would like all staff who are well and able to do their bit in covering these requirements.
- ✓ Clear your desk, tidy workspaces and secure all documentation before you vacate the office.
- ✓ Take home authorised equipment that you may require for work.
- ✓ Ensure that all information leaving the building is in line with GDPR guidance.
- ✓ Exercise good social distancing practices if you remain working in any of our premises in the critical services.
- ✓ Stay in touch with your manager at least weekly.
- ✓ Maintain regular contact with your work colleagues.
- ✓ Regularly look at the EA website for updates on working and services.
- ✓ Remember that the services of Inspire Wellbeing remain available to you and can be contacted free on 0808 800 0002, 24hrs a day 7 days a week

**What you can expect from us:**

- ✓ A single source of regular staff communication via our EA website. This can be accessed [here](#) or via [www.eani.org.uk/staff](http://www.eani.org.uk/staff). Using our website gives you a trusted source of information that is accessible for all. If you do not have internet access then please let your line manager know and we can consider other ways to keep you up to date.
- ✓ EA office buildings closed to visitors and the public unless by prior appointment.
- ✓ That you will continue to receive normal pay.
- ✓ On-going engagement with Trade Union colleagues to ensure that we find the best solutions to the situation as it changes.
- ✓ That we will schedule and phase where and when we require staff to work and will communicate how we will do this and what these are via our EA website staff updates and through your line manager.
- ✓ The working environments and office accommodation, that staff may be working in to support delivery of the critical services, will be safe, clean and enable essential social distancing practices at work.

I know many of you are already busy establishing the flow of communication in your own teams and will have many questions. Your line manager will continue to communicate with you on operational matters and a staff communication, as described, will be posted on the EA website 3 times a week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4.30pm.

We await further guidance from the Minister of Education on how school provision for key workers will operate and will keep you up to date on this as soon as the information is available. Many of you have already offered your flexibility to assist.

Thank you for your commitment and your highly valued support at this unprecedented time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Long', enclosed in a thin black rectangular box.

**SARA LONG**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**