

Minister Vicky Ford thanks parent carer forums for their work in the Covid 19 pandemic

July 2 2020

Ahead of the release of new guidance on school re-opening, the Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford met with representatives of the SEND sector to thank them for their work.

She singled out the work of parent carer forums for praise in highlighting the way in which risk assessments had been used by some schools to prevent the return of children and young people with SEND.

She also noted the work that the NNPCF and others had done in ensuring that the rights of pupils with SEND had been reflected in the guidance with regards to:

- Support for any behavioural problems
- Support for families to enable attendance
- Ensuring that schools were required to deliver full provision for children with SEND and that the Coronavirus Act easements are lifted as soon as possible
- The challenges that school transport poses during this period (although she recognised that more work needs to be done here)

NNPCF co-chairs Tina Emery and Mrunal Sisodia also raised the need to ensure that schools understood that catch up funding for disadvantaged pupils was made available for SEND and that it should include services used by SEND children such as therapy services and educational psychologists and not just focus on academic catch up. Tina and Mrunal advised the Minister to join up with DMO and DCO forum on this work and raised the need for clearer guidance for those young people with SEND in further education and the growing need for respite services for families who had had no break from caring since March.