

Corona Virus: Safeguarding in School, Colleges and other Providers (20/05/20) – Summary

Please be aware of new updated Safeguarding Guidance released on 20/05 -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

Some key points for schools in respect of the re-opening of schools in this document:

- Each school and college's circumstances will be slightly different. Any school or college that cannot achieve the small groups necessary at any point should discuss options with their local authority or trust. This might be because there are not enough classrooms/spaces available in the setting or because they do not have enough available teachers/staff to supervise the groups.

The safeguarding principles as outlined in KCSIE 2019 remain the same for schools :

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

It is likely as children start to return to school, staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about children. It is advised where possible to allow DSLs to have more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns as more children return.

Child Protection Policy

It is advised that a Corona Virus addendum to the Child Protection policy is appropriate – this has previously been provided by the Safeguarding Team – please ensure that the policy is updated and reflects the below:

- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child, including new concerns where children are returning
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns, including new concerns where children are returning
- the importance of ensuring relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children remains accurate and up to date. Schools and colleges should be doing all they reasonably can to ask parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a child returns
- DSL arrangements

- what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school or college safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed.
- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need
- the continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children's social workers, the local authority virtual school head for looked-after and previously looked-after children and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners

DSLs

As more children return to school it is expected that there is a trained DSL available on site. It is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances this may not be possible and suggests:

- a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school or college can be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs (or deputies) with other schools or colleges (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

Where a DSL is not available on site it is expected that a senior leader should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. For example, updating child protection files, liaising with the DSL and other agencies as required.

Each day all staff in school need to know each day who the DSL is and how to contact them.

The DSL should provide support to all staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school or college. Where possible staff should try and speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff should be encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school or college site via school or college phones and devices.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is unlikely to take place during this period, for the period coronavirus measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training. In Lancashire online DSL training is being offered where required and can be accessed by contacting school.safeguarding@lancashire.gov.uk

Attendance

The attendance of vulnerable children in school, as defined in the document is expected, where it is appropriate for them – that is where there are no shielding concerns. The Government expect educational providers and other relevant partners to work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school or college, where attendance is appropriate.

Schools and colleges should continue to notify social workers where children with a social worker do not attend. They should also continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

Parents and carers will not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision. Schools and colleges should resume taking their attendance register from 1 June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

For children moving schools it will continue to be important for any school or college whose children are attending another setting to ensure appropriate information and safeguarding files, are shared with the new school. Ideally this should be done prior to a child moving.

In respect of recruitment, if schools and colleges are recruiting new staff, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of [KCSIE](#). Where schools and colleges are utilising volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of [KCSIE](#). Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Mental Health

Teachers should be aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of those students/pupils (and their parents). Please be aware of the Government Guidance Our guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#) and ensure this is followed in respect of any concerns regarding a child's emotional wellbeing.

Virtual Lessons

There has been a number of queries to the Safeguarding Team recently regarding Virtual lessons. There is no expectation that teachers should live stream or provide pre-recorded videos. Schools and colleges should consider the approaches that best suit the needs of their children and staff. There is guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre on [which video conference service is right for you](#) and [using video conferencing services securely](#) can help set up video conferencing safely, if you choose to use it.

The Safeguarding Advice line remains open Monday –Friday 8.45 – 5pm for any safeguarding advice or queries required – 01772 531196.

