Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) ADDENDUM

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Guidance from the DfE states that schools and Trusts should continue to have regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) as per funding agreement requirements. The COVID-19 safeguarding guidance suggests where schools and trusts might consider safeguarding policy and process differently during COVID-19 when compared to business as usual. The BDAT policy is here: https://www.bdat-academies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Safeguarding-and-Child-Protection-Policy-Reviewed-Sep-20.pdf

Guidance for all schools during lockdown is here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950510/School_national_restrictions_guidance.pdf

The current national lockdown, introduced on 6 January 2021, has caused a move to remote education for most pupils and students. Vulnerable children and children of Critical Workers who can access schools or educational settings are set out in this guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision

The key features of safeguarding remain the same:

- the best interests of children must always come first
- if anyone in the academy has a safeguarding concern about any child they should 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 be protected when they are online

This addendum sets out the differences which have been adopted during this period of significant change.

Any updated advice received from the local 3 safeguarding partners	The Trust and academies are following government COVID-19 guidance on school closures, maintaining education provision with local authorities and for education settings, all of which are frequently updated.
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,	The Trust and academies are following government COVID-19 guidance on vulnerable children and young people, which is frequently updated. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people

referral thresholds and children in need	
What staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child	Report concerns immediately
The continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns	Act immediately
DSL (and deputy) arrangements	See below
The continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children	There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend the academy, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
Peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools and colleges are operating in a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform any revised approach)	Be aware that peer-on-peer abuse may occur and report concerns. Any decisions made in responding to reports of peer on peer abuse will be made by the academy on a case-by-case basis. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will take a leading role, using their professional judgement, and supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required. Any disclosures should be passed to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) immediately who will risk assess the situation. The risk assessment should be recorded electronically and kept constantly under review in consideration of the measures required to keep all pupils safe. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will liaise with the parents of the children involved and engage with children's social care and the police

	where a crime has been committed. Immediate support will be given to the victim. Peer on peer abuse is not tolerated at the academy and the principal, with the designated safeguarding lead will determine an appropriate response which may include support or sanction for the alleged perpetrator.
What staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns)	Report concerns immediately to the DSL/DDSL
Any arrangements to support children the school or college are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition	Senior leaders, especially the DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support
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	See below

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)

The optimal scenario for any school or college providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case there are 2 options to consider:

- 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 trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, the department recommend a senior leader takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL (or deputy) should provide support to teachers and pastoral 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 site via school phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they should withhold their personal number.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). 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.

DSLs (and deputies) should continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.

Every school will face unique challenges at this time, including as they welcome back more children. Where reasonably possible and where relevant, the DSL (or deputy) should consider these challenges in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection policy as appropriate.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children for the purposes of continued attendance during the coronavirus outbreak are those across all year groups who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment (risk assessment guidance), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion

Read more in the guidance on vulnerable children and young people.

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and virtual school heads will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period. School staff (supported by the DSL or deputy) should continue to work with and support children's social workers, virtual school heads and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners to help protect vulnerable children.

Attendance

Vulnerable children attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending. Vulnerable children – regardless of year group – that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to nursery, early years, school provision where this would now be appropriate for them to do so. We expect educational providers and other relevant partners to work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school, where attendance is appropriate. A brief summary of attendance expectations across the different groups of vulnerable children is as follows:

- for vulnerable children who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable
- for vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment

- for vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school or local authority discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable

Read more in the guidance on vulnerable children and young people.

Schools 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. To support the above, schools should take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Parents and carers will not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision.

Schools 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.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The important thing for these staff will be awareness of any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school or college, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up to date child protection policy will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE.

The existing workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving academy should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. If recruiting new staff, academies should continue to

follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

Where an academy is 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.

Regarding members of the school workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the response to coronavirus. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on schools to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason the school has concerns about the individual, they may obtain a new check in the usual way.

Schools must continue to follow their legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 179 of KCSIE.

Schools should continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 182 of KCSIE and the TRA's advice for making a referral. During the coronavirus period all referrals should be made by emailing misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers

will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. This will be more important than ever as more children and staff return. As such, schools must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164-171 in KCSIE. The SCR can, if a school chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school or college on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Schools have a legal duty under KCSiE para 211 et seq about managing cases of allegations that might indicate where an individual has behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. The reason is because of transferrable risk. Where a member of staff or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school/college which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children. For example, a member of staff is involved in domestic violence at home. No children were involved, but schools/colleges need to consider what triggered these actions and could a child in the school trigger the same reaction, therefore being put at risk.

Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Where they have children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children returning to school from 1 June onwards, schools and colleges should ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools can help schools to identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school or college (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from specialist staff or support services.

Teachers should be aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of those students/pupils (and their parents) who are continuing to work from home, including when setting expectations of childrens' work. The DfE has provided separate guidance on remote education practices during the coronavirus outbreak.

Online safety

It is more important than ever that academies provide a safe environment, including online. Academies should continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read guidance on what "appropriate" looks like) are in place to protect children when they are online on the academy IT systems or recommended resources. Academy Leadership should consider who in their institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements and should also consider their contingency arrangements are if their IT staff become unavailable.

The UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing bodies and proprietors assure themselves that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

Internet Matters vulnerable children in a digital world-report may help governing bodies, proprietors, senior leaders and DSLs understand more about the potential increased risks some groups of children can face online.

The UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline, email helpline@saferinternet.org.uk or telephone 0344 381 4772 provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face.

The NSPCC Learning website also provides useful support and training opportunities for professionals.

The LA may also be able to provide support.

Children and online safety away from the academy

All schools should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all their children safe. Whilst more children return to school and college, others will continue to stay at home and, in many cases, will be continuing to engage with their school online.

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should continue to be made to children's social care and as required the police.

Remote education

The DfE has provided guidance on safeguarding and remote education to support schools and colleges plan lessons safely. Case studies are available for schools to learn from each other's emerging practice as they develop their approaches to providing remote education.

Virtual lessons and live streaming

There is no expectation that teachers should live stream or provide pre-recorded videos. Schools should consider the approaches that best suit the needs of their children and staff.

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.

In addition, guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning includes detailed advice for real time online teaching and the London Grid for Learning safeguarding advice includes platform specific advice.

Teaching from home is different to teaching in the classroom. Teachers should try to find a quiet or private room or area to talk to pupils, parents or carers. When broadcasting a lesson or making a recording, also consider what will be in the background.

Online safety

All schools should continue to consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct) should be followed. This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

Schools should, as much as is reasonably possible, consider if their existing policies adequately reflect that some children (and in some cases staff) continue to work remotely online. As with the child protection policy, in some cases an annex/addendum summarising key coronavirus related changes may be more effective than re-writing/re-issuing the whole policy.

The principles set out in the guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium may help schools and colleges satisfy themselves that their staff behaviour

policies are robust and effective. In some areas schools and colleges may be able to seek support from their local authority when planning online lessons/activities and considering online safety.

Schools should continue to ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection requirements.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- Childline - for support
- UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Schools are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should continue to be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will asked to access and be clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents and carers, schools and colleges should emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children.

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- Thinkuknow provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- Parent info is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- Childnet offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- Internet Matters provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- London Grid for Learning has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online

- Net-aware has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- Let's Talk About It has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- UK Safer Internet Centre has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

Government has also provided:

- support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online harms, includes advice about specific harms such as online child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying
- support to stay safe online includes security and privacy settings, blocking unsuitable content, and parental controls

The DfE encourages schools to share this support with parents and carers.