

Coronavirus (Covid-19) – Safeguarding during School Closure and Remote Learning

This annex to the Safeguarding Policy applies to the period of school closure as a result of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Keeping Children Safe in Schools – Key Principles

The current situation is not 'business as usual' but the following key principles provide the focus during the period of school closure:

- The safety and best interests of the child should always be the main priority
- All staff should act immediately if they have a safeguarding concern about a child.
- The DSL (or deputy) should always be available
- Unsuitable people should not be allowed to gain access to children.
- Children should be protected when they are online.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Andrew Cook.

The deputy DSL is Phil Davies.

When students are on site the optimal scenario is to have the DSL, or a member of staff trained to DSL level, on site. If this is not possible the DSL, or deputy, will be available to be contacted by phone.

Where a member of staff trained to DSL level, is not available on site a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This may include updating and managing child protection records (CPOMS), liaising with the offsite DSL and liaising with a child's social worker where required.

It is important that all staff have access to the DSL, or deputy, and know on any given day how they can contact them. Most staff working from home will not have access to CPOMs to report and record safeguarding concerns. While the school closure continues all staff can contact the DSL directly by using the following methods:

Telephone: 07592 328079

Email: aco@little-lever.bolton.sch.uk

For the period that Covid-19 measures are in place, all staff who have received Level 3 safeguarding training (DSL level) training can be classed as operating at DSL level, even if they have missed their refresher training. Therefore the following staff can deputise as acting DSL or assistant DSL should the need arise:

Dominic Mckee, Samantha Leigh, Carleen Fernside, Marie Richardson, Mike Beaumont, Siobhan Guy, Toni Hills

Staff will be informed by email should any changes be made to DSL arrangements

Vulnerable children

It is expected that all children with a social worker will continue to attend school unless it is agreed – in consultation with the child’s social worker and family - that it is not in the child’s best interests for them to attend.

The school may consider making places available to children ‘on the edge’ of receiving children’s social care support if it judges that this will have significant safeguarding benefits.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and children that are looked after (LAC), can attend school if it is not possible for them to be cared for safely at home.

To support those vulnerable students who remain at home the DSL and SENDCO will create lists and code students red, amber and green in accordance with their level of need. Where students are judged red contact with home will be made at least twice each week. Students marked amber will be contacted once a week and those judged green will be contacted at least once every two weeks. These lists are subject to continual review and update.

Attendance

Each day the school will follow up on any vulnerable child who is expected to attend, but do not.

The school will follow up with any parent/carer who has arranged for their child to be cared for in school that does not attend.

Where it has been arranged for a child to be cared for on the school site all parents/carers should provide school with at least two current emergency contact numbers.

Whenever a vulnerable child does not take up their place, or discontinues attendance, their social worker should be informed by the DSL or SENDCO.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All staff will be made aware by email of the revised procedures that have been put in place for reporting their concerns if they are worried about a child.

Basic safeguarding induction training will continue to be provided where new staff are recruited. This will take place by email and include a summary of the procedures and protocols for reporting concerns about a child, a copy of the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Where staff arrive at the school on a temporary basis from a different setting, as part of flexible supervision arrangements, the DSL will judge on a case-by-case basis the level of induction training required. At the very least they will receive a copy of the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure, details of the school and local procedures for reporting concerns and details of arrangements for contacting the DSL.

Children moving schools

Where a child moves to another setting relevant welfare and child protection information will be shared with the receiving institution. For LAC, arrangements will be managed by the Virtual Headteacher (VSH). The receiving institution receive a one-page summary explaining why the child is considered vulnerable and what arrangements have been put in place to support them. Relevant EHC plans, Child in Need Plans, Child Protection Plans will be shared with the receiving institution. The PEP will be provided for LAC along with the name of the social worker and VSH. Where possible this information will be provided before the child moves.

While full regard to GDPR and data protection procedures will be given, this will not be used as a reason not to share information required for keeping children safe.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movements of staff

The school will continue to use the safer recruitment procedures set out on Part 3 of KCSIE, in conjunction with the revised guidance from DBS in response to Covid-19 to reduce the need for face-to-face contact.

Risk assessments set out in paragraphs 167-172 of KCSIE will still be used for volunteers.

Where staff from a different school setting move to the school on a temporary basis the school will contact their current employer to ensure that they have appropriate DBS status.

On any given day a formal record will be kept of all staff/volunteers who are present in school. The Single Central Record will continue to be updated, in line with paragraphs 148 and 156 of KCSIE, to take account of this. This will include any staff on 'loan' from other institutions.

Mental health

When setting expectations of children's work all staff need to understand that the mental health of parents/carers and students may be currently affected by negative experiences and distressing life events. The NSPCC has reported a dramatic increase in the number of children contacting Childline because of anxiety relating to Covid-19.

Support will be provided for children who are being cared for on the school site. This will make use of existing provision, though this may be provided remotely over the phone. Support may also be provided by specialist staff and support services.

If any member of staff has a concern about the emotional or mental health of a child – either on the school site or through remote contact from children in their homes – they should report this to the DSL who will co-ordinate the provision of appropriate support.

Online safety in school

Firewalls to filter content available on the school network system, and the Impero monitoring system, will continue to operate to support children when they are online on the school system. A member of staff with the appropriate technical knowledge will always be available, either in person or by telephone, to maintain safe IT arrangements.

Children and online safety away from school

It is essential that staff who interact with students online continue to look for signs that a child may be at risk. Concerns should be dealt with as set out in the section below – **‘How to report safeguarding and child protection concerns during the Covid-19 school closure’**.

Staff should take care to ensure that all online communication with students is appropriate. If staff are using video links to communicate with students, they should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Under no circumstances should staff engage in a one to one video link with a student
- Appropriate settings should be used for video links (e.g. not a bedroom)
- Staff using video links should be dressed appropriately and ensure that all other participants are dressed appropriately
- Video links should be made against a plain or neutral background. Photographs or pictures of other individuals should not be visible in a video link.
- Staff should ensure that all video link communications are recorded and stored.

While communicating online with students staff should remain mindful that this is a difficult time for all families, and will be a very distressing, time for some families.

All staff should ensure that all online learning tools and systems meet privacy and GDPR requirements. For this reason WhatsApp should not be used by staff to communicate with students.

Promoting child safety during school closure

Students need to be clear how they can report any concerns that may arise while working online from home. Guidance on how to stay safe and how to report concerns back to school are set out in the section below – **‘How to stay safe while working from home’**. This will be placed on the school website and social media accounts.

Regular contacts between school and parents/carers should be used to reinforce the importance that children should be keeping themselves safe online.

Where parents/carers indicate they wish to supplement their child’s learning by using online companies or tutors they should be reminded of the importance of only using reputable

organisations or individuals that can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children.

Where the school has provided equipment to support home learning - such as laptops, Chromebooks or internet 'dongles' - it is expected that this will be used in accordance with the school's IT policies and procedures. Where there is evidence that this equipment is being misused the school may decide to recall it. Should the misuse involve inappropriate or illegal conduct the DSL may decide to make a referral to children's social care or the police.

How to report safeguarding and child protection concerns during the Covid-19 school closure

It is vital that you remain vigilant concerning safeguarding and child protection matters while working with students remotely during the period of school closure.

If you do become concerned about the safety of a child this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

The DSL is Andrew Cook. The deputy DSL is Phil Davies.

The DSL can be contacted directly by phone, voicemail or text at

07592 328079

Or by email at aco@little-lever.bolton.sch.uk

You will receive acknowledgement that your report has been received as soon as possible, and certainly within 24 hours.

You may be asked to provide additional details to assist with any subsequent investigation.

Please note that the system of using CPOMS to report safeguarding concerns has been suspended for the period of school closure.

You can also contact children's social care services directly on the following numbers:

Bolton Children's Services Referral and Assessment

01204 331500 (office hours) 01204 337777 (out of hours)

Bury MASH

0161 253 5678 (office hours) 0161 253 6606 (out of hours)

If you believe the child has been the victim of crime you can call the police on 101

If you believe the child is in immediate danger call the police on 999

You must inform the DSL if you have contacted children's social care or the police directly.

How to stay safe while working from home

Even though you are not currently working in school your safety and wellbeing is still very important to us. If you are feeling unsafe, anxious or unhappy you can get support from the school by calling, texting or leaving a voicemail on the following number:

07592 328079

Or you can send an email to aco@little-lever.bolton.sch.uk

A member of staff will contact you to provide you with support and advice.

You are probably spending more time online than normal at present and it is important that you remember the key rules for keeping yourself safe:

- Only communicate online with people you know
- Do not share personal information online (e.g. address, phone numbers)
- Set your social media accounts to private so only the people you want to can view them
- Block and report anybody you are concerned about

There are many organisations that you contact if you feel unsafe or unhappy. These include:

Childline Phone 0800 1111 (free) Online: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

CEOPS Reporting online safety concerns <https://tinyurl.com/orfuphs>

Think You Know Online safety advice <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

NSPCC (Mental health advice) <https://tinyurl.com/vszc9ee>

Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Place 2be <https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

Kooth – Online counselling and support <https://www.kooth.com/>

If you feel unsafe and need of immediate help call the police on 999