



safeguarding children in Stockport

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Interim Safeguarding & Child Protection Arrangements for Schools & Colleges- Coronavirus
(Covid-19)

PARENTS' VERSION

Context

April2020

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that all schools and colleges are under as a result of the required responses to addressing coronavirus (Covid-19), we understand it remains essential that we continue to be a safe place for students.

This guidance is designed to support us a whole school community to ensure we continue to have appropriate regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education ([KCSIE 2019](#)) and promote the welfare of all our students.

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- With regard to safeguarding, 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 immediately in line with existing expectation
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy (DDSL) must be available. If they are not on site due to self-isolation or any other reason, they must be contactable by phone during school working hours.
- Safer working practices must be maintained -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 safeguarded when they are online.

Schools are therefore being asked to continue to **provide care** for a limited number of children - children who are **vulnerable**, and children whose parents are **critical** to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Vulnerable children include those who are supported by a social care (have a social worker), those with **safeguarding and welfare needs**, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).

Additional information is available by following the link below.

<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>

As well as safeguarding those children who are attending our setting, thought must be given to how we safeguard those children at home who are also deemed to be vulnerable.

Safeguarding principles remain unchanged. How we escalate and manage them is communicated here and will be shared with all Governors and staff to ensure they are understood by the whole school community. This document is an annex to our more detailed safeguarding policy which still contains relevant details and information on recognising and responding to abuse and continues to be a source of reference.

As a school and in line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) we are committed to working in partnership with Stockport Local Authority and Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all should make sure their approach remains child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. We work in a multi-agency way understanding no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

1 Safeguarding vulnerable* Students remotely

We remain committed to supporting our vulnerable students and will take the following steps:

- Where vulnerable students are not in school we will ensure that contact is maintained by the school with all vulnerable pupils at least once per week, by email in the first instance. This will be the responsibility of the main DSL or the Deputy DSL. If both are unavailable, it will pass to one of the other DSLs, who will be asked to undertake this. This will either be Victoria Krywonos (vitoria.krywonos@northcheshire.srockport.sch.uk) or Kirstie Snape (kirstie.snape@northcheshire.stockport.sch.uk).
- Where it is identified that a child or family are in need of additional support or guidance we will ensure that this is in place. This may include extra contact (most likely phone call), signposting and referring to other services. All interactions will be recorded and stored confidentially.
- All vulnerable children and families should be provided with a point of contact for support, namely the main DSL (Michael Woolf) and the Deputy DSL (Karen

Sulman). They can be contacted via school (0161 282 4500) or via email. **Sharing of staff's personal phone numbers and emails is to be avoided.**

*Described in appendix 1

2 School provision for students currently supported at Team Around the Child (TAC) Level 3 or subject to a Child Protection Plan

Children and families who have an allocated Social Worker will **continue** to be supported by them. A set of working principles has been devised and is included in the last section of this document.

Schools continue to be a potential key source of additional support to this group. The established relationships between school and family are of great value and may be key to them feeling confident in seeking and engaging with help when it is needed.

Going forward we recognise these children may need to **access school** and engage in the **daily care offer**. Where these children need to attend, we will work with Social Workers to offer such a placement. Where families inform us of a need for help, by way of a placement, we will work with them and Children's Social Care (as appropriate) to agree a plan of support. Where we believe a child is at risk of significant harm or danger, we will refer our concerns (by **phone** in the first instance) to Children's Social Care – as described in our full Safeguarding Policy.

We will ensure that a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is available* to support staff where they have concerns about a child.

This includes:

- Children attending the setting.
- Those children and their families being contacted by school staff as part of a support package.
- Children who cause concern through other contact or interactions with staff e.g. through remote learning offers etc.

3 Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes completing a note of concern (NOC) and if required a skin map, and report to one of the DSLs.

In the unlikely event that there is no DSL on site, the member of staff reporting the disclosure/observation should call the DSL and follow this up by emailing BOTH the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy DSL their concern. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Any NOC / skin map received off site, will be saved and once back in school, printed off and placed in the secure folder.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the headteacher This should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mark Hilton - mark.hilton@northcheshire.stockport.sch.uk

The Headteacher will offer support in the process of managing allegations.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and their deputy are covered in our main Safeguarding Policy.

If staff cannot reach the DSL/DDSL, and they consider a child to be at immediate risk of harm they will contact the Multi –agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) tel. (0161) 217-6028 or 6024 or the Police -999 as they feel appropriate.

If the family lives in Trafford, Children’s First Response should be contacted (TCFR) tel. (0161) 912 5125.

If the family lives in Manchester, please contact Manchester Safeguarding Partnership. tel. (0161) 234 5001 <https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/children-young-people/>

If the family lives in Cheshire East, please contact Cheshire East Safeguarding Partnership - tel 0300 123 5012 (option 3)

<http://www.cheshireeastscb.org.uk/homepage.aspx>

The DSL/DDSL & other pastoral staff will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

4 Young carers

We understand that at this current time students who are young carers may benefit from additional contact and support. We are committed to working with other agencies to support their wellbeing and will take the following steps:

- Once a week phone contact with the young person
- Make sure the young carer knows how to access advice for the person they are caring for
- Awareness of help and support through Stockport's website for guidance.
- Offer of food support if needed
- Recorded and report concerns in the appropriate way
- If support and guidance are required, please contact: Katy Franklin
Signpost for Young Carers in Stockport
<https://www.signpostforcarers.org.uk/>

5 Children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)

On the 27th March 2020, the central Government produced guidance on supporting vulnerable children. 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

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those with an EHC plan should be risk-assessed by their school or college in consultation with the local authority (LA) and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services.

Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home. Schools, colleges, other training providers and local authorities will need to consider the needs of all

children and young people with an EHC plan, alongside the views of their parents, and make a risk assessment for each child or young person. Local authorities and schools or colleges should decide together who is best placed to undertake the risk assessment, noting that the duty to ensure provision remains with the local authority. They will need to consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This must be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered

We expect most children and young people with EHC plans will fall into the following categories:

- children and young people who would be at significant risk if their education, health and care provision and placement did not continue, namely those who could not safely be supported at home. This may include those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those receiving significant levels of personal care support. Local authorities will need to work with the individual's educational setting – especially residential special schools and specialist colleges – as well as local health partners, to ensure they are able to remain open wherever possible. This may mean deploying staff from other education settings, to keep staffing ratios safe
- children and young people whose needs can be met at home, namely those who are not receiving personal care from their educational setting, or whose limited need for personal care can be met in their family home.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans; with local authorities needing instead to apply 'reasonable endeavours' to support these children and their families. As such, where the Secretary of State has issued a temporary notice and a local authority is unable to secure the full range of provision stated in a plan, as long as they use their 'reasonable endeavours' to do this, they won't be penalised for failing to meet the existing duty in section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

During this outbreak, educational settings, local authorities, health bodies, parents and young people with SEND should work together to respond pragmatically and flexibly to each individual's needs.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 will help the government respond to the outbreak. This legislation gives the Secretary of State powers to provide for local authorities where appropriate temporarily to have more flexibility to prioritise their efforts to support those with the most complex needs.

Local authorities will need to work closely with educational settings – and in particular, special schools and specialist colleges, and other specialist provision – to ensure sufficient provision is available across the local area. Local authorities and educational settings may need to redeploy staff (whether teachers, support staff or other critical workers) to ensure that specialist settings have sufficient workforce to operate safely; and may need to do this across the usual boundaries of maintained, academy, college or other status to ensure the right staff are in the right settings.

Any changes made to a child or young person's provision in their EHC plan would only remain in place temporarily. The full range of provision would be reinstated once the temporary notice expires.

We are also proposing to amend regulations to provide for flexibility over matters such as the timescales in EHC needs assessments, and the reviews, re-assessments and amendments processes where particular cases are affected by the COVID-19 situation.

The Department for Education will seek to ensure that local authorities receive clear guidance and support to help them manage these new requirements effectively.

6 Supporting children in school

NCJPS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

We will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, appropriate support is in place for them.

Where there are concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we work with Stockport Local Authority.

7 Safeguarding Children (off school site)

As a school we recognise that our students may face challenges and be exposed to risks whilst away from school for this extended period. School staff will still have contact with

students, and we will use this time as an opportunity to offer support, advice and guidance, applying the principles of the school environment to offer suitable pastoral support. Everyone has a role to play and we expect staff to be vigilant in their interactions with students. Staff should take steps to safeguard pupils by contacting the DSL/DDSL or by making a direct referral
(in line with usual expectations- see school safeguarding policy and as described in section 2 above).

8 Online safety

It is likely many students are accessing internet enabled devices more frequently whilst families follow the advice of the government to 'stay at home'. This is also currently our primary source of contact with most of our students. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we continue to create as many opportunities as we can to support and educate children on how to stay safe online. Staff should be mindful of existing policies and the details described by the DfE in KCSiE19 -[teaching-online-safety-in-schools](#) .

NCJPS will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

9 Peer Abuse

NCJPS recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing students on and off site and providing support to any report of such abuse.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in the main safeguarding policy and in part 5 of KCSiE.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on a note of concern and appropriate referrals made.

10 Attendance

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

If NCJPS has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

The DfE and Stockport LA have shared guidance on recording and reporting pupil's attendance- see advisory notes. You can insert an appropriate statement here

11 Emotional wellbeing

We recognise the complexities and challenges of the Covid-19 crisis and the potential impact it may have on the emotional wellbeing of our staff and pupils. We will continually review guidance and cascade information across our workforce. We ask staff to be vigilant for signs of distress and to respond to them in line with our usual working practice.

<https://www.gov.uk/education/health-safety-and-wellbeing-in-schools>

12 Encompass

As an Encompass school we received notifications from the Police informing us when there has been an incident of domestic abuse or violence at a child's home. This process is to continue, and we will actively monitor notifications, risk assess them in conjunction with other information we hold and escalate our concerns. We will make assessments on a case by case basis of the need to contact families following a notification.

13 Safer recruitment & safer working practice

Any new staff, visitors or volunteers will be risk assessed and inducted in line with existing practice and in compliance with part 3 KCSiE.

Staff should continue to apply the principles of our safer working practice standards and general code of conduct.

It is particularly important that staff pay regard to previous advice and guidance on safer working practice, **especially in relation to any online activity**.

14 Staff training & safeguarding induction

All existing school/college staff have completed statutory safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSiE, safer working practice and the school's safeguarding policy. Staff should adhere to the principles of these key documents and this supplementary guide. Staff should also be aware that there may be further updates and guidance. Individuals will need to be vigilant and ensure that they read all new guidance and ask for clarity or support if required.

The existing Stockport school and college workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. Any staff arriving at this

school/college from another establishment will be given a tailored induction and copies of the school safeguarding and safer working practice policy.

Appendices

Definitions

The DfE states “Attending education settings is known as a protective factor for children receiving the support of a social worker. It is right that we prioritise support for those who will benefit the most. We are balancing this carefully with the urgent need to reduce social contact right across society to support our work to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Leaders of educational settings and designated safeguarding leads know who their most vulnerable children are and will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children’s social care support.”

Vulnerable children (DfE definition)

The definition of and information on vulnerable children can be found by following the link below.

Please pay particular regard to Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 6, 13 and 14

<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>

Advisory Notes & Additional Information

Advice on the use social media by education colleagues- Covid19 arrangements

During this period of disruption, we are seeing some truly creative approaches to engaging young people, particularly from the education sector. It is important that we do not lose sight of safeguarding practices and standards, or the reasons we have them in the first place. When using Social media or other platforms we need to risk assess continuously. Although these are unprecedented times and we do not have a 'map' for many of the unfolding challenges. We can support our colleagues to work safely and continue to apply safer working standards.

As a starting point it may be useful to refresh on the specific age limits that are applied to platforms.

Most social media services require users to be at least 13 years of age to access and use their services. This includes Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Musical.ly and Skype. WhatsApp has an age restriction of 16 years and older.

Using social media as a learning platform is not recommended, because of the age restrictions in place and also because there is opportunity to create informal relationships between students and staff.

Whilst there is no age restriction for watching videos on YouTube, users need to be 13 or older to have their own YouTube account (enabling them to subscribe to other channels, like videos, post comments, share their own content and flag inappropriate content). As a

sector we have worked consistently to ensure that these messages are repeatedly shared with parents and carers as part of our approaches to safeguarding. As role models in the community I am sure you all agree that we must follow our own advice and respect the guidelines.

Obviously, it is important we have routes to interact and exchange information with young people as it is a key way to safeguard their physical and emotional wellbeing; as well as offering informal opportunities to learn and maintain a sense of identity and belonging. If you have existing mechanisms such as virtual learning environments it would be better to use these creatively and ensure staff continue to apply the expected risk assessments. Staff can of course use and promote appropriate sites and where possible encourage children to share their work and experiences, but this has to be in a safe and controlled way. Using external platforms will potentially remove a lot of safeguards.

Staff need to continue to maintain their professional standards in these more informal times, and you may wish to remind them of your respective standards and acceptable user agreements. This should help avoid momentary lapses in judgment and encourage colleagues to reflect on language, dress, environments and any materials or videos before they publish content.

Using a learning platform to set assignments.

The next level is setting work remotely via a learning platform. Many schools will already have access to Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams (part of Office 365) or both. If staff are familiar with using Google Docs or Google Drive then starting to use Google Classroom should be quite simple. It is cleanly laid out and intuitive to use. Here is a link to a 16-minute tutorial video which covers the key points.

You should contact your IT provider if you wish to use Google Classroom for support on adding individual pupils.

School ICT Services (AVA) also have a series of useful guides they have provided to clients previously- <https://www.sseln.org.uk/how-to-guides>

You may also find the following useful-

Google Classroom Tutorial (16 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6L-nZGIUTE>

Lots of useful tips for Google Classroom (19 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCNlmsWUxZA&t=581s>

There are a number of benefits of using these platforms including:

- Being able to set and schedule assignments.

- Setting tasks for groups of pupils.
- Pupils can submit work.
- Quizzes can be auto-marked.
- Pupils can ask questions
- Staff can provide feedback and grading.

Safeguarding note: If pupils are being asked to share photos of their work with their teacher, the teacher should remind them about key messages around online safety and the school's usual policy around photographs should apply. The school's online safety coordinator should be consulted for advice.

Use of personal phones and use of email

It may be helpful to remind staff of the need to withhold their telephone number if they are using a personal phone to contact pupils. If staff are emailing students, this should only be from their work account.

It may be useful to consider and remind staff of the contents of your safer working practice guide, sections 11 and 12 are particularly relevant. A copy is attached for reference.