Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers

Based on the latest government guidance, which we recommend you read carefully, please find below a checklist which you may wish to use to ensure you have considered all relevant areas.

1.	The DSL has shared the latest government guidance with all staff 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
2.	All staff have received copies of any policies which have been updated during Covid-19 e.g. Child Protection and Safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour policy.
3.	All staff are aware of the most recent guidance on actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020 and the guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings to support this.
4.	**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** Schools and colleges will have an effective child protection policy in place reflecting business as usual. **The LA will not be producing a template for schools at this point in time, as each school's circumstances will be individual and their policy should be updated if they are planning for the return of more students**. In some cases, a coronavirus annex/addendum that summarizes any key coronavirus related changes might be more effective than re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy. The revised child protection policy should reflect the return of more children from 1 June and this might include, but should not be limited to: - reflecting that staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following partial school closures - 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 immediately on any safeguarding concerns, including new concerns where children are returning - reflecting (where resources allow) that DSLs (and deputies) will have more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more children return - reflecting the importance of ensuring relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children (including returning children) remains accurate. Schools and colleges (led by the DSL or deputy) 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 (and deputy) arrangements - peer on peer abuse - given the 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) - 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) - the approach to protecting vulnerable children (see below for further details on vulnerable children)

	- 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 for further details covering online safety) - any updated advice received from the local safeguarding partners. DSLs (or deputies) should be leading the school or college's input into the local arrangements - 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 **The School's Safeguarding team will be happy to review any school policy on request**
5	**Health and Safety Risk Assessments** The health and Safety risk assessments produced (as set out in <u>action or education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June</u>) are appropriately linked into to the safeguarding and child protection policy and all staff are aware of the updates
6.	**Prevent** All school staff remain vigilant about the risks of radicalisation and know exactly what to do if they have any concerns
7.	**Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)** As more children return, it is expected that schools and colleges will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible, and where this is the case there are two 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, a senior leader should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site **If a school makes alternative arrangements in the short term it would be really helpful if they could let the Schools' Safeguarding team know of the changes.**
8.	**Pastoral Support** 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 school or college site via school or college phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they should withhold their personal number.
9.	**Training for DSLs** 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.

	The Schools' Safeguarding team will continue to send out a weekly Safe To Learn Bulletin and we hope to resume virtual training after half term … watch out for an update on Safe To learn and let us know if you would be interested in training for DSLs or for your whole staff.
10.	**Training for Staff** DSLs should ensure all staff are informed of any relevant changes to local procedures; using Safe To Learn, and individual school procedures . Any new staff, including staff working in a school on a temporary basis should receive an appropriate induction from the DSL and a copy of the relevant policies
11.	**Vulnerable Children** School and college 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.
12.	**Attendance** Vulnerable children's 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 or college 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 or college, 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 <u>households with possible coronavirus infection</u> and <u>shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable</u> - for vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following <u>risk assessment</u>, 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, college 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 <u>households with possible coronavirus infection</u> and <u>shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable</u>
13.	**Children moving schools and colleges** Please use the checklist provided by the Schools' Safeguarding team to ensure all necessary steps are taken to keep all students safe. <u>https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/Looked%20after%20children/Safeguarding-Procedures-for-Children-Moving-Schools-02-04-20_1.pdf</u>
14.	**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. Schools and colleges should use their judgement on whether recruitment is needed and how this can best be done given the circumstances. 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. In response to coronavirus, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact
15.	**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
16.	**Online safety in settings and for remote learning** Ensure that the IT technician/e-safety lead are aware of any changes to school policy and that the necessary steps are taken to continue the monitoring of computer use in school. It may be deemed necessary to update the schools acceptable use policy/guidance and reissue this to all staff and students. Any such guidance should reflect current government advice - guidance on safeguarding and remote education
17.	**Staff Code of Conduct** 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.
18.	**And finally** **Make sure you have systems in place to support the DSL and other staff** **The schools' safeguarding team are still working and can be contacted for advice or support.** 1. **Carol Leckie** Carol.Leckie@northumberland.gov.uk 2. **Justine Clephane** Justine.Clephane@northumberland.gov.uk 3. **Victoria Kinneavy** Victoria.Kinneavy@northumberland.gov.uk **ONE CALL - 01670 536400**