

Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership with Northumberland Education and Skills Service

Half termly bulletin for Governors, Headteachers/Principals and Designated Safeguarding Leads
in Schools, Academies and Alternative Providers

Issue 30: 27th March 2020

DSL support during the Coronavirus Covid 19 outbreak

Arrangements for children's social care

The following measures were implemented in children's social care with immediate effect following the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 23rd March 2020.

Social care work will now focus on the following priorities:

- Children at risk of significant harm or where safeguarding issues are raised
- Children whose placement is at risk of breakdown (this includes home, care, independent or supported living)

Children's Services staff from areas which do not provide services solely within the priority categories above are, where possible, supporting work in those priority areas. Staff at NAS (Northumberland Adolescent Services) are providing a range of support to vulnerable young people within the priority groups.

Following a national direction, children's centres are now closed and universal youth provision has ceased.

While it is crucially important that we support family time for our children who are looked after, given the inherent risks in direct face to face contact, we are now facilitating this contact through the use of technology such as Skype and Facetime. The temporary ceasing of face to face contact has been supported by our local family court.

As you are fully aware, the overall situation continues to evolve and we may well need to make further adjustments and changes to the working arrangements of all staff to ensure priority areas of work are covered. Schools will be kept up to date with changes through social workers and on a case by case basis.

Children missing from education during school closure

A reminder that there is still a children missing protocol in place even though schools are closed.

On a daily basis DSLs should:

- Make sure they know which children on their school roll/AP register have a social worker (contact Vicky Kinneavy for clarification if necessary) and/or and EHCP
- Know who to expect at school/provision each day
- If an expected child doesn't arrive then contact home - parent/carer (ie carry out the usual reasonable checks for CME)
- If you can't make contact then contact the social worker **and** education welfare (educationwelfare@northumberland.gov.uk)

If you have significant concerns about a child who is either expected to attend or who is currently at home, then you should contact OneCall in the usual way – 01670 536400.

Changes to working arrangements: Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs)

From 24th March all face to face Child Protection Conferences and looked after reviews have been suspended. IROs will be using technology to hold virtual meetings with Google Meet or Hangout. The meetings will be led by the IROs and joining instructions will be sent prior to the conference either by the admin team or the conference Chair. If these fail the Chair will undertake a call round to to gather the views of everyone and the information will be recorded and distributed accordingly.

We appreciate that these are difficult times and the way in which we carry out our vital work needs to change - if we are no longer having face to face meetings we need to be confident decisions are being made with the right information - so reports will need to be shared within our prescribed timescales.

Designated Safeguarding Leads are encouraged to contact the IRO Team Manager Jan Tilson (Jan.Tilson@Northumberland.gov.uk, 01670 620293) or Adam Hall (Adam.Hall01@northumberland.gov.uk, 01670 623979) with any queries or information.

From the Schools' Safeguarding Team

The Northumberland Schools' Safeguarding Team would like to thank all DSLs, Headteachers, teachers and support staff for the amazing response to the continually changing situation and instructions being received as we live through this extraordinary period. Northumberland schools have done their very best to stay open for the most vulnerable children who need your support more than ever in this time of crisis. Thank you to all the Northumberland school staff who are also looking after the children of the essential workers so they can help the country stay safe and well for as long as possible. Thank you to everyone who is driving miles around the county to deliver free school meals to the families that need them. You are all doing a fantastic job in the most difficult circumstances.

The Northumberland Schools' Safeguarding Team are here to help with any advice or support that you might need. Please stay in touch with us. We are able to offer one to one virtual meetings to support you with your safeguarding needs, and to talk over some of the issues you are currently facing. If this is something you would like, please send an email to any of the team members and we will set up a meeting time.

The team contact details are:

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Victoria Kinneavy - Education Safeguarding Liaison Officer

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Wash your hands of coronavirus scams

[National Trading Standards](#) has launched a campaign, with useful promotional resources, to warn against unscrupulous criminals who are exploiting fears about COVID-19 to prey on members of the public, particularly older and vulnerable people who are isolated from family and friends. National Trading Standards is warning people to remain vigilant following a rise in coronavirus-related scams that seek to benefit from the public's concern and uncertainty over COVID-19. Follow the [link to their website](#) for further information.

Government guidance on vulnerable children and young people

Published on Sunday, 22nd March 2020, this DfE guidance is particularly important for headteachers of special schools, PRUs and alternative provisions; as well as local authority staff involved in work with SEND and vulnerable young people.

The government is advising that special schools, alternative provisions and PRUs should remain open.

The guidance has FAQs to help clarify many concerns. The guidance can be found [here](#).

This guidance is also available in the 'Information for DSLs' folder that has been shared with all Northumberland DSLs. Please check this folder regularly as it is being updated routinely with new Covid-19 guidance, as well as other safeguarding information.

Supporting vulnerable children

The DfE has produced new guidance to support schools to record the attendance of vulnerable children during this time of partial school closures. The guidance is available [here](#) and is also in the 'Information for DSLs' folder.

The Education & Skills Service in Northumberland is also asking that you share the submit the same information daily on a google form, starting from 26th March 2020. The form and guidance can be found on the [Northumberland Education](#) web page.

How to implement social distancing

Government guidance has been published on [how to implement social distancing in education and childcare settings](#).

To help ensure that the risk of virus spread for both staff and children is as low as possible, education and childcare settings that remain open should:

- tell children, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to visit the education or childcare setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- consider how children arrive at the education or childcare setting and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport
- ensure class sizes reflect the numbers of teaching staff available and are kept as small as possible
- stagger lunch times, break times and the movement of pupils around the school to reduce large groups of children gathering
- discourage parents from gathering at school gates
- try to follow the [social distancing guidelines](#)

Isolation guidance for residential educational settings

The Government has issued new guidance to provide household isolation advice for children and young people who live in residential educational settings, and the staff that support them. There is practical advice for how to manage issues arising from coronavirus for those who care for children and young people with more serious illnesses or special needs in residential special schools and colleges. The guidance can be found [here](#) and also in the 'Information for DSLs' folder.

Volunteers

At this exceptionally busy time, people may wish to volunteer to work with children in your school. Whilst things are stressful and chaotic, another pair of hands might be useful. However, please remember **safer recruitment processes** and that you will need a risk assessment. It may be helpful to start with volunteers you already know, and then the people that are working in schools now, preferably who are on the DBS Update Service and have references; **strangers offering their services may not be suitable**. Andrew Hall from [Safeguarding in Schools](#), has provided a risk assessment which you can view or download to use [here](#).

Risk Assessment Form for visiting children at home

As many of you are visiting families in their homes and delivering food parcels, our advice is that you should be pre-screening each visit before you go. In Children's Services we are using a risk assessment template which you might also find useful and you can find it in the 'Information for DSLs' folder. You will need to make a copy from this master for each visit.

Take care. As well as the risk of transmission of coronavirus, there is an acute risk of domestic violence for many families as the country remains in a state of lock down.

Online training for Designated Safeguarding Leads and school staff

Our Schools' Safeguarding Team Manager, Carol Leckie, has compiled a programme of online training for staff working from home or working on a rota to be in school. The courses will keep you in touch with key safeguarding matters and enhance your knowledge. Group 1 are courses available through [Learning Together](#) and Group 2 are external courses.

Group 1

- Safeguarding and Child Protection for Children's Workforce
- Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Children
- Emotional Abuse
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities
- FGM
- MAPPA
- Signs of Safety
- Private Fostering
- Criminal Exploitation
- Early Help for Children and Families
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Protection Processes
- Honor Based Violence and Forced Marriage
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Understanding SEN Support and EHCPs in Schools
- ROAR (mental health for primary schools)

Group 2

- ACEs ([Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences Early Trauma Online Learning](#)) produced by the Home Office Early Intervention Fund
- [Female Genital Mutilation](#) training
- [Honour Based Violence and Forced marriage](#)
- [Increasing Your Knowledge of Security and Counter Terrorism](#)

And other useful resources

1. Seven tips for headteachers coping with the coronavirus pandemic (Education Support Partnership)

Read more: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/blogs/7-tips-headteachers-coping-coronavirus-pandemic>
Education Support Partnership Helpline 08000 562 561 (24 hours) Txt: 07909 341229

2. Coronavirus: safeguarding during school closure and self-isolation (The Key for School Leaders)

This article from The Key looks at ways to [keep in contact with vulnerable pupils](#).

3. Coronavirus: resources for Mental Health and Wellbeing (Heads Together)

[Heads Together](#) has published a free toolkit with resources and tips to help address anxiety arising from these challenging times.

The toolkit includes a booklet to support schools, videos to provide practical guidance and tips to schools, parents and carers about coronavirus (COVID-19) and mental health, activities to ease anxiety that can be done at school or at home and other helpful advice, helplines and resources for adults and children.

4. Podcast: Coronavirus and child mental health (The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health)

Dr. Jon Goldin is a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist who works at Great Ormond Street Hospital. In this podcast he discusses child mental health in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Further information can be found [here](#).

5. Young Minds Helpline for parents and young people

- If there are concerns about a young person's mental health during this difficult time, you can contact the Young Minds Helplines.
- Parents Helpline: If you are a parent who needs advice about your child's mental health you can contact the Parents Helpline directly on 0808 802 between 9:30am-4pm
- YoungMinds Crisis Messenger: If you are a young person experiencing a mental health crisis you can text YM to 85258 for free 24/7 support

- The Young Minds website is [here](#).

Safe use of Google Hangouts

A message from Northumberland's ICT/ Computing and E-Learning Consultants:

Google Hangouts is turned off for school360 and video chat is not possible in school360 - teachers can upload videos to the classroom (but that is all).

All content within google classroom, even if deleted, can be recovered by the teacher so it's safe to use.

We are discouraging the use of google hangouts or zoo etc to create remote classroom live feeds. It would be impossible to stop students recording these and then editing video etc, and therefore create risk and pressure for teaching staff.

Safeguarding advice for remote teaching / online learning



The [London Grid for Learning](#) has provided advice on a range of safeguarding issues that may arise from remote teaching and online learning. There is also helpful advice on their website around talking to children and young people about coronavirus. This may help them with the anxieties children and young people may be feeling at this uncertain time.

Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour



It is extremely important throughout the outbreak that Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour notifications are checked daily. This will help to ensure that some of our most vulnerable children and young people can still be supported.

PSHE Association

The PSHE Association would like to find out what support you would like from them and have created a short survey for you to complete.

The association also launched a [coronavirus support hub](#) last week to help you to plan and deliver aspects of PSHE education during these challenging times. New materials will be added weekly and they are working on various ways to support you online.

The association would really appreciate your feedback on the services they are offering so please complete the [5 minute survey](#). By completing the survey you will be entered into a draw to win a year's free membership to the PSHE Association.

Education Support Advice for Headteachers

Writing for the Education Support website, Headteacher Darren Morgan offers 7 tips for headteachers and school leaders coping with the coronavirus pandemic:

Number 1 - Be human



It is important to understand that you cannot solve this problem yourself. You won't be able to solve many of the concerns raised by members of your school community. It is crucial that you come to terms with this at an early stage. However, people are looking to you for leadership and guidance, providing a listening ear will provide immense comfort to those who have the faith in you to hear their concerns.

Number 2 - You can't read everything



There is so much information being sent to headteachers at the moment; be it national announcements or commentary, discussions from neighbouring headteachers, social media and information from your leadership team and staff. For your own mental health it is advisable to filter the information you are receiving. It is okay to accept that one cannot take on board this vast amount of news. It may also be helpful to turn off or mute your devices in order to give yourself and your loved ones time each day. This will be a long race, without pacing yourself you will find yourself running out of steam.

Number 3 - Communicate regularly and strategically



There are hundreds of people looking to you for guidance. Regular communication with all members of the school is helpful, it means people feel informed. It is important that children, parents, staff and governors are not left in the dark as this will lead to frustration and perhaps to negativity. Don't communicate too frequently, as many small, sometimes contradictory messages can be confusing to those you are trying to lead.

Number 4 - Be honest



Explaining the reasoning behind your decisions can be very helpful. Part of the difficulty in situations such as this is that we can feel isolated and worry about decisions that have been made in the light of alternative choices made by other schools. Remember that they will feel 'in the same boat' as you. Stating to the parents why the choice has been made and being honest about how you are unsure but are trying to make the right decisions for your school at this difficult time, shows the parents that you are human, which will help to gain their support.

Number 5 - Be visible



When actor and public speaker Ben Walden talks about Henry V at The Battle of Agincourt, he describes how Henry demonstrated different styles of leadership at different times. Fundamentally, during the battle he was visible, his troops could see him and therefore had faith in him. Try to be visible while your school is still partially open, it will help parents, children and staff know you are there to support them.

Number 6 - Don't destroy bridges



There is a risk that during times of crises bridges that have taken many years to construct can be torn down. There will be an end to this crisis and it is important that at that point the school is in the strongest position possible. Remind your staff of this as part of your communication.

Number 7 - Plan for the future



Once this challenging time is over and schools are fully open again, there may be very challenging times in relation to mental health and school finances. It might be helpful to think about these things now and make plans with these in mind.

Help is Available

Teachers and education staff who are feeling stressed or anxious can get confidential emotional support from the [Education Support helpline](#).



The Education support telephone number is 08000 562561

Further information on the Education Support helpline service can be accessed [here](#)

Your next issue of Safe to Learn will be Friday 10th April