Safeguarding – further information for staff, students and families during the Covid 19 Pandemic

This is interim safeguarding guidance - it is under review and will be updated. The information has come from the DfE and Croydon LA.

Help and support
[Advice for the education sector](#) is being updated daily.

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)
The Covid-19 pandemic presents a number of safeguarding challenges for schools, colleges and other education settings. The principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (KCSIE 2019) and associated guidance still apply and in responding to Covid-19 the safeguarding of children must remain paramount. All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance we should continue to have regard to as per our legislative duty.

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that schools and colleges are under, it remains essential that as far as possible they continue to be safe places for children. This guidance supports governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) so they can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep their children safe. It suggests where schools and colleges might consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual.

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 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 continue to be protected when they are online

Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

Child Protection Policy
We currently have an effective child protection policy in place reflecting business as usual. It therefore does not accurately reflect new arrangements in response to COVID-19 and it is important to now review, revise and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve.

Good practice suggests that a COVID-19 addendum summarises any key COVID-19 related changes rather than re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy. This addendum has been written.

It is important that all are aware of both the addendum to our Child Protection Policy as well as the content of this document. Both will be made public via the school website.

Safeguarding arrangements in brief
- The DSL and DDSLs remain on duty and whilst not always on site are contactable via their usual school emails
  - Ms Francis (DSL)   francis@shirley.croydon.sch.uk
  - Ms Doherty (DDSL)   doherty@shirley.croydon.sch.uk
  - Mr Hurst (DDSL)   hurst@shirley.croydon.sch.uk
  - Ms Fair (DDSL)   fair@shirley.croyon.sch.uk

  The reporting system therefore remains the same and concerns, disclosures are to be reported via CPOMS if you are staff and via email if you are a parent/carer.
- Heads of Year will continue to maintain contact with social workers and complete social care information requests, PEPs etc. as required. This will be especially important during the COVID-19 period.

Vulnerable children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government and us as a school. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHCPs. We have also classed as vulnerable, any student for whom the home environment may not be as protective a factor as the school environment. These students have been offered access to school provision and are expected to attend unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
For those students on the list, who are regarded as vulnerable (not Key Workers children) and are not attending school, weekly welfare checks are made via phone calls and the outcomes recorded.

As well as the already known vulnerable children, schools should be mindful that the pandemic will place additional stress on families. Some, who in normal circumstances would be considered to have a stable family network, may become more vulnerable as a consequence of the situation. Therefore, schools as well as maintaining contact with their known vulnerable children cohort, have ensured helplines, how to access support etc. have been provided as well as ensuring that during term time reception and the school office are staffed to direct any concerns to the relevant members of staff.

Attendance

The school does not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. However where it has been agreed that a student should be attending school, we will follow up on any child we were expecting to attend, who does not and we will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged for their children to attend and they subsequently do not.

The department has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely.

Extended time away from the usual routine that school provides and dislocation from friends/extended family at a time of national emergency may increase anxiety levels and negatively affect the mental health of some young people and their parents/carers.

CAMHS is continuing to operate during this period with a revised service.

Croydon Mental Health Support Team (MHST) and Support Engagement and Delivery in Schools (SEADS) Team are continuing to support Croydon schools.
- One to one work with young people and families is continuing via telephone.
- The MHST are running a trial helpline from 30th March, which will be operational during school hours (9am-3:15pm), providing advice and support for young people and families.
- We are continuing to provide consultancy and advice for teaching staff on 07702 339000. If there is any difficulty accessing this phone line please could you alert us via email on croydoncamhsmail@slam.nhs.uk with the email subject line "MHST phone-line help"
- Croydon pupils also have access to Kooth online counselling service https://www.kooth.com/.

The following support is also available around mental health.
- Child Line– 0800 1111
- Samaritans – 116 123
- Papyrus (Prevention of Young Suicide) – 0800 068 4141
- Young Minds Crisis Messenger – text YM to 85258
- Croydon Drop In (CDI)
- Off The Record Croydon

Domestic Abuse
The Covid-19 response will place increased stress on families. In other parts of the world reported incidents of domestic abuse have increased significantly during lockdowns. School staff need to be particularly attuned to this increased risk at this time and the impact that this could have on children.

Support is available from:
- FJC – 0208 688 0100 or email fjc@croydon.gov.uk
- SPOC Consultation Line – email childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk

School Support
We have ensured that appropriate support, albeit different and limited from what can be offered in a direct face-to-face session, is available via having our mentors and counsellors available. They are setting up systems for providing their services to our vulnerable students and information will follow. CAMHS is continuing to operate during this period with a revised service.

Online safety
We continue to maintain a safe environment, including online and have ensured that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources. Our IT Team have the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements and will have contingency arrangements as appropriate.

Children and online safety away from school
The majority of our students are not physically attending the school but it is important that all staff who interact with them, 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.

All staff must 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 staff code of conduct and e-safety policy. These documents include acceptable use of technologies, staff /student relationships and communication including the use of social media. They apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

The DfE is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. It will set out 4 key areas that leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. This includes the use of technology. Recently published guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and from the London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming could help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.

It is important for staff 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 their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school's online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. It is important that this online support is provided by a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children.

To help with this, support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- London Grid for Learning - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers

Remote teaching and learning policy - safeguarding perspective during Covid-19 – taken from Andrew Hall's bulletin and abridged

Some schools may be ready to use technology to provide remote teaching and learning.
There are related issues to consider from a safeguarding perspective.
Consider webinar. The difference is that the teacher is on screen and does the talking whilst 'broadcasting' the lesson to the children. Recorded videos might be better than live webcams.

Live Webcams in teaching and learning - safeguarding issues to consider

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.
- The live class should be recorded and backed up elsewhere, so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background
- Data Controllers need to reassure themselves that any teaching/learning software and/or platforms are suitable and raise no privacy issues; or use cases against the providers terms and conditions (for example, no business use of consumer products)

Other considerations:
Access to technology is not universal as we know. We also need to remember that not every family is able to afford the required technology and even if they do, there may not be enough to go round the siblings. Families living in poor housing conditions may have no broadband. The gap between the haves and the have-nots will be noticeable with remote learning.

It is likely that children will be using the internet more than ever in an enforced school closure or period of self-isolation, so safer internet messages are particularly important.

Children with autism spectrum conditions may well find it difficult to accept that 'school' work should be done at home - they find ordinary homework difficult to accept. Their levels of anxiety will be higher than usual and may lead to more panic attacks.

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Staff Wellbeing
Separating the work-life balance is a new challenge for many employers, and employees, having to work remotely, due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Whilst it can be difficult to adjust to your new working environment, there are several considerations to ensure that you're working effectively.

By following these **10 top tips,** where possible, you can encourage both positive physical and mental health, whilst homeworking;
1. **Stick to a routine** – create boundaries with clear working hours
2. **Separate your space** – shut out the household noise
3. **Have a comfortable workstation** – use a supportive chair and conduct a workstation assessment, following the HSE Guidelines
4. **Take regular breaks** – have at least 30 minutes of exercise
5. **Limit distractions** – keep your personal phone out of reach
6. **Socialise** – catch up with your colleagues via an app like Microsoft Teams
7. **Plan your food** – prepare healthy snacks for your day
8. **Get some air** – give your eyes a rest and head outside
9. **Share your concerns** – speak to a colleague, your team or manager if you're struggling
10. **Have some support** – keep line managers in the loop and ask for any support you need