

Addendum

COVID 19 Pandemic

This addendum will be used as a reference during Pandemic crisis pending Government and Public Health advice at the time.

It sets out changes to our normal Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, in light of the Department for Education's guidance for schools: Coronavirus (COVID-19). The guidance is intended to supplement KCSIE 2020, which is still the statutory guidance for all schools.

Full guidance on schools reopening in September 2020 can be found- [Government guidance for schools during Coronavirus outbreak for full school opening](#)

The latest guidance from Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership In relation to COVID 19 can be found- [Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership COVID-19](#)

Back to school safely: A guide for parents and pupils

Bolton Council have produced a comprehensive guide for our parents/carers.

[The guidance](#) includes details of the safety measures we have put in place as well as the steps parents can take to help keep everyone safe.

Keeping children safe

It remains essential that as far as possible we continue to be a safe place for children.

In addition to our safeguarding and child protection policy, we will continue to be aware of the way we are operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19). It is fundamentally different to business as usual; however, several important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy will always 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
- The importance for practitioners to work with and support children's social workers, the local authority, and the virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- manage any report of peer on peer abuse and support victims
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children

We will keep abreast of any updated advice received from our local authority regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need.

It is likely as children return to school, our staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about children. Where possible we will allow DSLs to have more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns as more children return.

Attendance

Unless there is a local lockdown and schools are closed, from September 2020 (the autumn term) pupils are required by law to attend school. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply.

We will continue to notify the Early Intervention Team where children with a social worker do not attend. We will also continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

Vulnerable Children

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

Have a social worker, including children:

- With a child protection plan
- Assessed as being in need
- Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

It is expected that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carers following the advice set out by Public Health England. We will encourage vulnerable children and young people to attend.

Supporting children not in school

Where vulnerable children are not attending, we will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect them. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. Details of this plan is recorded on our safeguarding system, as is a record of contact made.

The communication plans includes; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods will also be considered and recorded.

This plan will be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate. We will share any concerns in relation to children with MASSS (Multi Agency Safeguarding and Screening Service).

It is recognised that school is a protective factor for children and young people.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

The demands and impact from Covid-19 may lead to reduced capacity for our designated safeguarding lead or deputies due to sickness, self-isolation etc. Therefore, it is essential that DSL arrangements are in place. We have also reviewed our current contingency arrangements for circumstances where DSL/deputies are all unavailable to ensure these arrangements remain fit for purpose and operational.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. However, if this is not possible, we will consider 2 options:

- a trained DSL or deputy being available to be contacted via phone or online - for example if they are working from home
- sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools or colleges (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online)

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

We will ensure all our staff and volunteers are aware of how to access a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers. The DSL, DDSL or a pastoral member of staff will attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Support can be accessed from the Safeguarding In Education Team on 01204 331314/7472 or email SET@bolton.gov.uk

Safer recruitment

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

In response to COVID-19, 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.

When utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE.

Where concerns are raised about staff, we will continue to use the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Colin Jones and the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) during the COVID-19 period. All referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Safeguarding Training and Induction

All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership provides a wealth of information and resources [safeguarding information and resources](#)

Level 1 online training offered by Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership can be accessed here- [Level 1 Training](#)

The Safeguarding in Education Team (SET) will offer virtual training for both Level 1 and Level 3 from September 2020.

Mental health

We recognise that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as COVID-19, can affect the mental health of our pupils and their parents.

We will ensure our provision of pastoral and extra-curricular activities are designed to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

Our work with Bolton's Healthy Families Team will provide:

- support with resilience, mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, bereavement and sleep issues
- support for pupils with additional and complex health needs
- support for vulnerable children and keeping children safe

Government Guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#) is available and this is followed in respect of any concerns regarding a child's emotional wellbeing.

Additional guidance from the government is available for parents and carers on [supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#) during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Links to other services regarding mental health and wellbeing can be found at the bottom of this document.

Support for wellbeing of pupils and teachers

The government programme supports staff to respond to the additional pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a direct result of the pandemic.

It will also help with the emotional response they or their teachers may still be experiencing from bereavement, stress, trauma or anxiety during the past months.

For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/8m-programme-to-boost-pupil-and-teacher-wellbeing>

Domestic Abuse

We recognise that negative experiences and stressful life events, such as COVID-19, can affect relationships and as such there has been a significant rise in Domestic abuse incidents.

Encompass notifications will continue to be received and we will ensure those children are supported.

Full details of Domestic Abuse services in Bolton and nationally can be found in our local [Domestic Abuse Handbook](#)

Online safety

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system and the DSL will have responsibility for monitoring any concerning usage and addressing this with individuals.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. All staff who interact with children, including online, will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns will be dealt with as per our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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

[The national grid for learning](#) has guidance and support related to remote learning to support DSLs, all staff, parents & pupils.

Contingency plans for outbreaks

For individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, remote education plans will be in place. These meet the same expectations as those who cannot yet attend school at all due to coronavirus (COVID-19). See section on [remote education support](#) from the DFE and “supporting children not in school” in this document (page 2).

In the event of a local outbreak, advice will be sought from the PHE Health Protection Team or Local Authority.

Additional Resources to Help Parents/Carers and Children During Covid-19

[What parents and carers need to know about schools and colleges during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)

[Coping with stress during COVID-19](#)

[Helping children cope during COVID-19](#)

[Children's guide to COVID-19](#)

[Place2Be](#)

Covibook – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing (different languages) <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>

My Hero is You – Storybook for children on Covid-19, published by UNHCR and available in a number of languages <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you>

Children's Emotional Health and Well-being- Bolton's [Be Kind to My Mind](#)

Young Minds - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>

Parenting through Covid-19 Institute of Health Visiting - <https://ihv.org.uk/families/parenting-through-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Carers UK - Guidance for carers: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19>

Early Break - in response to COVID-19, the service is offering support to young people affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse and/or parental imprisonment; contact Bolton's team on 07732685456 or 07841151835. For more information about the service go to <https://earlybreak.co.uk/>

Bereavement - more children and families may be experiencing unexpected bereavement due to Covid 19 and below are some national organisations can also offer support and advice in specific areas:

- Child Bereavement UK on their website www.childbereavementuk.org
- Childhood Bereavement Network on their website www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk
- Cruse Bereavement Care on their website www.cruse.org.uk/
- Hope Again (for young people living after loss) on their website www.hopeagain.org.uk

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