

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Coronavirus Outbreak Addendum

This addendum was updated on 21/05/2020, and will be updated regularly in line with Local Authority and National guidance regarding the COVID-19 outbreak within the United Kingdom. This addendum seeks to clarify practice around Child Protection and Safeguarding whilst Dixons Academies Trust operates a provision for children of key workers and for those who are vulnerable (whom have an allocated social worker or provision directed through an Education, Health and Care Plan).

Staff working within schools at this time must ensure that they continue to work with the best interests of the child at the centre of their practice at all times. If a member of staff has a concern about a child, they should act immediately, following the process outlined below. There will be a DSL available at all times – either present at school, or available via phone or video link. Dixons Academies Trust are taking a whole institution approach at the time. DSLs are working together regularly across the Trust to ensure that the response to child protection and safeguarding during the pandemic is not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

This addendum will seek to clarify:

- any updated advice received from the local 3 safeguarding partners
- 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
- what staff should do if they have any concerns about a child
- the continued importance of all staff acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns
- DSL (and deputy) arrangements
- the continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- peer on peer abuse – given the very different circumstances schools 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 should do if they have concerns about a staff member 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)
- any arrangements to support children the school are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition
- 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

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- There will be a trained DSL available at all operating provisions at all times – this may be remotely until 1 June.
- If the DSL is not present on-site, they will be available via phone or video link (if necessary) to liaise with other professionals.
- In the absence of a DSL due to illness, the most senior member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) available will act as DSL (regardless of whether they have undertaken mandatory training or not) in line with the guidance 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers' published 20/05/2020. This means that the SLT member would, if necessary, have access to child protection files, and would liaise with the off-site DSL and social workers.
- In the case of an allegation against a member of staff, DSLs should make the usual referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and support staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school or college.
- DSLs will 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, such as the regular meetings between DSLs at DAT.
- The DSL will ensure that if they have a student receiving support from Channel, they follow the government guidance on 'prevent management guidance for schools and colleges'.

Planning wider reopening

- Staff may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following partial school closures and should be aware to be vigilant for these.
- Staff will be briefed before a return to school on reporting systems during partial reopening and will receive guidance on how to report any child protection or safeguarding concern, including ones for new children returning to school.
- It is important that relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children (including returning children) remains accurate on CPOMS. School will discuss reopening with parents and carers (during welfare calls) and enquire about any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a child returns.
- Staff will be informed in advance of who the DSL is on that day, and how to speak to them.
- Whilst some children will start to return to school, some still may not. It is important that contact is kept with these children and their families via phone at this time. Where possible, staff should try to speak to the child directly. Further guidance for school staff on calls is in the individual school 'what to do' document.

Vulnerable children

- Children will be classed as vulnerable if they have an allocated social worker or are in receipt of an EHCP and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment.
- Vulnerable children should now be encouraged to attend school, where it is appropriate for them to.
- Other children may be considered as vulnerable if they are on the 'cusp' of receiving other external agency support, have a targeted early help plan, or a SEND diagnosis.
- The expectation is that children who have an allocated social worker will attend offered provision, unless they are self-isolating due to Coronavirus symptoms (either themselves or a family member), they or a family member are shielding, or their social worker agrees that they are safe at home. Where possible, DAT will seek to have written permission from the social worker if a child is staying at home.
- If a child has an allocated social worker, and should be attending provision, the social worker will be informed on the same day if they do not attend.
- We will continually review the attendance of our most vulnerable with social workers and where it is not unsafe to do so, we will expect attendance at school.
- We will make adequate staffing adjustments and review transport arrangements to ensure there are no practical barriers to attendance.
- We are mindful of the latest advice from the DfE and all decisions not to attend are thoroughly risk assessed and constantly reviewed with social care.
- We will always work with social workers and endeavour to include vulnerable children in school where it is safe to do so.
- We will review registers daily and follow up on the absence of vulnerable children first.
- Children with an EHCP may be safe to stay at home. Each case will be assessed on a needs and health basis, separately. Each child with an EHCP should have a risk assessment in place (Local Authority guided, or other).
- LAC children will be reviewed individually, where the placement is stable and they are able to fully educate and safeguard their ward, we will work with social workers to provide work at home.
- The DSL in school will be aware of any 'cusp' children – those who may be vulnerable, but not have an allocated social worker or EHCP. They will identify these children and offer provision and additional support as appropriate.
- If children with an allocated social worker are struggling to attend, a risk assessment will be carried out in conjunction with social care regarding transport. If it is appropriate, the school may provide transport for the student so that they can safely attend school – e.g. a taxi.

Uncontactable families

- Academies should attempt to contact all families, with a priority given to any family recognised by the school safeguarding team or any other agency as vulnerable.
- If any family is not contactable by phone / email / text for more than two days, this will need following up as per the school's internal agreed procedures during the Coronavirus outbreak.
- Social workers for families who have an allocated social worker should be contacted and agree a plan of action.
- If there is a serious concern, a doorstep visit should be conducted and this should, where possible, involve two members of staff, or one senior leader who has a contact by phone with another staff member. If this is not possible, the Principal will assess the risk and may undertake the visit by themselves.
- Staff members should not share cars during home visits to ensure they are following social distancing guidance.



- Staff should knock on the door and then move two metres from the door.
- Staff should have agreed the visit with the Principal.
- Any further concerns should be phoned through to the Police, using 101 and asking for a welfare check.

Attendance

- Schools will agree in advance who is attending any offered provision.
- If students do not attend, this will be followed up on the same day by staff to find out why they have not attended.
- If a vulnerable child (who has an allocated social worker) does not attend, the social worker will be informed on the same day. This will also be followed up with parents to discuss reasons for non-attendance.

Staffing

- Any new staff will be in receipt of a remote induction from the home school DSL. This will be carried out by sharing training with the staff member, and if appropriate, a Microsoft Teams conference call.
- All new staff members will be provided: a copy of the home school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; any new local safeguarding arrangements; the current DSL arrangements and a CPOMS login and training.
- The Trust will only use DAT staff during this time. Volunteers will not be working within the academies.
- All staff newly employed will have had the same safeguarding and safer recruitment checks as any other staff member.
- If schools are interviewing for new staff during this time, they should follow the DAT guidance for Electronic Recruitment during COVID-19.

Attending other schools

- All DAT sites are now open. Students should be able to attend their own school.

Mental health provisions

- DAT recognise that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Support will be offered by schools on a case by case basis.
- Where possible, provisions will still be offered from internal and external support/s via phone or email.
- Referrals will still be made during this time following the usual process.
- All schools will offer a contact email address for students' if they have mental health issues during this time.
- Staff (during this time) will need extra guidance in preparation for a wider reopening of school and the impact of the pandemic on children's mental health and wellbeing. This should include changes in behaviour and demeanour for those returning to school, and the mental health of those continuing to work from home.

Online safety within provision

- Whilst students are in school, they will continue to access the usual IT systems, with the DAT filters and monitoring systems in place.

Online safety whilst away from provision

- Young people are particularly vulnerable to grooming and to accessing inappropriate material during this period and all academies should send regular advice about on-line safety, contacting the police if there are any concerns raised.
- Online provisions offered by school during this time follow the same procedures set out in the school's behaviour policy and addendum, and will be followed up in this way, including the acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media.
- Students will be offered an appropriate way of reporting any concerns whilst online, for example, a school email address.
- Students will be provided with advice and resources whilst working from home about staying safe online that are appropriate for their age group.
- Parents will be provided with guidance from the school around keeping their children safe online whilst working at home.
- School websites are updated regularly with information around external support for parents and students during this time.
- Where appropriate, parents and their children will be signposted to support from the following recommended resources:
 - Childline – for support
 - UK Safer Internet Centre – to report and remove harmful online content



- CEOP – for advice on making a report about online abuse
- Where peer-on-peer abuse between students may occur over the internet (through whatever channel), this may result in suspension / termination of access to systems until the incident has been investigated and dealt with. The DSL will oversee any incidents and ensure that any victim or perpetrator in school receives appropriate support.
- Where abuse of staff from students may occur online, this may result in suspension / termination of access to systems until the incident has been investigated and dealt with.
- Schools will only promote known and trusted educational platform/s.
- Further information regarding online safety whilst away from provision can be found in the school's behaviour policy addendum.

Staff and Students and The Use of Technology for Online/ Virtual Safety

- The use of technology does present risks, some of which are particular to this medium, and teachers must be trained by the DSL before agreeing to provide any online lessons.
- Teachers must be aware that risk of allegation and also the misuse of any recording cannot be entirely eliminated, although it can be minimised by following very strict protocol.
- Any decision to use technology interactively must be thought through very carefully and there must be strict guidelines for staff, students and parents to follow.
- We recognise that interactive technology will only be used where we feel the risk is significantly outweighed by the benefit as we understand that we are crossing a boundary and entering into a young person's private space, even if this is virtually.
- We are also very conscious that the use of technology during lockdown may widen the poverty gap and can in itself have an impact on the wellbeing of young people.
- As such, the work we provide is never solely reliant on technology.
- No platforms such as Teams or Zoom will be used without the permission of the Principal and the involvement of the DSL and particularly care must be given to any move to use technology interactively.
- In some academies our professional counsellors are using technology and DSLs and Principals have in this situation reviewed the protocol.
- Any interaction with students by email or by any online platform will be conducted with the same level of professional formality as would be expected in the classroom and as expressed in the Professional Conduct Policy.
- Where videos are provided, staff will follow the expected protocol for example, dress code followed, de-personalised space, neutral background, professional dialogue etc.
- All video interaction if it is agreed to go ahead, must be recorded, data protection must be taken into account.
- Staff will be trained by the DSLs on the importance of reporting the types of behaviour that may be presented in an interactive situation and that with all safeguarding, no matter should be considered trivial.
- Parental consent must be sought before any interactive video sessions are provided and parents will be informed that sessions will be recorded and for what purpose. We would advise parents to supervise sessions where possible.
- In the event of introducing interactive sessions, a student code of conduct will be sent with the consent document and this will include how the young person should behave including how they should dress for a session, the most appropriate area for the interaction to occur (i.e. not a bedroom) and that the video should not be shared.
- Teachers need to be mindful that videos may be shared and in a way that does not reflect the original intention. There is therefore always a reputational risk associated and this must be taken into account before the decision to go ahead is taken.
- We have asked staff to contact students by phone in the same way that they may during usual working practices. We have scripts that are used during these interactions.
- Where there is no work phone or Teams option, the member of staff should use the 'caller withheld' option.
- All phone calls are logged and the parent is always spoken to along with the young person.
- Any child where there are particular additional needs, or who are classed as a safeguarding risk, will be phoned by the SENDCo or a DSL.
- The DSL will ensure that students and parents are regularly reminded that online safety is paramount, and advice on how to safeguard is given.

