

“Safeguarding”

2	<b><u>Statutory and required – centrally provided template for adoption without amendment:</u> these are policies which it is statutory for schools to have.</b>
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# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (Updated **March 2020**)

In line with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 2019



## St Christopher’s CE Primary, Cowley

This policy was updated on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

The policy must be reviewed and updated at least every 12 months.

St Christopher’s CE Primary recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

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## Overview

This document sets out the procedures for ODST schools in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection. The content remains substantively the same as the model Local Safeguarding Children Boards documents. It has been amended where necessary to reflect the independent status of ODST as a Multi-Academy Trust. It is compliant with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' **2019** and the required statutory content so is applicable to all ODST schools.

[This policy also reflects DfE guidance dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020 in respect of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#)

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that schools are under, it remains essential that as far as possible they continue to be safe places for children. This policy supports local 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 might consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual (**appendix G**).

The way schools 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

ODST takes a whole Trust approach to safeguarding. This allows that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening its approach to safeguarding or undermining this child protection policy.

## Part 1

### 1. Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the 'Children Act' 1989; and in line with the following:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'
- "Keeping Children Safe in Education"- statutory guidance for schools and further education colleges (**Sept 2019**)
- DBS Guide to Child Workforce Roles (2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Children Missing Education; Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities Sept 2016
- Statutory Guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

## APPENDIX G

## Supplementary DfE guidance 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020 during Coronavirus outbreak

It is important that ODST and its schools review and revise this child protection and safeguarding policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve. Therefore, the policy reflects and puts in place:

- Updated advice received from ODST's local 3 safeguarding partners as prescribed at: <https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/> <https://www.eastberkshireccg.nhs.uk/important-information-about-the-coronavirus-covid-19/> <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/safeguarding> [https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200168/schools\\_and\\_schooling](https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200168/schools_and_schooling) .
- Updated advice received from Oxfordshire County Council and RBWM 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: <https://www.wamlsob.org/about-the-lsrb/new-multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements/> <https://www.oscb.org.uk/practitioners-volunteers/schools-safeguarding-team/> .
- What staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child – referenced in the current ODST policy and advice at <https://www.odst.org.uk/> during the coronavirus outbreak.
- The continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns – referenced in the current ODST policy and advice at <https://www.odst.org.uk/> during the coronavirus outbreak.
- DSL (and deputy) arrangements – the Headteacher and normal Designated Safeguarding Lead as deputy at the school.
- The continued importance for school staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authorities virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children – refer to current ODST policy and <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/our-work-schools/virtual-school-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-0-25> <https://www.afcvirtualschool.org.uk/> .
- Peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools are operating in. The principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform our approach) – referenced in the current ODST policy and advice at <https://www.odst.org.uk/>.
- 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 continue to support how a school responds to any such concerns) – referenced in the current ODST policy and advice at <https://www.odst.org.uk/> .
- Any arrangements to support children the school is concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition – referenced in the current ODST policy and advice at <https://www.odst.org.uk/> .
- 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; of particular relevance whilst schools are closed and referenced in the current ODST policy and advice at <https://www.odst.org.uk/> .
- The importance that all staff and volunteers are aware of the revisions to the current policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised is available publicly <https://www.odst.org.uk/>.

## APPENDIX G

### Exemplar and best practice adjustments pursuant to DfE guidance 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**During this time of unprecedented closure, this appendix outlines our procedures and practice in relation to keeping children safe during this period.**

KCSIE continues to apply at all times, and is additionally guided by the latest version of the Government recommendations in Coronavirus (Covid-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers.

The ODST Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy continues to remain in place, with the addition of the Government recommendations to guide practice at this unprecedented time, together with the multi-agency and local authority resources linked above. The overview at page 3 of this policy reiterates a number of important safeguarding principles that continue to apply in the DfE's guidance.

#### **Designated Safeguarding Lead role and availability**

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead during the school's closure remains: Sheenagh Broadbent Headteacher
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads during school closure are: Susie Davies (DHT), Philippa Sherry (HSLW), Elly Baskerville (HSLW), Alison Hook, Julieann Exley.
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead is available on call at all times that the school is open for reduced provision, and during normal school opening hours.
- Whilst the DSL is not onsite, the provision leader is responsible for coordinating the safeguarding onsite, and liaising with the DSL.

#### **Reporting concerns**

- Staff with safeguarding concerns should report these in the usual way, alerting the Designated Safeguarding Leads. This includes making a report which can be done remotely, via MyConcern. They can call the DSL at any time. Concerns will be escalated in the usual way. Contact with social workers and social services continues as usual.
- Staff should continue to report concerns **immediately**.
- Parents have access to the MASH contact details, DSL email contact and reminders about online safety through our school Home Learning Zone website, which contains a dedicated safeguarding page.
- Childline contact details are available in the foregoing policy.

#### **Vulnerable Children**

- We identify vulnerable children in line with usual school processes, and also because we have a good knowledge of our children and our community.
- We have drawn up a communication plan to ensure we are in regular contact with vulnerable children and families, allowing us to signpost external support or refer to a member of staff in school who can help. Our aim is to provide support and reassurance to families who need it, alongside ensuring our safeguarding duty of care.
- We use our Home School Link Worker team of Philippa Sherry and Elly Baskerville, to continue contact with the families they support, to ensure best communication.
- Vulnerable children with a social worker are offered a place in the school's reduced provision.

#### **Attendance**

- We monitor attendance of the children in during reduced provision using the new DfE registration requirements. There is no requirement for usual day-to-day attendance

processes to follow up on non-attendance, but non-attendance will be followed up afterwards via a telephone conversation and the school will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

### **Staff Training and Safeguarding induction**

- All staff within our setting who cover our reduced provision class or who contact parents have up-to-date DBS checks and Generalist Safeguarding Training. Where this becomes out-of-date, we will follow the OSCB guidance on interim arrangements for refresher training, although this is not envisaged to be an issue. Our Single Central Record remains in place as usual, as a record of these checks.

### **Safer recruitment**

- We maintain safer recruitment checks on all new staff. We recognise the following Government guidance:

*“There is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on schools and colleges to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.”*

### **Children moving schools**

- Where children move schools to attend reduced provision, we follow the Government guidance outlined in the document above, and the locally agreed guidance from the LADO. This means that the DSL remains overall responsible for the safeguarding of that child, and that the DSL passes on all relevant welfare and child protection information to the host school’s DSL. The receiving institution will be made aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. This will ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable.

### **Mental Health**

- We recognise that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home, and is awaiting Government guidance on expectations regarding home learning.
- For our children in reduced provision, we also ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Children have time to discuss current events where appropriate, to discuss their concerns and worries, and to work through these using resources provided by the provision leader. By keeping this group small, staff in the setting can be vigilant and work with individual children where necessary. This may involve liaison and discussion with our Home School Link Workers where appropriate.

### **Online Safety**

Government guidance on expectations regarding home learning, will be issued shortly. In the meantime:

- We continue to receive targeted IT support from 123ICT and are in regular contact to ensure safe settings are in place, along with any other technical advice needed to ensure, as much as is reasonably practicable, that our children are safe online at home.

- Key Stage 2 children access home learning through their secure Google Profiles, and contact is managed within a Google Classroom environment.
- Google Classrooms are visible by the DSL and Senior Leaders. Staff communicating online with children do not do so on a 1:1 basis. Emails sent are to parents rather than children.
- Key Stage 1 children have less online expectation, and learning is presented on our website, but managed mainly by parents in a more paper-based format.
- Our Home Learning Website has online safety guidance, alongside our KS1 and KS2 Acceptable Use Agreements, governing safe use of the internet and the CEOP referral system.
- Our ESafety policy continues to guide our response to incidents or concerns where necessary.
- The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face.
- All staff have DSL and Deputy DSL mobile numbers in order to contact if they are not on site.
- Staff reminded of policy regarding reporting to DSL if anything concerns them during contact with child or families: All referrals to be emailed via DSL through Early Help and MASH team using online form.
- Whilst on site at least two members of teaching staff to supervise children even if numbers are extremely low.
- No volunteers in school during closure.
- School open to children with EHCPs and those with a social worker.
- Contact with children with a social worker every three days via a telephone call if they are self-isolating or not attending.
- Information sent to all parents about keeping children safe online while working from home.
- Protocol sent to staff about contacting parents/families during school closure with particular reference to remote teaching and live meetings:
- No live lessons to take place from staff's home
- Any live storytelling to be through an invite only with a password to join. This should take place in a room where no personal identifying items can be seen (ie photographs of family/addresses etc).
- All teachers have a class email address for parents to send in photographs of work for celebration purposes.
- All parents have been given rules around contacting teachers – between 8.30am and 3:00pm during the week and with an expectation that they will receive a reply within 24 hours.
- Parents daily reminders to contact ODST, DSL, office staff, Senior Leadership Team or teachers if they have any concerns.

## APPENDIX H

1. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#)

1. [Department for Education](#)

Guidance

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

Published 27 March 2020

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#### Background

This guidance is relevant to all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent (including academies, academy trusts, free schools and alternative provision academies), maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

Where the guidance refers to 'colleges' this includes all of the following:

- further education colleges
- sixth-form colleges
- institutions designated as being in the further education sector
- other further education providers, funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, such as 16 to 19 academies and independent learning providers, including special post-16 institutions.

This is interim safeguarding guidance, it is under review and will be updated.

## Help and support

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

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline, is available to answer questions.

### DfE coronavirus helpline

Email [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

Telephone 0800 046 8687

If you have a query about coronavirus (COVID-19), relating to schools and other educational establishments in England contact our helpline.

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.

### Role of the local authority

The department is working very closely with all local authorities to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend a school or college. The department will, via regional school commissioners, continue to support local authorities' crucial responsibilities in maintaining effective safeguarding and child protection services in this challenging time to ensure schools and colleges can access the support they need.

### Safeguarding and clusters

Where schools and colleges collaborate and children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#) and this guidance continue to apply. In particular, the school or college that is acting as the hub in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required. Additional advice on clusters and safeguarding will be provided in due course.

### Keeping children safe in schools and colleges

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools and colleges should continue to have regard to as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements.

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**

Schools and colleges will have an effective child protection policy in place reflecting business as usual. It is likely that the policy will not accurately reflect new arrangements in response to COVID-19. It is important schools and colleges (led by a DSL or deputy, wherever possible) review and revise their child protection policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve. In some cases, a COVID-19 annex/addendum that summarises any key COVID-19 related changes might be more effective than re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy. Amongst other things the revised child protection policy should reflect:

- 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 and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and 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 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)
- any arrangements to support children the school or college 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

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

### **Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)**

The optimal scenario for any school or college providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case there are 2 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, the department recommend a senior leader takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school and college staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). For the period COVID-19 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.

Every school and college will face unique challenges at this time. Where reasonably possible, the DSL (or deputy) should consider these in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection policy as appropriate.

### **Vulnerable children**

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans, read more in the [guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) for further information.

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend provision, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.

Senior leaders, especially DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.

School and college staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the COVID-19 period.

## **Attendance**

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Schools/colleges and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school or college should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools and colleges should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend. To support the above, schools and colleges should take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school or college, or discontinues, the school or college should notify their social worker.

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.

## **Staff training and safeguarding induction**

All existing school and college staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The important thing for these staff will be awareness of 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 the school or college, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up to date child protection policy (described above) will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE.

The existing school and college workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school or college should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## **Children moving schools and colleges**

It will be important for any school or college whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders should take responsibility.

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

### **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. 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 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.

Where schools and colleges are utilising volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Regarding members of the school or college workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on schools and colleges to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

Schools and colleges must continue to follow their legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

Schools and colleges should continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's '[Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral](#)'. During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk). All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school or college is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, schools and colleges must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE. The SCR can, if a school or college chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school or college on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

### **Mental health**

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

Where they are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, schools and colleges should ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Our guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools (which may also be useful for colleges) sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services. You can read the guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

### **Online safety in schools and colleges**

It will be more important than ever that schools and colleges provide a safe environment, including online. Schools and colleges should continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what "appropriate" looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the school or college's IT systems or recommended resources. Schools and colleges should consider who in their institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. Schools and colleges should also consider what their contingency arrangements are if their IT staff become unavailable.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. Local authorities may also be able to provide support.

### **Children and online safety away from school and college**

All schools and colleges should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the school or college. It is important that all staff who interact with children, 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 and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

The department 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.

All schools and colleges should 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 school's or college's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct). This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced. Schools and colleges should, as much as is reasonably possible, consider if their existing policies adequately reflect the new reality of so many children (and in some cases staff) working remotely online. As

with the child protection policy, in some cases an annex/addendum summarising key COVID-19 related changes may be more effective than re-writing/re-issuing the whole policy. 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. In some areas schools and colleges may be able to seek support from their local authority when planning online lessons/activities and considering online safety.

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

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Schools and colleges are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should be used 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 be asked to access and be clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school or college online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents and carers, schools and colleges should emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. 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 carers 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

The department encourages schools and colleges to share this support with parents and carers.