

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### Coronavirus Outbreak Addendum

This addendum was updated on 08/03/2021, and will continue to 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 within Dixons Academies Trust in relation to the ongoing outbreak and wider re-opening of all schools.

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 their own academy's systems and the process outlined below. Each academy must ensure that there is a DSL available at all times and that opportunities for safeguarding supervision remain in place.

This addendum will seek to clarify:

- any updated advice received from the three local 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 and volunteers 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)
- 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)

- Our Designated Safeguarding Leads continue to work together to share best practice and expertise .
- KCSIE 2020 training has been delivered in all schools and messages have been tailored in relation to specific issues and concerns that may have arisen as a result of lockdown, restricted opening and wider reopening of schools.
- We are mindful of being extra-vigilant, however, we do not wish to project anxiety onto the children.
- We are aware that some children may have found lockdown, the fear of Covid and the return to school stressful and we are building time into our curriculum for reflection.
- We are aware of the fact that DSLs may have more work than usual and Principals are mindful of their workload.
- We have built time into the start of the term to assist with workload.

### Supporting vulnerable families

- Each academy will have a system for the distribution of vouchers to families in receipt of free school meals whose children are not attending for Covid related reasons.
- Each academy should incorporate identification of families who are struggling financially, including food shortage and payment of utility bills, through their regular contact with students and have means of offering support where needed. This could be through the academy's own hardship funds, referral to food banks or other charity organisation or, in some cases, referral to Early Help.
- Other sources of wellbeing support for families, students and for staff, can be found at [www.dixonsat.com/why/wellbeing](http://www.dixonsat.com/why/wellbeing)

## Attendance

- Attendance may be impacted by the wider re-opening of schools and so we will return to our usual monitoring systems with first priority for contact 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.
- Social workers for families who have an allocated social worker should be contacted and a plan of action agreed.
- 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
- If a vulnerable child (who has an allocated social worker) does not attend, the social worker will be informed on the same day.

## Staffing

- At all sites, Principals and their senior teams are working on scenario planning in case of a change of circumstances.
- Health and safety and adequate supervision is an absolute priority and there may have to be adjustments to the timetable and curriculum to accommodate staff absence should an outbreak of Covid occur.

## Attending other schools

- Any short-term placement at other schools will be within the Dixons group only and fully risk assessed.
- If a managed move is necessary, this will be fully risk assessed.

## Intimate Care

- Intimate care will be provided and we have protocols for this – this is a regulated activity.

## Mental health provisions

- Where possible, provisions will still be offered from internal and external support.
- Referrals will still be made following the usual process.

## Bereavement

- All schools have coping with bereavement sessions planned to deliver to those students whose family may have been impacted.
- DSLs will be delivering a training update on this during staff induction for the wider opening of schools.

## Domestic Abuse

- An increase in incidents of domestic abuse has been reported nationally as well as noted individually by our academy DSLs.
- Reported incidents of domestic abuse is likely to hid the full scale of the issue through both underreporting and sub-threshold incidents.
- This mean that, in addition to known cases, there may be students who are experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse without us being aware.
- DSLs will deliver training for staff and students with the aim to:
  - support identification and understanding
  - ensure lessons and other provision is not distressing or triggering to students
  - provide clear signposting for support



## Attachment

- We expect that some students (particularly and the younger and more vulnerable) will have become unattached from their school environment and over attached to parents.
- DSLs will be offering training and support on this during the wider opening of schools period.

## Free School Meals

- For students unable to attend for other Covid related reasons, academies will continue to provide food support for students who are eligible for Free School Meals.
- Wherever possible, this will be by providing weekly supermarket vouchers to each family with eligible children unable to attend.
- In a minority of cases it may be necessary to refer a family to a foodbank service, to provide food shopping to them directly, or to deliver a meal from school.

## Mitigating the spread of misinformation

- There have been a number of fairly prevalent examples of misinformation about how schools will manage students who develop symptoms whilst they are in the school building, both on social media and in the local communities.
- Academies have been provided with a template for a text message has been pushed out to all parent / carers and further information has been provided to support individual phone calls.
- Further information about the four most common pieces of misinformation can be found at: [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/53919867?fbclid=IwAR3UK90tvxD9hMLzsTOWexN3fnRI8zjW1P7R9DdWI8aXioUGWp5\\_eqXgxQw](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/53919867?fbclid=IwAR3UK90tvxD9hMLzsTOWexN3fnRI8zjW1P7R9DdWI8aXioUGWp5_eqXgxQw)

## Students with Covid Symptoms or positive Covid test results

- If a student develops symptoms whilst in school, their safety, wellbeing and dignity should continue to be prioritised at every stage whilst following Public Health England and Local Authority guidance.
- The student should be supervised and reassured, including when they are isolated and awaiting collection by an appropriate adult; this is especially pertinent with younger and / or SEND students.
- Parent / carers should be informed and offered guidance at the first available opportunity, with staff members liaising with parents being mindful of misinformation that they may have encountered on social media or in the local community.
- Information, including that being provided for Track and Trace procedures, should be shared in line with Public Health England and Local Authority guidance only and always in a sensitive and professional way.

## Testing of Students in Secondary Schools

- LFD testing in Secondary schools will commence as a part of our wider re-opening and only for children for whom informed consent has been received (see our website).
- No child will be denied an education because their parent has not given consent for testing.
- No child will be denied an education where their parent has consented but they later themselves deny consent, in this case we will work with the student and family, however, we will never coerce.
- Where families do not understand the process, schools will support with understanding so that no child is deprived of testing because of any communication barrier, informed consent will still be secured.
- GDPR regulations are followed in the handling of all data and we recognise that this is a safeguarding matter.
- Where a child with a specific need cannot self-test we will work with the family to support as necessary.
- Students who have given consent for testing in school will be provided with home-testing kits and we will continue to record positive and negative tests.
- Where there are barriers to a family providing self-testing at home but they would like their child to take part, we will arrange for testing in the academy.
- No school will use testing to avoid self-isolation of staff or students as this may pose a risk of further spreading of infection.

## 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 online 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: o Childline – for support or UK Safer Internet Centre – to report and remove harmful online content o 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.
- 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**

- Full guidance on use of technology and online / virtual safety can be found in the Online Safety and Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy.
- Detailed 'What to do' documents for the different types of online learning, as well as safeguarding training for staff, can be found on MS Teams and have been shared with all Principals. Parents may request an oversight of these.
- 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 on-line 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.
- 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 and so, as such, the work we provide is never solely reliant on technology.
- 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 DSL.
- All our academies have online safety advice for students, they are all currently undertaking a 360 degree of their approach

