

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Guidance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and for Vulnerable Learners not attending school during Covid-19

Due to the rapidly moving nature of current events this guidance is likely to quickly become out of date. **Please read any official advice from the government alongside this advice, and always refer to government guidance in the first instance.** Please always refer to the most up to date version of this guidance on <https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19>

This document addition /amendments will be highlighted in yellow.

- You can find the government guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
Current government guidance includes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

- Please also refer to the most up to date North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Service Information for schools and early years settings regarding Covid-19 (Coronavirus) <https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19>
This will include 'What health and safety arrangements must be in place for full or partial closure' provided by the Health and Safety Service and guidance from Property Services.

- It is important that you also refer regularly to the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Partnership Safeguarding Children During Coronavirus (COVID-19) which includes any current multi-agency procedure and guidance changes: <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/coronavirus/>

- Schools may also find it helpful to sign up to Andrew Hall's (Safeguarding Consultant) weekly safeguarding briefing (no cost).
<https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/safeguardingbriefing-2/>

Please note

- North Yorkshire safeguarding policies and procedures including referral processes remain in place and schools should continue to follow these as far as possible. See <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/coronavirus/> for any changes.

- **Health and Safety Policies and procedures should be followed with attention to government and local authority additional guidance as above**

Questions	Responses
<p><u>Policies</u> Have any NYCC policies been updated including Covid 19 guidance? Are policies such as child protection health and safety aspects going to be updated?</p>	<p>A number of policies in relation to safeguarding are being reviewed at present by the local authority and will be made available as soon as possible. This includes arrangements for Child Protection conferences, Looked After Children visits etc. In the meantime, the current policies remain in place. Please see any updates as they become available on https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19</p> <p>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 summaries any key COVID-19 related changes might be more effective that re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A sample NYSCP Addendum to Child Protection Policy COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection is available to download from https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19 or the quick Links to Useful Documents at https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/coronavirus/</p>
<p>What Health and Safety requirements do I need to have in place during the Covid-19 situation?</p>	<p>The Health & Safety Service have drawn up some key information to respond to questions on what is required for schools during the COVID 19 situation. 'What health and safety arrangements must be in place for full or partial closure '.</p> <p>Please check on https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19 and also check guidance from NYCC Property Service on the same website.</p>
<p><u>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Role</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we need a safeguarding lead on site at all times? • What happens if my DSL is ill? Can we cluster a DSL? • With GDPR is it okay to share information when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the DSL is self-isolating and able to work from home, they can continue to undertake the role using a school laptop and a school mobile. They can make contact with any professionals by phone. Any follow up activity, including attendance at meetings by phone or in person, can be undertaken by staff from the school, if the Headteacher

<p>clustering with staff from other schools? See later section on GDPR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens in the event that the school has no designated safeguarding lead? • What basic DSL requirements need to be in place when staffing is low? • I am the only DSL for my school(s). Is it okay to share this role with another Headteacher locally who is a DSL to ensure that we can support each other in managing some time off over Easter? • What interim DSL arrangements need to be in place where DSL staff are self-isolating. I suggested HT supporting each other but they are querying how they would they record this? 	<p>and DSL determine they are competent to do so, or by agreement with a DSL from another school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If DSL is absent through ill health/Covid 19 symptoms, they should note on any referrals that the DSL from “named” school is stepping in to cover. The Chair of Governors and nominated safeguarding governors know what the temporary arrangement is. As far as possible anyone undertaking DSL work should have undertaken the appropriate training, but if this is not possible they should take advice from an established DSL from another school. Staff should know who and how to contact to raise concerns. The DSL stepping in should use the school’s recording system, and should be given temporary confidential access to hard copy files or CPOMs as required. • Key telephone numbers of all available DSL’s/deputies should be provided to staff covering the setting. • Ensure the contact details of the Safeguarding Hub/Early Help Team/LADO are available to all staff on duty. • Access to such confidential information may need to be given to the senior designated member of staff (in the absence of the nominated DSL/deputy) where normally access would be restricted to the DSL/deputy. Confidentiality of records must be maintained at all times. • If it has not been possible to make an interim temporary DSL arrangement, then staff should be reminded that they can make a referral in these exceptional circumstances to the Customer Contact Centre number 01609 780780 and/or LADO contact number 01609 532477. • Schools need to ensure that access to a Designated Safeguarding Lead is available during the Easter holidays possibly through a shared arrangement with another school in line with current arrangements for cover required in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I arrange for pupil X to go to the school up the road next week, since they can provide wrap around and I can’t and that would help critical worker parents, what safeguarding measures will I need to put in place? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responsibility lies with the child’s Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy/Interim in their absence through ill health, to alert you to any specific vulnerabilities, risk assessment and action plan (including EHCP) for the individual pupil and to maintain contact. It is recommended where possible for a member of staff who is familiar to the child to be deployed to the other school to support the arrangement. • If pupils are attending other schools, it is important to ensure that all appropriate information, including child protection and medical information, is shared with the ‘senior designated leader’ to ensure their safety and well-being. • Ensure that this information is held securely by the other school/hub.

<p>GDPR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With GDPR is it okay to share information when clustering with staff from other schools? • Is there any guidance that we need regarding pupil contact information? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 is clear that The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. • Staff should be using school mobile phones wherever possible. • If having to use personal phones, then this should have been agreed with the school's Headteacher. Staff should follow safer working practices with regard to sharing of personal information and their personal phone number should not be visible to the recipient (parent/carer or students).
<p>DBS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any changes to DBS processes during the current challenges? • What checks should we be carrying out when we have offers of help from people who are not our current volunteers who have not undergone our safer recruitment checks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DBS have made temporary changes to the ID document checking process, not the DBS safer recruitment procedures. The changes came into effect on 19th March 2020. The guidance can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-standard-and-enhanced-id-checking-guidelines • You must continue to follow safer recruitment processes including a risk assessment. Start with people you already know, and then the people that are working in schools now, preferably who are on the DBS Update Service and have references; strangers offering their services may not be suitable.
<p>Checks on visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should a school restrict visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a professional judgment on essential/non-essential visits – some schools are using skype meetings as an alternative to visits e.g. Health and Safety. • For visits by persons in the vulnerable category e.g., underlying health condition try and make arrangements for them to work alone and have restrictions on where they go and see. If County Hall NYCC staff with underlying health conditions they should have their own risk assessments. • Make available alternative methods of communication and ensure parents/carers know these contacts school e-mail/ telephone. • See Department for Education guidance for educational settings for visitors picking up poorly children/students • If the reason for the school visit is essential and does not amount to a group visit, the visit may go ahead, subject to a straightforward risk assessment.
<p>Home/Online learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What safeguarding arrangements need to be in place for home on line learning? • Is there support for parents and pupils to discuss online safety together? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful safeguarding advice has been prepared by the London Grid for Learning, including delivering lessons via livestream or video meetings. The guidance can be found here: https://coronavirus.lgfl.net/safeguarding • Thinkuknow has produced some materials for children and young people and their families to discuss online safety to cover all age groups.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If pupils feel they are being bullied online by other pupils who attend their school who should they report this too? • What guidance is there to support children and young people and parents in schools in relation to mental and emotional wellbeing? • Are there any resources especially for younger children to help address anxieties about Coronavirus ? 	<p>https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/support-tools/home-activity-worksheets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils need to be informed how to contact a named member of staff if they are being affected by bullying online aligned to safeguarding arrangements for home learning. Staff need to follow the school’s agreed policy for recording and responding to the reported incident. Support for pupils can be accessed at https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/ and anti-bullying alliance has information to support schools, pupils and parents https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/ • Please see https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19 for Covid-19 support for pupils and parents in primary and secondary school in relation to mental and emotional wellbeing. • <u>Dave the Dog is worried about coronavirus</u> is a book for children about coronavirus that aims to give information without fear. This can be downloaded free from the official website.
<p>Staff children in schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If staff bring their own children into school how does this impact on safeguarding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff will be designated as critical workers and their children may attend school if there is no other suitable person to look after them at home. • If staff children are attending a school that they do not normally attend (particularly if it is a different phase of school) consideration will need to be made as to how this is managed to ensure that all children are as safe as possible. This may include them being accommodated in separate rooms if appropriate.
<p>Vulnerable Pupils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Safeguarding arrangements should be in place for all vulnerable pupils, including EHCP, not in school who choose not to come? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools should follow the DFE Guidance. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people

VULNERABLE PUPILS WHO ARE NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL DURING COVID-19

Government guidance on temporary school closures (22nd March 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>) states:

- Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- Vulnerable pupils with an EHC plan should be risk-assessed by the school/LA/parents
- Many children and young people with an EHC plan can safely remain at home.
- There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as it is safe for them to do so. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to school, the social worker and schools should explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent, and help to resolve any concerns or difficulties wherever possible. Where

parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, the school should talk through these anxieties with the parent.

- **What should schools do if vulnerable children do not attend school?** Schools should work with LAs to monitor with welfare of vulnerable children who are not attending school, and other pupils they might wish to keep in touch with, for safeguarding purposes.
- There are also children who may need to be shielded due to their own medical vulnerability and should be at home for 12 weeks – see guidance below. This group will receive a letter from the GP and should NOT be at school
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Guidance from North Yorkshire Local Authority regarding vulnerable pupils who are not attending school during COVID-19

- Ensure that key people in school have a current list of identified vulnerable pupils including those who are medically shielding. This is likely to include vulnerable learners identified by school leaders, in addition to those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- Allocate a member of staff to coordinate welfare and contact and have the oversight of all the vulnerable pupils during this period of time. This may be a delegated role separate from the DSL role however there must be good liaison.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken (for pupils with a Child Protection Plan or identified as a Child in Need) through discussion between the school DSL, social worker and parents/carers to determine why the pupil is not in school and to agree the level of contact that will take place with the pupil and who will undertake that contact. This must be a joint responsibility between school and the social worker. The risk assessment is likely to take the form of a recorded conversation with agreed actions.
- Ensure that there are systems in place for a named member of staff/group of staff (school and/or Children's Social Care) to make contact with named vulnerable pupils through phone calls, Skype and/or Zoom and through email, if appropriate. If deemed necessary by Children's Social Care, some pupils will receive home visits.
- Referrals to Children's Social Care will continue to be made in the usual way.
- Contact with vulnerable pupils must be on a weekly basis as an absolute minimum.
- For those pupils who are risk assessed as being the most vulnerable, checks should be taking place with them directly (phone or video call), in line with the agreed risk assessment. There needs to be coordination and communication between the school member of staff coordinating welfare with Children's Social Care (e.g. the child's social worker, Early Help staff)
- Agree key questions with named members of staff to be asked during phone/video conversations - e.g.: How are you feeling? Are you struggling with anything? What did you do yesterday/today? What exercise have you done? What work have you completed? Do you need any additional work/activities? How can we help you so that things are better for you?
- For those who are medically shielding, please check that parents / carers know how to contact the relevant health professional and that they have sufficient medication at this time. If they have any concerns they need to contact their GP urgently.
- As well as contact with the pupil, regular contact should take place with parents/carers by phone/email.

- There is no need to keep detailed notes of this contact but it would be good practice to keep a record of the date, time and type of contact that has taken place for each pupil in order that there is a robust trail, and any pupil who you have not been able to contact can be flagged up with senior leaders. Some schools may choose to update CPOMs/welfare records following contact with pupils.
- Set up an open school email contact for pupils to access at any time.
- A reminder that schools can still access support through the Early Help team, as required.