

Safeguarding FAQs for Education Leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Please note this document will be amended on a regular basis as required. Please ensure you access the most up to date version; this edition is version 2 and was published June 2020.

Is the Education Safeguarding Service still available to provide safeguarding advice and consultations?

Yes. The [Education Safeguarding Service](#) is available to be contacted by schools, early years settings and educational settings to provide safeguarding advice and guidance. Advisors are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Is there national safeguarding guidance for education settings in response to Covid-19?

Yes. On 27th March 2020 the DfE published '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#)', interim safeguarding guidance to supplement 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2019. This was subsequently updated on the 20th May to reflect the phased return to schools for a number of year groups.

Other Government advice and guidance for the education sector can be found [online](#). Schools and settings should continue to look at newly published Government guidance and adhere to this.

The NSPCC has also published general safeguarding [FAQs](#).

Is there local guidance and resources for education settings in response to Covid-19?

Yes. Local guidance and resources are published on [Kelsi](#). Links and documents available may answer FAQs not covered within this document. This includes:

- [FAQs](#)
- [School Safeguarding Toolkit](#)
- [LA Hub Guidance](#)
- [Hub Safeguarding Toolkit](#)

My DSL training is due to expire, and I can't access a course due to cancellations. What should I do?

The [DfE Covid-19 safeguarding guidance](#) acknowledges that DSL training is unlikely to take place during this period and suggests that whilst COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained, will continue to be classed as a trained DSL even if they miss their refresher training.

We suggest DSLs keep evidence of the initial course they had planned to attend, along with records of any future bookings. In the meantime, DSLs may find it helpful to gather evidence to demonstrate how their knowledge and skills are being kept up to date, for example accessing newsletters, e-bulletins, e-learning and reading about safeguarding developments.

Can we stay open if we do not have a DSL onsite?

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site, as they will have the required up to date knowledge of specific local policies and procedures as well as your local context and learners needs. However, this may not always be possible and in these situations, it is recommended that either:

- a trained DSL or deputy should be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.
- a trained DSL could be shared between other settings - for example in a local area or as part of a multi-academy trust. They should be available to be contacted via phone or online video.

If a trained DSL or deputy is not available on site, a senior leader should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site, such as maintaining child protection files etc, in liaison with the DSL.

Is the DSL expected to attend meetings in person?

Existing child protection meetings and processes, such as child protection conferences, child in need meetings and Joint Agency Response meetings in response to child deaths will continue to take place, but these are now being held remotely. DSLs should ensure they are able to attend and can access all necessary information. If for any reason a DSL cannot attend remotely, alternative arrangements should be made; there should be a discussion with the social worker etc, and any expected reports should be completed and made available.

I had booked a member of staff to attend initial DSL training, but it was cancelled due to Covid-19 – can they act as a deputy DSL?

If the member of staff has not already attended an initial DSL course, they will not have undertaken appropriate training so will not be able to deputise. We recommend they book onto an appropriate DSL course when training resumes.

Do we need to write a new child protection policy?

Educational settings should already have an effective child protection policy in place which will need to be updated to incorporate any changes in response to Covid-19; this could be in the form of an addendum which summarises any key COVID-19 related changes. The Education Safeguarding Service have provided a [template child protection policy](#) addendum for schools and colleges (updated May 2020) to adapt in accordance with their local context and specific safeguarding arrangements.

Can an addendum child protection policy be ratified/approved by the Chair of Governor's alone?

The policy addendum can be approved as a Chairs action; however, it should be presented at the next full Governing Body meeting to be ratified. Specific FAQs for Governors can be found on The Education People Governor Hub platform.

Should we publish/share personal contact information, for example the DSL or headteacher?

All staff and volunteers need to have access to a trained DSL and know on any given day who that person is and how to contact them. It may also be necessary for staff to be able to contact other staff in line with allegations procedures, for example the headteacher or Chair of Governors. The decision about how to manage this is down to individual settings and should be reflected in your policies and procedures.

Some settings provide staff with dedicated work mobile phones or SIM cards, can divert or forward calls from school phone numbers or are able to regularly monitor a school provided phone number/email address for messages. We would not suggest personal contact information is published or shared.

What should we do if we have welfare concerns about a child or family?

Where possible existing child protection procedures should still be followed. For example, if you have an immediate safeguarding concern, please contact the Front Door and/or the Police without delay, and requests for support should be made via the Front Door as necessary.

DSLs should consider how they can maintain regular contact with learners and families where there are any existing welfare concerns. This could include agreeing frequency of contact and arrangements to follow if concerns escalate or contact is not maintained.

If a child is attending a setting which is not their ordinary place of education, the DSL from the 'owning school' and the DSL from the Hub or other setting should liaise with each other when assessing situations of a safeguarding nature.

The Education Safeguarding Service is available, Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm to provide advice and support; please consult with your [Area Safeguarding Advisor](#) if you are unsure how to proceed with any safeguarding concerns.

What should we do if a child is missing education and we are unable to contact the parents?

Currently the advice is to continue to follow existing Children Missing Education (CME) procedures – this however may be subject to change. Try all routes of communication to engage with the family. If this is unsuccessful, consider if the child meets level 3 or 4 by looking at the [support levels guidance](#) or whether the police should be contacted. If you are unsure, consult with your [Area Safeguarding Advisor](#).

What should we do if we receive an Operation Encompass notification for a child not attending school?

- Refer to either the Front Door or the Police (999) without delay if concerns suggest a child is in immediate danger.
- If there are no immediate concerns, establish whether any other professionals are involved, i.e. social worker or early help worker and share information with them and agree a plan as to next steps.
 - Please contact the [Education Safeguarding Service](#) if the DSL does not already have this information.
- If there are no professionals currently involved and DSLs are unsure whether concerns require a request for support (RFS), or are unsure about next steps, DSLs should continue to seek advice from the Education Safeguarding Service in the first instance to agree a plan as to next steps.

If following review and consultation, concerns are considered to be level 3 or 4 (from the support levels guidance), contact the Police to establish whether they have made a Request For Support (RFS) to the Front Door using the email: Op.Encompass.CRU@kent.police.uk. If a RFS has not been made by the Police, DSLs should make a RFS themselves.

A child who has been identified as vulnerable due to social care involvement has not attended school, what should I do?

There should be a clear plan in place, devised by social workers and other agencies, about vulnerable children's attendance and what your actions should be if they do not follow that plan. In the first instance contact the social worker to inform them and keep them updated. If you are unsure how to proceed, please consult with your [Area Safeguarding Advisor](#).

Do all children with an EHC Plan need a risk assessment?

DfE and PHE published '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#)'.

Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home. Education settings and local authorities need to consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, alongside the views of parents, and make a risk assessment for each child or young person. Local authorities and education settings should decide together who is best placed to undertake the risk assessment, noting that the duty to ensure provision remains with the local authority.

They will need to consider several different risks, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This must be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required.
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting.
- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely.
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered.

Do staff moving between schools/settings need a safeguarding induction?

Staff may be moving between settings to ensure appropriate staffing levels during the pandemic. Schools receiving existing staff from other settings should assess the level of safeguarding induction needed on a case-by-case basis.

Schools and settings should share all relevant safeguarding policies with new staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware of specific expectations and procedures to follow; your expectations may differ from their original setting. All staff and volunteers should know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern about a learner.

What should we do if we have a concern about a member of staff's conduct or an allegation is made, and the usual safeguarding lead or point of contact is not available in this crisis?

You can contact the [County LADO Service](#) and ask to speak with the LADO Enquiries Officer who will be able to advise on next steps. At this stage you will not need to disclose details of the member of staff or child. A record of the conversation will be sent to you from the LADO as part of your audit trail. This is not a referral into the [County LADO Service](#) – the team are there to provide advice, guidance and reassurance.

What safeguarding considerations do we need to explore when implementing remote learning?

DfE published '[Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)' on 19/04/20.

The Education Safeguarding Service have provided best practice guidance for school leaders [here](#) – this includes links to national guidance and related content. We have also published a template [remote learning Acceptable Use Policy](#) (AUP) for schools and college to adapt.

Additional guidance can be sought from the Education Safeguarding Advisor (Online Protection) via the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).

Can you recommend a system to use for video conferencing/remote learning?

We are not able to recommend or endorse specific platforms; this is down to individual schools and settings to decide. Leaders should have oversight and ownership of any decisions made and be able to evidence that they have taken all reasonable precautions to safeguard learners and staff from a range of potential risks.

We recommend using existing school/setting managed systems where possible, as appropriate safeguarding and data protection measures are likely to already be in place. If this is not possible, settings should thoroughly evaluate and assess any new platform prior to use to ensure that it's appropriate and safe. Specialist input should be sought from the DSL and Data Protection Officer (DPO).

If a platform is deemed suitable, appropriate policies should be amended or implemented to provide clear expectations and boundaries for staff and learners and to reinforce safeguarding and reporting mechanisms. Staff should only use official and approved accounts or systems to communicate with learners and/or parents.

Additional guidance can be sought from the Education Safeguarding Advisor (Online Protection) via the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).

How should we 'record' live remote learning sessions?

Where possible and appropriate, live events and/or chat messages should be recorded; staff should formally document the time, date, attendance and length of online lessons and/or communications.

Some video conferencing systems offer the ability for settings to 'record' conferences; this should be managed in line with existing data protection requirements, for example with appropriate parental permissions. All participants should be made aware what content is recorded and how this will be processed and stored.

If the recording involves capturing live streamed content, consideration should be given as to how this will be managed safely and in line with your data protection obligations.

I have a different query.

Kent schools, early years settings and colleges can contact the [Education Safeguarding Service](#) to discuss any specific safeguarding concerns or practices, Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm.