

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Active Support Education.

Adopted on: 13/01/2021
Ratified by: Matthew Ford

Note: This is a model safeguarding addendum based on the current government guidance and is published on behalf of the Safeguarding in Education team for Luton Borough Council.

1. Context

From Tuesday 5th January, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for vulnerable children and those of workers critical to the COVID-19 response.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home, or those who are listed as vulnerable and have no access to an electronic device at home.

This does not replace the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and should be read in conjunction with the main policy.

Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole school 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.

Key safeguarding contacts

Role:	Name	Contact number	Email
Joint Head	Matthew Ford	07790592316	matt@activesupporteducation.co.uk

Contingency safeguarding contacts

Role:	Name	Contact number	Email
Joint Head	Shahed Koyes	07957274340	shahed@activesupporteducation.co.uk

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children are listed by definition as follows:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order

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- those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - other children and young people at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health
- 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 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. Where there are concerns around disengagement and remote learning, the child's social worker should be notified.
 - Contingency plans are in place for children who may not directly fall into the listed 'vulnerable group', but are children for whom the school has concern
 - Active Support will accommodate children that are a child of a 'critical worker' to ensure they are able to work in response to Covid-19

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

The school will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The staff member responsible for this is Louise Stewart SLT.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the school will discuss the reasons for this directly with the parent. The school will share the names of those attending with allocated social workers to discuss their views on attendance/non-attendance. The school will put in place measures to ensure there is regular contact with non-attending children, this contact should be recorded and information shared as appropriate.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting

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COVID19, the school or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Children/families, who are shielding due to being defined as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) due to specified underlying health conditions (as per Government guidance), will not be in a position to attend school even if identified as vulnerable. Where this is the case, regular contact will be made to ensure the children/family receive appropriate educational support. This information will be shared with the assigned social worker if the family have one.

The school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including engagement with the schools remote offered if needed.

We have set up to test for Covid-19 for all staff and students attending Active Support and they will be tested every 3-5 days, providing consent has been obtained.

For more information you can access the Government website on:
dfc.information@notifications.services.gov.uk