

Northern Counties School KCSIE Covid-19 Appendix

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2019)

Northern Counties School is currently operating through a partial closure due to significant staff absence (through illness including C19 and self-isolation due to C19 symptoms in the home or staff having underlying health conditions). Throughout the period of partial closure we continue to meet our responsibilities under KCSIE Sept 19 in the following ways.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)

Our DSLs are Jo Allen, Claire Ramsay and Julia Patterson. While they are able to do so staff are on site or working from home. Whilst working from home all are available through Microsoft Teams for video conferencing. The senior leadership team (including all 3 DSLs) are conference calling daily.

If all three become incapacitated through the C19 epidemic we will call upon trained DSLs from Percy Hedley School who use the same systems as NCS.

All staff are aware that if they consider a child is at risk of immediate harm they should intervene then follow up with reports to children's services and DSL.

We continue to use CPOMS as this is an online encrypted system to log all incidents and information of concern. Historical hard copy child protection files are in Jo Allen / Lauren Stephenson's office and can be accessed if required.

Vulnerable children

All NCS children are deemed vulnerable in the context of C19 as they each have an EHCP. We have considered each child's needs, in consultation with their parents/carers and with social workers where they have one.

The school offer through the period of partial closure remains dynamic so that we are able to support our most vulnerable children at any given time. It is recognised that our autistic children are very much reliant on the structures and routines that NCS provides for them. At this time those structures are removed as the available learning spaces, activities and staffing is constantly changing. At all times we aim to do what is in the best interests of each child and remain responsive to their changing needs.

It is vital that we keep communication with families and social workers open and that we are transparent about what our offer is.

Attendance

We will agree with families about whether attendance at NCS is appropriate for their child and are reporting our attendance figures daily to the DfE. We are currently offering between 2 and 5 days school for our most vulnerable children and have reduced the length of the school day to 9:30am – 3:00pm in order to reduce staff fatigue as working with our children is particularly intense during this period of change. Some children are receiving Keeping in Touch visits at the family home and others are maintaining contact through video conferencing, with appropriate safeguards in place. Teachers and therapists are maintaining contact with all children to support home with home learning activities.

We are checking in with all children at least weekly, including during school holidays. If we are concerned about a child or have not have contact their family, we will raise this with the Local Authority and social care.

We have updated our emergency contacts and emails.

Northern Counties School KCSIE Covid-19 Appendix

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. They are aware of arrangements for what to do if they are worried about a child through the period of partial closure.

Any new staff will have a safeguarding induction either by video call with Jo Allen or through online training. All new staff will receive a copy of part 1 of KCSIE to read and will have access to the Child Protection Policy.

The existing school workforce may move between school, Percy Hedley School, Tees House and Bradbury View on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school or residence 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

At this time it is not anticipated that children will need to move between schools.

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. Where we are partially through a recruitment process we will continue to follow our safer recruitment processes, 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.

If we need to utilise volunteers, we shall continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will 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.

As the receiving institution, NCS will risk assess as we would for a volunteer (see above). We understand that the onus remains on NCS to satisfy ourselves that someone in our own setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE. We may choose to do this, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

NCS will continue to follow our 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.

NCS will 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

Northern Counties School KCSIE Covid-19 Appendix

emailing 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 NCS is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, NCS 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.

Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, NCS will ensure appropriate support is in place for them. We may choose to use existing process or develop those as we see fit. We will call on the experience of the school's Wellbeing Team to support this process.

Online safety in schools and colleges

It will be more important than ever that NCS provides a safe environment, including online. NCS will 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.

NCS will be supported by the PHF IT Department to maintain filters. The system to block sites is automatic and there are 4 staff in the department, all working at distance to each other.

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

NCS will do what we reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the school. Staff will continue to interact with children and will report to the DSLs and make referrals into social care should they spot any signs that a child is at risk. Any such concerns will 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.

Northern Counties School KCSIE Covid-19 Appendix

NCS will follow DfE guidance on providing education remotely. The DfE 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.

NCS will 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 staff code of conduct.

This policy covers amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy applies equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced. NCS will 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.