



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

PHASE 6

(Full opening of schools)

8th March 2021-

SAFEGUARDING &

CHILD PROTECTION

PROTOCOL

(including attendance)

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1 .Audience

This guidance is written for all NPCAT schools.

2. Purpose

This is guidance for the full opening of NPCAT schools from the 8th March 2021. It ensures that pupils remain safeguarded with the easing of restrictions and in response to the coronavirus (Covid-19).

3. Overview

It is the government plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time. This guidance is intended to support NPCAT schools in the easing of restrictions following the coronavirus (Covid-19) lockdown period. It also includes the expectations on schools if there is a need for further lockdown.

4. Keeping Children Safe in Education

4.1 Maintaining effective safeguarding practice

Whether or not in a lockdown situation, schools must continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance and legislative functions as outlined in, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Schools must always be safe places for children and safeguarding continues to be everybody's responsibility.

The following safeguarding principles remain for all staff:

- To always **act in the best interests of children.**
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern they must **continue to act in accordance with safeguarding practice** for the school and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and to act immediately.
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** or Deputy must be available. If not on site, they must be contactable.
- **Safer recruitment** practice is maintained to ensure that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the workforce and/or gain access to children.
- Children continue to be **protected when they are online.**

The Teacher's Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes Headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as

part of their professional duties (*para 12, Part One: Safeguarding Information for all staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020*).

4.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection

All staff must comply with the NPCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the School Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

Visitors to the school site must be kept to a minimum, in accordance with the school's risk assessment. Where there are visitors on the school site, the precautionary measures put in place by the school will be expected to be followed.

All statutory functions relating to the safeguarding of children will continue to be followed by schools in accordance with the local authority arrangements.

Expectations in lockdown

- The local authority will continue to be responsible for statutory intervention and the management of cases of vulnerable pupils.
- Where there is an allocated social worker, they are the main point of contact for the child, or if the child is in the care of the local authority, it is the Virtual School Head.
- The school must collaborate with the local authority on their arrangements for the processing of referrals to children's services and facilitating meetings in accordance with statutory guidance.
- The Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH) will continue to be the mechanism for making referrals, unless otherwise stated by the local authority.
- The school must ensure that contact information for the MACH is available to parents on the school website.
- Subject to the local authority arrangements, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other meetings with social workers, where possible will continue through either conference call or video link.
- Information sharing on the broader aspects of safeguarding and any requests made of the school by the local authority must continue to be directed through the Head of Attendance and Welfare. This will help to reduce any conflicting advice and duplication of practice.
- The safeguarding protocols for visitors must continue to be followed.
- Accident and near miss reporting must continue in accordance with the school procedure.

4.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in a school. The pathways in school for reporting any concerns about a child must always, in the first instance, be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The school's safeguarding and child protection procedures provide further guidance when the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is self-isolating or shielding, the Headteacher must ensure that there are interim staffing arrangements in place to cover this role.

Expectations in lockdown

In a lockdown situation, it is important that all school staff have access to a trained Designated safeguarding Lead or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them. It is the Designated safeguarding Lead's responsibility to ensure:

- If there is a need for the movement of staff between schools new staff at the receiving school are inducted on safeguarding processes for the setting.
- Ensure that any information relating to the vulnerability of the child is shared with the receiving school. A risk assessment in relation to the child's needs must be undertaken by the receiving school.
- All staff are made aware of any changes to local safeguarding reporting structures.
- Information on safeguarding posters in school, must be amended with any staff changes and displayed with the term, 'Coronavirus (COVID-19)'. This will ensure that all staff are assured of the current arrangements for reporting concerns and that there is updated photograph identification of any additional staff with safeguarding responsibilities.
- Dismissal process in place at the end of the school day, whereby children are only collected from school by the parent or other authorised person. This must be shared with all staff and be part of any new staff induction.
- The Peer on Peer Abuse policy is revised to ensure that there are effective reporting mechanisms in place for children not attending school to report any concerns. This must include incidents occurring on social media.
- Where there is concern for the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil that there is frequent contact with the pupil and the parent with information and advice available on the school website.
- Children that are vulnerable with a social worker continue to be visited every 3 days or as frequently as the social worker determines, which must be in writing.

- Where there is an Operation Encompass call made to the school the Designated Safeguarding Lead must notify the Trust by recording information on the central spreadsheet allocated to the school and if necessary, discuss the safeguarding arrangements for the child with the school's allocated Trust Safeguarding Partner.
- Information continues to be recorded on CPOMS. Information provided may be shared by the Trust with local authorities to assist in arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable pupils. The information of the incident and actions taken must also be uploaded to CPOMS.

4.4 Safer Recruitment, Volunteers and Contractors

Safer recruitment practice must be in accordance with the Trust expectations. The Trust HR Team must be informed of any newly recruited personnel. It is essential that people unsuitable to work with children are identified through the recruitment process and prohibited to enter the NPCAT workforce. Recruitment checks will revert to be carried out in person.

Expectations in lockdown

- Recruitment may continue remotely. When recruiting, schools must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre-appointment checks, with any safeguarding checks being undertaken remotely.
- Staff induction and probationary periods will continue.
- It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that on any given day that the school is aware of the staff that are on their site. As such, the single central record must continue to be updated.
- This is particularly important where contractors are being used for any work required on site, as usual contractors may not be available. In all instances of work being carried out, the appropriate checks of persons must be completed.
- Where there is contracted work taking place, the school must notify the Trust Estates and Compliance Manager.

4.5 Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers

From 1st September 2020, in accordance with the changes to the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, any allegation of abuse includes supply teachers.

Schools must have regard to the provisions of the NPCAT Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers Policy.

Expectations in lockdown

- The school must continue to notify the Senior Standards Officer and the Head of Attendance and Welfare in all cases where an allegation has been made.
- The school will respond to the advice from the Teaching Regulation Agency regarding referrals.

4.6 Online Safety

Children in all groups, whether eligible to attend school or not, must be reminded of the rules around keeping safe online. The school must ensure that websites are updated with the appropriate guidance, including an appropriate link for help and guidance for parents. Children and their parents must know how to report any abuse.

Some pupils that are unable to attend school due to reasons of coronavirus (Covid-19) may be provided with remote learning. When delivering a remote learning session, staff must have regard to the NPCAT Online Education (Remote Learning) protocols that apply in either secondary or primary schools, particularly for the teaching of live lessons. Where live lessons are undertaken it is important that staff abide by the provisions of the NPCAT Staff Code of Conduct

Expectations in lockdown

- When parents are contacted by the school, staff must ensure that parents are advised of the requirement to keep their children safe online and be provided with the opportunity to discuss any concerns.
- Where a concern is reported to a member of staff, this must be escalated immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.
- The school website must be updated regularly with information and advice for pupils and parents to keep children safe online.
- Remote learning sessions must be delivered in accordance with the NPCAT Online Education (Remote Learning) protocols that apply in either secondary or primary schools, particularly for the teaching of live lessons. Where live lessons are undertaken it is important that staff abide by the provisions of the NPCAT Staff Code of Conduct

4.7 Pupil Wellbeing and Support

On returning to school, pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important that staff in schools contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some pupils may need support to re-adjust to school, whilst others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return, a few

may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.

All staff will be expected to adopt a positive attitude to the return of pupils to school which allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, and benefits wellbeing.

Where a pupil is anxious and needs support, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure that there is focused pastoral support for the child, drawing on external support from agencies and the school nurse.

Where children have experienced the bereavement or loss, it is important that school allow the child to talk about their feelings. External agencies may be overwhelmed with referrals. If there is a delay in a pupil having access to services this must be discussed with the Trust Head of Attendance and Welfare if this issue cannot be readily resolved.

The school website must continue to be updated with information and advice for pupils and parents on supporting mental health and bereavement, including a link to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

Expectations in lockdown

- Where there is concern identified around a child's mental health, this must be reported by the member of staff to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will assess for the appropriate action to be taken.
- If there is a social worker assigned to a pupil where a concern has been raised, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that they remain apprised of the situation.
- All information must be recorded on CPOMS and any other format collated centrally by the Trust as requested by the local authority.
- Schools must continue to include information and advice on Mental Health and wellbeing on the school website for pupils and parents.
- Communication with children is essential to their mental health and wellbeing. Where a child is known to be having difficulty with their mental health, the school must assess the child's needs around the frequency of contact with the school and take action with available staff who are willing to support those known to be struggling emotionally.
- For pupils that are not attending school, increasing or decreasing the frequency of calls by the school, may be helpful to allaying any fears that the child may have.

- Consideration must be given to involving older children and young people in thinking of ways they can support others, such as painting rainbows and putting up in their windows, creating emoji's and sharing examples of their craftwork on school social media platforms.
- Schools should provide resources around mindfulness art worksheets for downtime.
- Encourage pupils and parents to keep to routines.
- Encourage children to listen to music and do fitness workouts at a set time each day.
- Task pupils with creative thinking of ways to keep engagement high with the world beyond their home/bedroom.
- If there is a delay in a pupil having access to services to support with mental health, bereavement or loss, this must be discussed with the Trust Head of Attendance and Welfare, where the issue cannot be readily resolved.

5. Attendance

5.1 Attendance expectations

With the full opening of schools, the NPCAT Attendance Policy and School Attendance Procedures will be eased back into practice. The Trust attendance expectations remain unchanged and the policy will be robustly applied.

All pupils, unless shielding or self-isolating in accordance with government advice, will be expected to attend school.

The government anticipates that local authorities will penalise parents where a child of compulsory school age is not attending school regularly, without justifiable cause. The Trust Attendance Team will resume their responsibilities with regards to attendance monitoring, formal intervention and home visits. Attendance meetings in school will be arranged in accordance with the school's risk assessment .

Schools must clearly establish when pupils are due to arrive on site each day. The timings of the school day must be on the school's website. This must include the arrangements for any staggered starts, in keeping with the school's risk assessment. This information will be relevant for any subsequent legal proceedings that are taken for non-school attendance.

Lateness to school will be recorded in accordance with the requirements of the Trust Attendance Policy and the School Attendance Procedures and this will include the

recording of unauthorised lateness, where a child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Returning to school may be an anxious time for some pupils and parents. The steps undertaken by schools for the safe return of pupils should provide reassurances around implementing a system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission of infection. If a child is not attending school without justification, the school must discuss this situation with their allocated Trust Attendance Manager.

In some cases it may be known to the school that parents or pupils are deliberately not abiding by precautionary measures or social distancing, which raises concerns around the increase in transmission of the virus to other pupils and staff. Where this is the case, the school must speak with the parent about the risks to others and advise them that unless there is compliance the child will not be permitted to attend school. The Trust Attendance Manager must be informed of such cases.

A pupil having complex needs is not a reason to deny the pupil a face to face education. Their needs should be considered in any risk assessment to support the pupil in school.

Expectations in lockdown

- The Trust will endeavour to keep all schools open to vulnerable pupils and other priority groups following government guidance.
- The school will update risk assessments on preventing the transmission of coronavirus (Covid-19).
- The NPCAT Attendance Policy and School Attendance Procedures will be held in abeyance with regards to formal attendance monitoring, and legal intervention will be subject to the local authority guidance on progressing legal proceedings.
- The school will liaise with the Trust Attendance Team regarding the expectations on vulnerable pupils or priority groups attending school.

5.2 Leave of Absence in Term Time

With the recommencing of the NPCAT Attendance Policy, the process for requests for leave of absence in term time will apply. Parents must submit a request to the Headteacher of the school at which the child is on roll. Requests must only be granted if the exceptional circumstance criteria can be satisfied. Where there is doubt about granting the leave, the school must discuss the matter with their allocated Trust Attendance Manager.

It is the expectation that parents will avoid taking leave of absence for their child in term time as this will cause further disruption to their child's education. To assist the school with precautionary measures to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (Covid-19), when making a request for leave, the parent must provide details of the destination to be visited. If the area to be visited is at high risk of transmission of the coronavirus and subject to quarantine requirements on return to the UK, the child must not return to school until it can be satisfied that the quarantine requirements have been satisfied. If the school is in doubt about the authenticity of any information provided this must be discussed with the Trust Attendance Manager.

The issue of fines for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be subject to local authority guidance.

Expectations in lockdown

- Leave of absence in term time requests will be held in abeyance.

5.3 Pupils attending alternative provision

Pupils that routinely attend more than one setting on a part-time basis, for example they are dual registered at a mainstream school and an alternative provision setting or special school, should have any risks identified collaboratively between both settings to allow the pupil access to their education.

All pupils in alternative provision settings will be expected to return to school full-time. The mainstream school will continue to request attendance information from the provider and ensure that absences are followed up in a timely manner. If an alternative provision setting is not providing attendance information or making home visits to see the child, this must be discussed with the Trust Attendance Manager allocated to the mainstream school setting.

Expectations in lockdown

- The school will continue to liaise with the alternative provider on the requirements for pupils to attend school.
- The school will collaborate with the alternative provider on safeguarding checks of pupils and home visits.

5.4 Pupil Absence & Coronavirus (COVID-19)

To prevent the transmission of coronavirus (Covid-19), the government guidance on pupil attendance at school must be followed:

- Pupils who have coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms, or who have tested positive in at least the last 10 days must not attend school.
- If a pupil develops symptoms during the school day they must be sent home, be advised to self-isolate for at least 10 days and arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (Covid-19).
- If a pupil tests positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develops symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.
- Other members of the household (including siblings), must self-isolate for 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.
- If a pupil tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. Other members of the household, including siblings, can stop self-isolating.
- A pupil must only return to school after self-isolating if they no longer have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. Other members of the household (including siblings), must continue to self-isolate for the full 10 days.

Any pupils (unless a sibling in the family home) who have been in close contact with someone with symptoms do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Schools should not request evidence of negative results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming children back after a period of self-isolation. This does not mean that where a pupil has a pattern of illness absences or is not regularly attending school due to illness that a request for evidence of the illness absence should not be requested. It is important that where coronavirus (Covid-19) is not a concern that normal attendance practice applies.

Pupils that are shielding in accordance with government guidance and health advice should be offered access to remote education. The Trust Attendance Manager must be informed of pupils that are shielding.

Expectations in lockdown

- The school will follow government guidance on preventing the transmission of coronavirus (Covid-19).
- The school will update risk assessments on preventing the transmission of coronavirus (Covid-19).

5.5 Pupil Registration

Pupil attendance and absence will be recorded on the schools MIS using the appropriate codes. This will include the registration of pupils in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Registration codes must be applied in accordance with the government guidance, *School Attendance, August 2020*. For the school year 2020 to 2021, this includes where a child is not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19).

(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census).

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- *guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care, or*
- *any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).*

Code Y: secondary school pupils not expected to be attending school for lessons during the week commencing 8th March 2021 due to the asymptomatic testing programme.

First day absence calling will be undertaken by schools of those pupils that are expected to attend and are not in attendance.

The DfE educational settings status form will continue to be completed daily by schools. If the local authority requires information.

Expectations in lockdown

- The Trust Head of Attendance and Welfare will advise schools on the registration codes that must be applied in accordance with the government guidance.
- First day absence calling will continue to be undertaken by schools of those pupils that are expected to attend and are not in attendance.
- Information requested by the local authority will be collated centrally.

5.6 Home Visits

The criteria within the NPCAT Attendance Policy that applies to home visits will resume, with the addition of visits to vulnerable pupils that are not attending due to coronavirus. Where there is no reason for absence provided for a pupil expected to attend school, the school must liaise with their allocated Trust Attendance Manager who will assess with the school the requirement for a home visit to be undertaken.

Where there are 3 consecutive days of authorised absence for pupils expected to attend school, the school must liaise with the Trust Attendance Manager who will assess with the school the requirement for a home visit to be undertaken.

Vulnerable pupils with a social worker that are legitimately not attending school for reasons linked to the coronavirus must continue to be highlighted for a home visit every 3 days, or as frequent as the social worker advises. In such cases, the Trust Attendance Team will continue to support schools with visits. Staff undertaking the visit must ensure there is regular liaison with the social worker and all discussions are recorded on CPOMS.

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- 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 **may** 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

- 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
- others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

It continues to be the case that where there is a need for a home visit, face to face contact with the child or parent must be avoided. Preferably, the visit should be undertaken with the staff member remaining in their vehicle and talking to the parent using the telephone. If a doorstep discussion takes place staff should maintain a distance of at least 2 metres at all times. In such circumstances, staff must take precautionary measures by wearing a face covering and ensuring that they sanitise their hands immediately after the visit. At no time must a member of staff enter into the family home.

To assist with contact tracing, staff must note on their CPOMS recording how the visit was conducted and whether the visit entailed face to face contact with the parent, child or other persons.

Expectations in lockdown

- Information on home visits undertaken in lockdown may be subject to local authority requests to provide information on visits undertaken to vulnerable pupils. This information will be collected centrally by the Trust and schools will be advised on the process for collating this information.
- There will be no doorstep conversations and face to face contact with pupils or parents.
- Home visits will be conducted by staff having sight of the child from within their vehicle and speaking to a parent or pupil by telephone.
- In their recording of the visit, staff must include their observations of the home and surrounding area on CPOMS and any other format to provide information on vulnerable pupils.

- It is important to ensure there is transparency with the parent around the reason for visiting, which must be explained as a requirement of the school's safeguarding practice in ensuring children remain safe and supported.

6. Behaviour

6.1 Behaviour expectations

Schools must have regard to the NPCAT Behaviour Policy and school behaviour procedures at all times.

Any non-compliance or disregard of precautionary measures to control the transmission of infection within the school setting must be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour procedures and the school must consider the potential impact on the health and safety of all pupils and staff. Such conduct may mean that it is unsafe to others for the pupil to be in school, and this must be discussed with the parent. Individual risk assessments must be put in place. Continued non-compliance may result in exclusion.

The deliberate coughing or spitting with intent, must be dealt with immediately by way of exclusion.

Behaviour meetings with parents will be arranged in accordance with the school's risk assessment or held remotely.

Expectations in lockdown

- The expectations for pupil behaviour remain unchanged.
- Where possible, meetings must be arranged remotely.

7. Communication

7.1 Communication with parents

School websites must continue to be updated with the school mobile numbers and the emergency contact numbers, including Trust contact details to assist parents in contacting school to report a Covid positive case.

It is important that schools have up to date contact lists for the parent/carer, with at least two contacts for each child.

Expectations in lockdown

- For pupils in groups that are not eligible to attend school, the Headteacher should continue to make every best effort that there is a fortnightly rotation of staff with responsibility to make contact with the parent of every child on roll at the school and to endeavour to speak with the child at the point of contact with the parent.
- All teachers in secondary schools will be expected to conduct live lessons even in lockdown ensuring there is daily contact with pupils.
- This dialogue with the child may not always be possible, however if the child has failed to engage with the school for a period over this two week window the parent will be notified and all/any reasons for failure of engagement will be noted. These notes must be forwarded to the Headteacher who will determine next steps.
- Where the child is deemed to be vulnerable and has a social worker, or is 'otherwise vulnerable', this contact must be more frequent; where practicable, daily. Naturally, the ongoing needs of the child will continue to be identified by the social worker.
- Where parental contact cannot be established there must be communication with all additional persons listed as a contact for the child.

8. Legislation

- Children Act 1989
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006

9. Publications

- Keeping Children Safe in Education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges. September 2020.
- School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. August 2020.

10. Related Policies

- NPCAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- NPCAT Recruitment Policy
- NPCAT Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers Policy
- NPCAT Attendance Policy
- NPCAT Behaviour Policy
- NPCAT Exclusions Policy

- NPCAT Online Education (Remote Learning) Policy and associated school procedures.

11. Supporting Information/Websites

- Guidance for full opening: schools.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#pupil-wellbeing-and-support>
- Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (Covid-19) infection.
[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)
- Public Health England: Guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (Covid-19).
[Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision#vulnerable-children-and-young-people>
- How to complete the education settings status form.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-complete-the-educational-setting-status-form>

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