

## Covid-19 Appendix

### **Safeguarding in relation to Covid-19**

#### **Pandemic Procedures: COVID 19 (p.59 of School Safeguarding Policy)**

This section of the Policy addresses how the school will apply the safeguarding and child protection policy in order to safeguard all our learners during COVID-19. It applies both to the minority of learners who are attending school and the majority who will be staying at home pending further government advice.

#### **Vulnerable children**

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the government asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. Children who absolutely need to attend are those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response and children defined as vulnerable as follows:

- Children who have a social worker, including children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989\*\*.
- Children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans\*.
- Other children who the Designated Safeguarding Lead considers to be vulnerable, including those children who may be in receipt of early help; were previously the subject of child protection or child in need plans; were previously looked after; or whose situation and wellbeing at home may become unsafe or insecure if they do not attend school.

\*The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in consultation with the local authority and parents/carers to determine whether children with an EHC plan 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.

- \*\*It may also be necessary and appropriate to undertake a similar risk assessment in relation to children with social workers. However, the school will provide a place for any child with a social worker:
  - If the social worker requires a place to be provided; and
  - The child's parents/carers are willing to send the child to school; and
  - The child does not have an underlying health condition that puts them at increased risk.

In circumstances where the school considers a child to be vulnerable and eligible to attend school but a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to school, the DSL will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent/carer. If the child has a social worker, the DSL will liaise with the social worker and seek to involve them in the discussion with the child's parents/carers.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of their child contracting COVID19, the DSL will discuss those anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. If the child has a social worker, the DSL will liaise with the social worker and seek to involve them in the discussion with the child's parents/carers.

NB eligibility for free school meals in and of itself will not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability for these purposes.

In line with advice from Warwickshire County Council, Quest will create and maintain an up-to-date register/database of all learners who are considered vulnerable as above and 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 Virtual School for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this is: Ben Makins and in his absence Anna Stelfox.

The register will contain the names and contact details of the child's parents; other significant family members; social workers; family support workers; and any other key professionals including health professionals and youth justice workers. The register will be accessible to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and all deputy designated safeguarding leads including by secure access for DSLs who may need to self-isolate and/or work from home.

Quest assessed and reviewed the level of vulnerability of each learner on the register using the RAG rating format as below. This supported the DSL to identify those children that needed to be offered the opportunity to attend school (including those children with a social worker), those that can be supported by regular contact from a DSL and those whose attendance might be inconsistent and who may therefore need additional contact and support. The RAG rating criteria are:

Red - most at risk of harm, self-harm or neglect (will include all children subject of a child protection plan); and all children who are looked after unless they are in a stable setting)

Amber - a moderate risk of harm, but with some protective factors (Is likely to include some of the learners with a Child in Need plan and/or being supported by a family support worker)

Green - some concerns or unmet needs; or have been red or amber and need monitoring.

Every child on the vulnerable children register is allocated to a named DSL who is responsible for ensuring that the identified level of support and contact is provided. Our DSLs will record all contacts and outcomes with vulnerable children and their families in the usual way so that those records are visible to colleague DSLs which will be reviewed in weekly DSL meetings.

### **Further Information**

Since September 2020 when all learners were advised to return to schools the following steps have been taken;

- Any learners displaying symptoms of Covid-19 are advised not to come in or sent home and advised to take a test. If the test is positive they are asked to isolate for 14 days, if it is negative they would be expected to return to school.
- If a learner is off with Covid-19 the Family Footings Team and/ or class team will check in on a weekly basis to ensure safeguarding of the learner.
- If a learner who is rated as Red or Amber in terms of their vulnerability is off due to Covid-19 then additional check in's will take place and relevant external professionals such as Social Workers will be made aware.