

Covid-19 Emergency Safeguarding plan

This is a guide to help Early Years providers consider the best way to support your vulnerable children and families during the current Coronavirus pandemic. An assessment of your staff resources and the needs of your children and families will be required which may need to be reviewed regularly due to the changing nature of the government advice being given.

Information will need to be sought from your Local Authority regarding their critical incident plan for supporting vulnerable families in your local area

Now is a good time to reiterate key safeguarding messages

- Discuss with parents the impact of closure on their ability to work / mental health
- Check if all parents have internet access and make alternative resource and information sharing arrangements for those who do not
- Share information about Early Help, PACEY, Samaritans, Mind, Early Years Alliance, Domestic abuse helplines and other support services that can help children and families
- It is likely that children will spend more time online, reshare online safety advice and resources such as Thinkuknow, Safer Internet Centre and Digital Parenting
- Children are hearing about the Coronavirus too and naturally, may be feeling scared and anxious. Talking to children about their worries can help. Child Mind Institute and Mindheart have resources that can support you and can be shared with parents
- Ensure all contact details are up to date for staff, children and families

Planning ahead

- Ensure all staff know how to contact the DSL/DDSL in the event of closure and home working arrangements
- Rearrange all non-urgent meetings, training courses etc
- Remind staff how to refer directly to MASH/social care if they have concerns about the immediate safety of a child out of hours
- Consider how the DSL/DDSL will remain available, develop plans to manage a skeleton staff and adapt current systems and procedures to support this
- Consider how sensitive and personal information will be accessed and kept securely in different working conditions
- Consider how social media can be used to support social connection, this could include creating protected You Tube channels to upload remote teaching and learning activities
- Complete a safeguarding plan for individual children where there are safeguarding and child protection concerns. Consider their individual risk and protective factors and what the impact of closure might be on each child. Balance risk of exposure to the virus with risk of complete isolation, what measures can be put in place to strengthen protective factors (see below)
- For children with additional needs, create visual timetables, communication mats, social stories about the closure and other resources tailored to meet the individual needs of the child

- Complete risk assessments for 'Safe and Well' activities that may be undertaken by staff in the event of closure
- Ensure staff conducting home visits have received appropriate training and that systems and procedures are in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing
- Create scripts or a list of key questions that will help staff to have quality conversations when undertaking safe and well activities e.g. using scaling tools to monitor changes to mood and risk

Consider the use of enhanced DBS checks and risk assessments to check the suitability of volunteers in the event of you needing them

Consider provisionally scheduling future staff meetings via Skype or Zoom during closures?

Create weekly newsletters for staff/parents to keep them up to date and promote regular communication

Check with your insurers and HR advisors re staff pay entitlements

Check what funds are available via the treasury to support small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic

In the event of your setting closing

Consider your unique context, remember we all need support so ensure staff are applying self-care too and that we have opportunities to connect and support each other.

- Promote resources that support children and families with their emotional wellbeing e.g. Go Noodle, Calmzone, Headspace

• Set daily self-care challenges for children and families, encourage social connection by promoting opportunities for them to share how they have met them

• Share ideas about how families can enjoy time together, use social media to promote the 'digital 5 a day', favourite reads, host virtual book clubs, arts and crafts, and encourage play and interaction e.g. Family board games, BBC 'Tiny Happy People'

• Ensure all children receive a 'Safe and Well' phone call at least once a week

• Let children and parents know how and when they can contact you to ask any questions or reach out for support e.g. We will be available by telephone 10am – 2pm or email ...

• Where there are safeguarding and child protection concerns, ensure children receive a 'Safe and Well' home visit at least once a week where the child is seen and spoken to.

Frequency should be informed by level of risk. **Work with other agencies to develop a co-ordinated response and to avoid duplication**

• Attend any meetings and or reviews for children or agree alternative arrangements to contribute to multi-agency working e.g. online conferencing

• Consider additional support for families facing financial difficulties e.g. Food parcels, information about food banks

• Create kindness packages that can be sent to families where closure may impact on mental health to let them know you are thinking about them, this could include personalised messages, food and essentials, family activities such as jigsaws, mindful colouring activities, recipe ideas, letters from teachers etc.

• Record home visits and telephone communication using your record-keeping systems

• Keep in touch with your local authority, find out what will remain available through the local offer for children with SEND and/or complex medical conditions

- Consider what outreach support can be offered to the most vulnerable children in line with government advice
- Consider how you can use this time effectively to review/ update staff training, peer supervision, policies and procedures
 - Any food / food voucher collection to be staggered to prevent large group gatherings and increased risk of exposure. Keep a record of families receiving this support, who collected and if children were present
- Remember to keep yourselves and each other safe, ensure supervision and support is in place for **everyone**, including you.

Children Looked after or previously Looked After / Children with current Child Protection Plans/ Concerns: Tier 1

- If possible speak to the child about the closure period to gain their wishes and feeling regarding support needed.
- Speak with children's social worker to assess and plan for this period.
- Agree who will see the child/ren in the event of school closures / lockdown
- Action and support from school could include:
 - Visits to the family home- doorstep contact (weekly?)
 - Telephone contact / Email Contact – Frequency?
 - Food voucher if eligible for Pupil Premium
- Liaise with all necessary professionals if possible to agree how information will be shared and children will be monitored
- Attend any Child Protection conferences, review meetings, unless advised otherwise
- Use efficient systems to record and report concerns

Children with additional needs / vulnerable families: Tier 2

- If possible speak to the child about the closure period to gain their wishes and feeling regarding support needed.
- Clear plan documented with agreed actions this could include:
 - Visits to the family home- doorstep contact, (All children must be seen)
 - Phone contact, Email (Frequency to be agreed)
 - Food vouchers if children eligible for Pupil Premium
 - liaising with all necessary professionals if possible to agree how information will be shared and children will be monitored
 - attending any planned review meetings if necessary unless advised otherwise
- Use efficient systems to record and report concerns

All children: Tier 3

- If possible, when informing all children of the closure please ask children to speak to a member of staff if they are concerned for their safety or wellbeing in any way during this period.
- any children (or parents) who identify themselves as vulnerable should be moved into tier 2 category.
- remain optimistic and remind children that this is temporary and will pass

Teachers/ Staff

- Children identified in tier 1 and 2 wherever possible should be allocated to a designated member of staff where possible to visit according to the agreed individual plan
- Other pupils should be allocated to a teaching member of staff for them to make contact as agreed within the closure period. (Reminder to staff regarding Safer Working Practice advice)
- No personal information to be taken from the premises (paper copies etc)
- Any cause for concern must be recorded and reported unless there is an immediate danger/safety risk in which case they must call the named DSL's and or the emergency services.
- Any home visits must be undertaken by 2x staff, at least one will be the DSL / DDSL wherever possible, this will be doorstep visits but children must be seen. This should be done taking into account advice received by LA
 - The frequency of any required contact must be agreed with all staff eg check staff email daily
 - Consider how you might create a skeleton staff to continue to provide a reduced service

These are unprecedented times so keep ahead of changes in government advice via all the usual online channels

#Stay Safe

#WeWillGetThroughThis

Susan x