SUPPLEMENTARY SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION – plans for school closure

Identification of, and planning for, pupils at risk

Instructions:

- Review all pupils on vulnerable pupil list and identify those for whom school closure and a lack of contact with school staff would pose most risk.

Think about pupils on CP or CIN, all of whom will have identified risks, or consider those for whom home life is known to be particularly challenging or high risk, i.e. domestic abuse, substance misuse, parental mental ill health, high levels of neglect. Also think about pupils who are under assessment with Social Care, or those for whom you have recently submitted referrals which did not lead to further action. There is no definitive checklist to determine which pupils should belong on this list; schools are advised to make reasonable and proportionate decisions based on what they know about each individual pupil's risk.

- Ensure pupil contact details are up to date and are remotely accessible by all DSLs.

In the event of school closure and all buildings being inaccessible, it is important that DSLs are able to contact parents remotely, both by email and by phone. Think about providing all DSLs with a school laptop / iPad and a school mobile phone, if that is possible. If not, ask DSLs about how they can safely access [Pupil date MIS] outside of school, and discuss how they can protect their mobile number from being shared with parents. Please speak to [named person], for further advice.

- Ensure all DSLs have remote access to email and [online data systems].

As above, in the event of school closure, it is important that DSLs are able to have remote access to email and to [online data systems] so that any safeguarding information can be accessed, shared and responded to if the building is out of action. The above advice re: access to a school laptop, or other safe device, from which email and [online data systems] can be accessed also applies.

Advice:

- Prepare letter / communication for parents of identified children to explain the contact that a DSL will be making in the event of school closure.

A template letter is included below in the appendix to this document, which you are welcome to use. The appendix also includes a paragraph to add to any whole school letter for all parents in the event of school closure to remind them of our safeguarding responsibility, informing them that we will be making contact with families, and highlighting how they can report any safeguarding concerns themselves.

- Prepare letter / communication for Social Care and all other relevant professionals to explain contact that a DSL will be making with vulnerable pupils in the event of school closure.

This can be a blanket email that you prepare for all professionals currently involved with pupils in your school. Think about giving them a named school contact for the child / family with whom they are working, so that the responsibility doesn't just fall on one person. Make sure that any school or staff phone numbers and email addresses that are used by professionals have suitable out of office messages prepared so that anyone making contact about a safeguarding issue will know how to make contact with the right person.

- Check staff remote access to email and [online data systems] and plan a letter / communication for staff re: logging safeguarding concerns in the event of school closure.

It is important that staff understand their responsibility for safeguarding pupils still continues despite school closure. Many of our staff live in the local community, and may see pupils out and about. In the event of school

closure, make sure staff are clear about how they can share a safeguarding concern with a member of the DSL team, be that through the [online data system] or through an electronic version of the school's paper concern form. For those staff without access to the internet outside of school, phone number(s) for at least one member of the DSL team will need to be shared.

Guidance and support for pupils

Advice:

- Highlight, signpost, share leaflets, etc, for key sources of support for children that they can access directly, i.e. ChildLine, CEOP.

Help pupils to feel safe by learning who they can talk to about anything that is worrying them or anything that is making them feel unsafe when they aren't seeing school staff every day. ChildLine runs a free, 24-hour phone, online and messaging service for children of all ages, and there are lots of useful self-help resources on their website which explains to children about how to keep safe – these, plus their articles and videos, could be used in assemblies or class discussions. CEOP have a 'make a report' button on their website, where anyone can report anything that they have seen or experienced online that worries them. There are also advice and game pages for children of different ages that can help remind children how to stay safe. You might want to highlight the National Online Safety guides to parents and carers, which are a range of easy to use guides covering a range of popular social media, gaming and online platforms, advising parents on the benefits and risks of their children using them, and offering useful advice on taking sensible precautions to support their children to be safe while using them.

- Assembly for pupils to discuss safe adults and who they can talk to if they are worried or have a problem.

Many pupils identify school adults as amongst their network of safe adults, so removing this support leaves many of them vulnerable. Work with children, particularly those identified in the steps above as being vulnerable in the event of school closure, to identify where they could go and who they could talk to if they needed to. For some pupils, this may need to look more specifically at urgent / high risk scenarios, i.e. violence in the home, and consideration needs to be given, at an age and stage appropriate level, to whether these pupils know how to seek emergency help and protection for themselves, i.e. a safe place to go, calling the police.

SUPPLEMENTARY SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION – mandated school closure

Pupils at risk

Instructions:

- Allocate each child at risk (as identified above) to a member of the DSL team.

Distribute the pupils identified as vulnerable or at increased risk from school closure equally across the DSL team. please see the 3ʳᵈ point below for recommendations in the event that a member of the DSL team is absent.

- Issue a letter / communication to parent and any allocated workers of each child at risk to explain DSL contact taking place during school closure.

Please see the sample letter in the appendix. You know your families best – this may be best shared via a face to face conversation initially, with the letter as a follow up. You may want to tell each family who their named person is from school to reassure them. Don't forget to inform any professionals working with the family about these arrangements so that they know what you are doing to support the child/ren's welfare, and who to contact if they need to discuss anything.

- DSLs to make phone contact with each allocated child 3 times per week to check safety and wellbeing (speak to child not just parent)

In the absence of a member of the DSL team, responsibility for contacting vulnerable pupils may be re-allocated to another DSL, escalated to the HT or a member of SLT, or delegated to the class teacher (under SLT / HT guidance) In the event of significant staff sickness / shortage, contact all other worker(s) involved with the family to inform them that school are unable to complete regular check ins as previously advised. Remember to consider the schools of any siblings, where relevant. If the family is not currently involved with services, consideration should be given to a referral to Social Care if the circumstances warrant. In the event that school buildings can remain open, i.e. for provision of free school meals, face to face check ins can take place, and phone check ins can be reserved for those pupils who have not been seen. There is not a 'script' or prescribed list of questions for the check in!

- DSLs to record summary of conversation on <mark>[online data system]</mark> or an electronic version of school concern form which is then circulated to DSL team via email

It is important to record any unsuccessful contacts, as well as those that did take place. The DSL, or a Deputy DSL, should review all <mark>[online data system]</mark> / concern forms for vulnerable pupil check ins at the end of each week and escalate any concerns as required.

Recording and reporting concerns

Instructions:

- Issue letter / communication to staff advising them to report any safeguarding concerns via [on line dats system] or on electronic version of school concern form which is then circulated to DSL team via email

Make sure that staff understand that the same policies apply for reporting concerns during the period of school closure. In the event that school buildings are inaccessible, consideration must be given to information security when logging concerns about vulnerable pupils; if staff do not have access to an appropriate device from which to log their concerns, staff must be advised to contact the DSL, a Deputy DSL or member of SLT via phone to make a verbal report.

- DSLs to monitor <mark>[online data system]</mark> and emails daily, and respond as required in line with the safeguarding policy and LA thresholds

As above, consider how this can be achieved in the event of the school building being made inaccessible. Please contact your [named person] to talk through any concerns.

Access to food

Instructions:

- Contact each parent for whom there are concerns about reliance on breakfast club / FSM or other sources of support for food, highlight and signpost local support.

Remember to keep a record of all pupils / families accessing support with food during the period of school closure, either directly from school or from other agencies.

- Where required, DSLs to make direct contact with local agencies offering food support and refer families to their attention.

As is already the case in a number of our schools at times like Christmas and Easter, some families may benefit from a referral being completed by school on their behalf for food support.

- If not already receiving DSL contact (as above) DSL to make phone contact weekly to check wellbeing and food provision.

Consider the need for this on a case by case basis – if families are accessing food support directly through school, then face to face check ins will be taking place so phone contact will only be required for those not already being seen by a member of school staff.

APPENDIX – letters

SUGGESTED PARAGRAPH TO BE INSERTED INTO WHOLE SCHOOL LETTER

Whilst the school is closed, our duty and responsibility to safeguarding our pupils remains. Our regular check ins with families needing a bit of extra help and support will continue throughout the period of school closure, just as if the school was open. Please do not feel offended if a member of school staff calls to check in with you, and to speak to your child. If you have any safeguarding concerns whilst the school is closed, for your child or for any other pupil from the school, please contact [named person].

TEMPLATE LETTER FOR PARENTS OF VULNERABLE / HIGH RISK PUPILS SHOULD SCHOOLS CLOSE

Dear [whom it may concern]

Following the announcement to close schools, we understand that this may be a difficult and stressful time for some of our families. At [named] Academy / school, we take our responsibility to safeguard and support vulnerable families very seriously, and we do not want the help and care that we currently offer to you and your child(ren) to stop just because the building has been closed.

To enable us to continue to offer you our support, we will be making regular phone contact with you throughout the time that school remains closed, to speak to you and to speak to your child(ren). The purpose of these phone calls is to 'check in' – ask how you all are doing, offer any help or advice, and support where we can with any issues.

this paragraph is relevant for CP/CIN etc, delete as required
Whilst the school is closed, we will continue to support you, and work with other colleagues supporting you, by contributing to core group/Child in Need (amend / delete as required) meetings. Depending on the circumstances, this may be on the phone or by a video call, or through the form of a written report. If you have any concerns about any meetings that you are required to attend, please contact [name of SW or other appropriate professional]

If you have any concerns about this letter or would like to speak about if further, please contact [named person]. If you have any safeguarding concerns whilst the school is closed, for your child or for any other pupil from the school, please contact [named person].