Remote Learning and Safeguarding

Cheshire East Council

April 2020

The government has issued advice on remote learning: Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

The guidance is relatively straightforward and includes advice on communicating with parents, safeguarding concerns such as online bullying, reporting concerns and staff ensuring they remain within the boundaries of their role. It reiterates that online education should follow the same principles set out in the school staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct).

There are some key considerations for you to be aware of, from a safeguarding point of view, when undertaking remote learning. This document is to complement the government guidance and to support you in thinking about some of those things which you need to be aware of. The list is not exhaustive and there will be other things you need to put in place to effectively safeguard yourself, other staff and children.

Working collaboratively with parents:
- Let parents know what you are going to do, the sites you may use and how you are going to work with the child using these resources.

- Let the parents know how they can support this e.g. ensuring they provide an appropriate workspace without interruptions, supporting any IT issues, letting you know as early as possible if they are experiencing issues etc.

- Parents should identify the device their child will use if you are going to link in with them remotely. They should ensure the necessary Firewalls are in place.

Safeguarding yourself:
- To safeguard yourself from any accusations you should not deviate from agreed school policies e.g. calling the pupil at other times/messaging them outside of the session etc.

- If possible you should not use personal devices to communicate with the pupils.

- Ensure that you are compliant with GDPR at all times e.g. do not download or keep pupil information on your personal devices.

- Do not set up your own systems of communication with pupils. The chosen method should be used by the whole school; approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

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- Use school email addresses not personal ones. Do not use the personal email addresses of pupils unless these are their school e mails.

- Remember that the pupils are not friends; you should deal with them at all times as a professional so that the lines do not get blurred.

Using Information Technology:

At this current time there are many advantages to remote learning and using software which enables virtual classrooms, live streaming and video tutorials etc.

There are safeguarding considerations when using these platforms:

- Be aware of where you are working from: ensure you are appropriately dressed and in a living space, i.e. not a bedroom. Do not have personal things around you e.g. photographs of your family/your address etc.

- If pupils are being asked to share photographs of their work remind them about key messages around online safety. You should not ask for any photographs/recordings of the pupil and should make it clear to the pupil and their parents that they should never send you photographs/recordings of the pupil. If they do you should alert the parent and line manager immediately.

- Do not use **WhatsApp** or **Facebook Messenger** etc for video calling. These would require sharing of personal mobile numbers or Facebook accounts with pupils which may lead to safeguarding concerns.

- You should only use work accounts to communicate with pupils. Under no circumstances should you use your personal accounts for this work.

- Video-conferencing is more suitable for secondary aged pupils. Primary pupils will require parental involvement in the conference. If you are holding video conferencing live sessions with **pupils of any age**, this must be with parental permission and with the approval of your manager. It is good practice to have at least two adults in the conference at any one time.

- Parental permission could take the form of a virtual hello at the start of the session and a virtual goodbye at the end of the session.

- Ensure you log out of your devices securely, especially if you are working on shared devices or in shared workspaces with family members.

The following might be useful to send to parents reminding them about online safety: Thinkuknow - home, UK Safer Internet Centre and Net Aware

Data Protection:

Schools and colleges are reminded to follow the guidance outlined in the data protection toolkit for schools when managing personal data e.g. taking care not to share contact details when emailing multiple people, being careful when sharing usernames and other personal data for access to online resources and providing access to school data systems safely.

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Safeguarding Children:

During this time it is important that Safeguarding Procedures continue as usual. If at any stage you become concerned about a child or they disclose information that causes you concern it is imperative that you act immediately; working remotely should not prevent that.

If a child makes a disclosure remember the 4 'R's:

Receive:
- Listen, try not to looked shocked
- Free narrative: let them tell you in their own words , try not to interrupt
- Mentally note the time and date of the incident; what was done to them; who did it; where it took place
- Don't criticise the perpetrator or ask why they haven't told someone earlier
- Believe what they say

Remember **TED**:

> **T**ell me what you mean by that?
>
> **E**xplain that to me?
>
> **D**escribe that . . . . .

Reassure:
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you
- Reassure them they are not to blame
- Empathise but don't tell them how they should be feeling
- Don't promise confidentiality – explain who needs to know
- Explain what will happen next (*as appropriate to age & level of understanding*)

Report and Record:
- Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy, **without delay**
- The DSL will assess the situation and decide on the next steps.

All staff, including you, have a legal duty to report and record concerns about a child.

It is important that, as the person who witnessed or heard the incident or disclosure should make the record. They need to record…
- Date, time and location of incident
- what you observed or they have told you- write the words used by the child
- your full name and job title
- who else was present with you at the time
- who you have shared it with and when it was shared
- use full names of all people involved and who they are in relation to the child e.g. child/ parent/brother etc. and for practitioners their job titles

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Use your school record of concern template or ensure you record accurately on your electronc record keepng system.

If you are unable to speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead and you have concerns that a child is at risk you should contact Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) and/or the police without delay:

ChECS: **0300 123 5012**
Cheshire East Police: **101 or in urgent cases dial 999**

Where it is safe to do so you should discuss your concerns with the child and family before consultation (not having consent would not prevent consultation, but you would need to be clear on why you haven't spoken to the parents).

When contacting ChECS assume you are the only one with any information about the child and family; give as much information as you can.

If the DSL or their Deputy are not available for you to talk things through with and your safeguarding concerns are lower level i.e. not requiring a referral to ChECS/police, you can e mail the Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) team. sciesteameast@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Do not put confidential information in that e mail just your name, role and contact number asking for a phone call and they will talk through the situation with you.

Useful Resources:
The following are sources of further advice around working remotely in a safe way:

* The Key for School Leaders

* UK Safer Internet Centre

* Guidance on teaching online safety in schools provides information to help schools ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online

* South West Grid For Learning (SWGFL): Coronavirus SWGFL

* Undertaking remote teaching safely during school closures | NSPCC Learning

* Educate against Hate provides support and reporting mechanisms where there are concerns about harmful content and concerns about extremism and radicalisation: https://educateagainsthate.com/

* Schools can access the free Professionals Online Safety Helpline which supports the online safeguarding of both children and professionals.
  Call: 0344 381 4772 or email helpline@saferinternet.org.uk.
  The helpline is open from Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm.

We hope that you find this information useful