Safeguarding pupils while remote learning – guidance for staff

In the event of any of our pupils needing to self-isolate due to COVID-19, or where there are local restrictions requiring pupils to remain at home, we are expected to be able to immediately offer access to remote education. It is imperative that this provision is safe and of a high quality. The guidance below outlines expectations for staff behaviour, conduct and actions while delivering remote learning to promote pupil safety as well as personal safety for the staff member.

Regardless of the mode of delivery for remote learning, the language, learning resources and materials used will be professional, consistent with the school's substantive curriculum, and appropriate to the age and stage of the children concerned. Remote learning will be delivered in the safest and most effective way possible, and every possible step will be taken to promote the safety of our pupils throughout this process.

This document is in addition to, and is intended to work alongside, the school's code of conduct, safeguarding and child protection policy (including any COVID-19 annexes) and any policies related to online safety, curriculum delivery and acceptable use of technology.

Communication with parents/carers

Establishing and maintaining good communication with parents/carers is essential during any period of remote learning, in order to assess progress in learning as well as to provide support, advice and check on safety and wellbeing. In order to do this safely, the following principles apply.

- Communication with parents/carers should take place within usual school business hours, which have been agreed by school leaders to be 8am – 5pm via phone. However, emails can be sent at any time. It is acknowledged that, in exceptional circumstances, communication may need to take place outside of these hours; if this is the case, permission should be sought from school leaders prior to this taking place.
- Communication will take place only using school devices (phone, laptop, tablet), which will have the appropriate security software installed and will be appropriately protected from misuse.
- Communication will only take place using approved school platforms or accounts, i.e. school email, Office 365 Education (Teams) and Zoom. N.B. Zoom is not permitted for use with pupils alone, but can be used to communicate with parents/carers.
- Communication will be professional at all times, and will show dignity and respect to those with whom contact is being made.
- If communication is live, i.e. via Zoom, this will take place in an appropriate location with neutral surroundings. It is acknowledged that, if staff are self-isolating, it is impossible to avoid communicating with parents/carers from outside of the school building; in this instance, staff should be mindful to conduct live communication in a place that does compromise their personal information or security.
- Guidance will be shared with parents/carers prior to commencing remote learning to explain how it should be accessed, what resources will be used and how (including where learning will take place online), and which staff will be working with the pupils and overseeing their work. This guidance will also share the school's expectations of pupils' responsible participation with online learning in order to promote their safety, where applicable.
- Throughout the period of remote learning taking place, regular communication will take place to allow parents/carers to ask questions, feedback about their child's learning, raise any concerns, and seek any support required.

Online lessons, including those that are live (videoconferencing)

Many schools are choosing to deliver part or all of their remote learning using online methods. Our chosen platform for this is Office 365 Education, which is one of a small number of platforms recommended by the Department for Education. Our staff have received appropriate training to support them to use the applications within this platform, namely Microsoft Teams, safely and effectively. In addition, the following measures are in place to promote pupil safety when using the platform and to prevent misuse.

- Each staff member and pupil has been provided with their own account, with an individual log in and password which is not visible or shared with any other user.
- The chat function has been disabled to prevent private messaging between staff and pupils, and between pupils and other pupils.
- Meetings and videoconferencing can only be arranged, initiated and hosted by staff members, and this takes place within a protected environment only accessible to those who are members of the Teams group.
- All lessons will be recorded.

Reporting a concern

- It is important that all staff continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk when they are not at school and accessing remote learning.
- If any member of staff working with a child or children whilst remote learning has a safeguarding concern, this must be reported immediately to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, in line with the safeguarding and child protection policy and accompanying COVID-19 annex(es).
- Parents/carers will also be issued with guidance and receive regular updates regarding safety and wellbeing, especially when online. Pupils will be regularly reminded how to report any worries that they have, including those related to online activity, and we will share age-appropriate resources with them to promote their physical and mental safety and wellbeing.