



Temporary Amendment in response to COVID 19

Procedures for ensuring the safety of vulnerable pupils during Coronavirus lockdown

May 2020

Rationale

As part of the response to coronavirus (COVID-19) educational settings have been asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children and young people:

- those who are vulnerable
- those whose parents/carers are critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response.

The government encourages vulnerable children and young people to attend educational settings unless they have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk.

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, for the purposes of continued attendance at educational settings, vulnerable children and young people are defined as those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan whose needs cannot be met safely in the home environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who are therefore in need of continued education provision - this might include children on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, or those who are young carers, and others at the provider and local authority discretion

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Keeping Children Safe In Education is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools should continue to have regard to. Advice to support schools to do this is available in the DfE's published [safeguarding guidance](#).

Vulnerable Children and Young People Not Attending School During Coronavirus Lockdown

DfE advise that schools should work with local authorities to monitor the welfare of vulnerable children who are not attending school, and other pupils they might wish to keep in touch with, for safeguarding purposes.

Procedures to safeguard vulnerable children and young people

(this does not apply to those with an EHCP unless there are additional safeguarding concerns)

1. Schools should remain in contact with the parents of vulnerable children, young people and families with regular phone calls, texts, emails, etc.
2. If there is no response from a parent, schools should try other emergency contacts held in the pupil's file, other known extended family and, if applicable, the family's designated social worker or agencies known to be working with the family. If it is known that there are siblings who attend other schools, then school could contact those schools to enquire whether recent contact has been made with the family. Schools could also send a letter to the parent requesting they make contact and to explain that a welfare check will be made if the parent does not respond to the request.
3. It is important to establish whether the child/family is still resident at the known address. A home visit could be made by school, using social distancing guidelines, if other measures failed to result in contact with the family. This could be when, for example, staff are dropping off or collecting work, providing help with free school meals vouchers etc.
4. If school has made all reasonable attempts to contact the child/ family and there are genuine concerns about vulnerabilities then school should contact Ian Shanks, Lead Education Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups by emailing ian.shanks@durham.gov.uk (tel. held in school), providing details of the child, parent/ carer (including any contact numbers), home address and a brief description of the vulnerabilities/ concerns. School should also provide both an email address and telephone number of the school SPOC to help keep communication timely.

School should share any known risks which may impact on visiting the home and steps already taken to trace the child. The email will be triaged and if agreed, the Lead Education Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups will request the Local Authority's One Point Service to undertake home visits using social distancing guidelines. School should detail:

- efforts made to trace the family to date
 - whether there are any known risks which may impact on visiting the home (including whether anyone in the family is known to be displaying coronavirus symptoms).
5. The case will be allocated to a member of the One Point Service who will make up to three visits to the family home over a maximum three working day period. The One Point Service will report the outcome to the school.
 6. If it is established that the family are no longer at the address, school should make a Child Missing from Education referral to the Local Authority (see 'CME notification form – Final Stage' in the Attendance Toolkit).
 7. If it is believed that the family are still living at the address, then the school should contact the police by telephoning 101 and request a welfare check. The school will need to share the rationale for the check, including any known vulnerability history

and current potential risks. The police will carry out a welfare check and report the outcome to the school.

8. Should schools have any difficulties with the procedure then these should be reported to Ian Shanks by emailing ian.shanks@durham.gov.uk who will raise the concerns with the Operations Manager for the One Point Service or the Detective Inspector Safeguarding, depending on the nature of the concerns.