

## Covid-19 Emergency Safeguarding plan

This is a guide to help Early Years providers consider the best way to support your staff and 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 will need to be reviewed regularly due to the changing nature of the government advice being given.

### **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, EY talking, EY Matters, Domestic abuse helplines and other support services that can help
- 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, Beacon House, Young Minds, Special Needs Jungle have resources that can support you and can be shared with parents
- Ensure all contact details are up to date for staff, governors, 3<sup>rd</sup> party partners, children and families

### **Planning ahead**

- Ensure all staff know how to contact the DSL/DDSL in the event of closure and home working arrangements
- Be aware of all the government websites eg dfe, NHS England etc to provide you with updates and assistance
- Update yourself on all the symptoms associated with Covid-19 eg high temperature, repetitive cough, loss of smell etc and raise awareness in your setting and with parents
- Identify which children are vulnerable eg Children Looked after or previously Looked After / Children with current Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plan/ EHCP's / Young Carer, Vulnerable and children who have a parent who is a KEYWORKER or Critical care worker (as per Government definition) Tier 1
- Check and double check that you have accurate contact details for Tier 1 and Tier 2 professional network eg social workers and team managers, Family Support workers, Education Welfare Officer, Virtual school staff, Foster Carers etc
- Draw up a list of staff with long term health issues e.g. diabetes, asthma.
- Draw up a table of any staff self-isolating, showing start date and planned end-date.
- Rearrange all non-urgent meetings, reviews, visits, 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
- Identify a local food bank so you can sign post families who need their services during this crisis

- 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 EHCP's, SEND, additional needs, create visual timetables, stories, 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 who may be 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 and individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Create a staff email list to be shared with staff, governors, parents, 3<sup>rd</sup> party partners etc. (just check they give consent and are happy to have their email addresses shared due to GDPR)

### **In the event of your setting closing**

- Consider how you will record the child's absence. Y Code = Exceptional circumstances
- Think about the following, how will you communicate with / support staff? How can your website, Facebook or social media pages be used differently?
- Encourage more experienced staff to 'buddy up' with less experienced staff to offer emotional support during this crisis
- 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
- Think about how you will communicate with staff (Zoom/Skype?) parents (email?) and children (Class Dojo?) other brands/platforms
- Create a priority list for attendance in the event that you have to restrict numbers:



- Children who are Looked after or previously Looked after
- Children subject to CP or CIN plans
- Children with SEND / SEN Support Plans
- Children who have an EHCP
- • Other vulnerable children (professional judgement) could include Young Carers, children who have teenage parents, children who live in temporary accommodation etc
- • Children of parents who are KEYWORKERS or Critical care worker (as per Government definition)
- Promote resources that support staff children and families with their emotional wellbeing e.g. Headspace, Anna Freud Centre, Believe perform, FAMILY
- Set daily self-care challenges for staff, 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 (in line with Covid-19 guidance on social contact). Frequency should be informed by level of risk. **Work with other agencies to develop a co-ordinated response and to avoid duplication**
- Attend any multi agency meetings and/or reviews for children or agree alternative arrangements to contribute to multi-agency working e.g. online conferencing, Zoom etc
- 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 EHCPs, 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, Child in Need Plan/ EHCP's / Vulnerable or have a parent who is a Keyworker or Critical care worker (as per Government definition) Tier 1**

- If possible speak to the child / parent/ carer 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 vouchers if child is eligible for Pupil Premium / EYPP. Can this funding be used creatively in the circumstances?
- 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
- Safeguards for children at risk of other child protection risks including criminal and sexual exploitation also need to be considered

**Children with additional needs / vulnerable families: Tier 2**

- If possible speak to the child, parent, carer 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, parent, and carer 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 (you can see them through a window if they're self-isolating) This should be done taking into account advice received by LA
  - Avoid close contact with others (closer than 2 metres for more than 15 minutes), in line with government advice on social distancing
  - Avoid staff going to pupils' homes alone. Have 2 members of staff go, ideally including someone with a good relationship with the family
  - Follow any policies you have on home visits and lone working
  - If phone calls are your preferred choice of contact - Use work phones if possible
  - If you need to use personal phones, remember to hide your number
  - Try to you speak to the child too (if age appropriate) and not just their parents, record all contacts and details who was seen.
- 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
- Schools must also consider how they will continue to feed children who are entitled to FSMs.

#### **Food vouchers**

- Consider if food vouchers will be distributed to eligible Pupil Premium or EYPP families. £20 per child pw
- Plans for distribution should be created
- Collections to be staggered to prevent large group gatherings and increased risk of exposure.
- Clear record to be maintained of families receiving this support, who collected and if children were present.
- Parallel planning in case closures last longer than anticipated

#### **In the event of your setting partially closing**

- **all of the above but also** be clear about who will form part of the skeleton staff group (ratio's)
- What will your day look like? Usual curriculum or more nurturing / fun activities?
- Practice social distancing (The current Government guidance says that we need to stay 2 meters apart)
- develop links with your local Early Years providers? Children Centres and consider sharing staff, resources etc if the situation lasts longer than anticipated
- If possible increase the list of emergency contact numbers in case children develop symptoms whilst in your care



- Depending of the size of your staff team... Teams split in 3 teams Team 1, 2 and 3, These teams split into a's and b's ..... so 1a 1b, 2a....A 6 week plan, Team 1a do week one .....with team 1b at home as 'reserves' Team 2a do week 2bs reserves, Team 3a do week ...WEEK 4 will see 1b in work and 1a as reserves etc
- Create isolation areas and procedures in case children develop symptoms whilst in your care
- Consider offering a different kind of service that meets the needs of your cohort eg reduced hours eg collection after lunch? Wrap a round care?
- Consider when you might change your current offer to stay open?
- consider reduced hours eg collection after lunch? Wrap around care?
  
- Plan that on entry every day parents are asked a series of questions to help assess risk ie relating to them and their children's health and contact with people who may be infected or Critical care worker (as per Government definition) Please be aware of changing list of symptoms
- Beef up your daily deep clean routines and record everything
- rearrange all visits, meetings, reviews etc and avoid visitors from entering your premises as much as possible. You may want to create a visual for your front door / reception area or a leaflet
- Parallel planning in case the pandemic lasts longer than anticipated

Finally, I understand that this is a challenging time for everyone. Getting through the next few weeks and months, will require us all to dig deep, support each other and to keep safe, taking every possible precaution to prevent the further spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Leaders, please be mindful that terms such as 'stretch and strain' can be useful to consider in understanding of the dynamics of the state people are in, and what has become widely known as the Nixon Curve [P. Nixon 1979] has also been called the Stress Response Curve. The term "stretch" is often used when someone is working and functioning at a high level whilst generally coping and efficient. At this time a person may be experiencing what might be termed "good stress". However, as the stress increases, accumulates or develops multiple layers, this good stress can become distress (bad stress). At this point people may be seen as strained, and though initially they may appear to be functioning and coping, the truth is they may rapidly descend into someone developing psychological, emotional and physical signs and symptoms which may lead to them becoming unwell, experiencing crises and burnout with even the smallest additional stresses. Think about how you can support your own emotional wellbeing as well as how you model self-regulation though out this pandemic.

Please keep an eye on changes in government advice via all the usual online channels. I will update this document as regularly as I can to reflect changes. I am extremely proud to work with you all. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, queries or concerns **#Stay Safe and hopeful #WeWillGetThroughThis**



## **Preparing for re-opening**

- Consult with staff and parents about your plans
- Consider how you will maintain social distancing
- Create a 'communication strategy' eg more frequent newsletters
- Discuss transition arrangements with staff, parents and new setting / new room
- Think about the possibility of opening during the traditional school summer holidays (if you are a term time only setting)
- Identify who should come back first (vulnerable children)
- Review staff supervision rota to enable more frequent 121 supervision sessions for the first 3 months of reopening
- Explore therapeutic interventions for all children
- Prioritise the mental health of staff, parents children and yourself
- PPE
- Staff ratios
- How will you monitor the absence of children who do not attend in spite of you being open?
- Access to regular Testing – will you obtain and administer tests?
- Protocols to be put in place if a positive case occurs and for isolation procedures to be strictly followed
- Update emergency contact list
- Safer recruitment of new staff
- Notify LA, professional networks and all 3<sup>rd</sup> party partners of your new arrangements
- Health & Safety on arrival
- Health & Safety on arrival during the day
- Health & Safety at the end of each day
- Update safeguarding children and other related policies eg code of conduct

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