

Education Safeguarding due to Covid-19

Attendance coding

If families are not sending children to school then the most recent DfE advice is as follows:

Where a pupil is in self-isolation, in accordance with latest information and advice from Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, the pupil should be recorded as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances in the attendance register. Code Y (Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) should be used in this instance.

Where a pupil does not attend school despite the school operating as usual and is not self-isolating, the pupil will be marked as absent. It is for Headteachers to determine whether or not the absence is authorised depending on the individual circumstances.

Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as normally would happen, the pupil should be recorded as absent in the attendance register and the school will authorise the absence. Code I (Illness) should be used in this instance.

You can find more information relating to the coronavirus, including prevention methods via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

Personal hygiene such as washing hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer is still paramount to tackling the spread of the virus.

Absence procedures

Where possible and necessary, schools should follow their normal sickness absence procedure. Where schools are informed of families in self isolation, schools should consider vulnerability of children to determine contact as per advice below.

Schools must not remove any children from roll without a discussion with the Education Safeguarding Team on – 01274 437043 or 01274 439340 or email on MEST@bradford.gov.uk .

Pupils with vulnerabilities

Children who are Looked After, subject to a Child Protection or Child In Need plan will continue to receive contact in line with statutory guidance from Children's Services. Schools should continue to make arrangements to have contact with these children and families as per visit guidance below.

Families who continue to consent to Early Help support will continue to receive this in line with their current plan.

Schools should consider identifying children who will need additional support due to their known vulnerabilities. Schools should consider how they can identify children who *may* become more vulnerable due to the impact of school closure, such as families who lose income, or employment during any closure period. Increased risks for children may also include domestic violence, mental ill

health, exploitation and other forms of abuse. Children with Special Education Needs are inherently more vulnerable in any circumstance.

Schools should refer parents to NHS and Government advice in relation to children who have additional health vulnerabilities or needs. Schools should inform parents if they are concerned about greater risk to children with specific health needs to enable parents to make informed decisions about access to education.

Safeguarding preparation for children

We know schools deliver a robust safeguarding curriculum. Please take some time to revisit key messages around how children can keep themselves safe when at home and especially online. Schools will already be preparing resources and messages for children, and these should include key information around what to do if a child is experiencing any form of abuse. Schools should also remind parents of key safeguarding support.

Suggested plan for contact with children

The removal of education provision in schools immediately makes all children more vulnerable. This guidance applies whenever children are not being seen regularly in school. Designated Safeguarding Leads need to collate information known about each child's vulnerability to enable to categorise children's risk into 'High, Medium and Low' in relation to school closure. You may find it helpful to use Bradford's continuum of need. Schools should ensure they have two up to date contacts for each child.

Schools will need to create formalised plans in relation to contact with children and should consider that some children will need bespoke individual risk management plans. Whilst schools leaders will need to consider resource in their particular circumstances, where possible our recommendation is as follows:

High risk children

- Twice weekly doorstep home visits and
- Weekly telephone call
- Key staff contact list for families
- Individual risk management plan if necessary

Medium risk children

- Once weekly home visit and
- Weekly telephone call
- Key contact list for families

Low risk children

- At least once weekly communication
- Be prepared to do doorstep visits and offer support if required

DSLs should assess changes in risk and be prepared to increase contact if necessary, for example if school is in receipt of a Domestic Violence or Missing notification, or information from other professionals. Normal safeguarding procedures should be followed. Staff should be given guidance in relation to any changes in reporting and recording procedures.

Procedures around home visiting

- Headteachers should provide instruction in line with current Government and Public Health guidance
- Staff should visit homes in pairs and if possible at least one of these should be familiar with children
- Staff do not need to enter the home environment unless they feel it is necessary or safe to do so and should follow social distancing guidance
- Staff should speak to an adult with parental responsibility to ascertain the wellbeing of the family, and ask to see and speak to children
- Staff should be given a checklist (Education Safeguarding to provide example on BSO) of welfare questions
- Staff should respond to any new cause for concern as per school policy
- All home visit outcomes and actions should be recorded

Communication methods

Whilst schools are closed they will need to consider alternate methods of communication with pupils. Schools need to consider if delivering learning virtually, what additional safeguarding measures should be put in place for both staff and pupils. For example, staff should not be able to see pupils via video. Schools should consider how pupils are able to safely request advice and information about learning and pastoral needs.

Where English is not a family's first language schools should make every attempt to have information translated and use interpreters where required.

The Local Authority

The Local Authority's statutory functions for Children Missing Education and children who are Electively Home Educated will continue and schools should follow procedures as normal. Please note, no school should remove a pupil from roll without communication with the Local Authority.

Should you require any further guidance in relation to the above, please call the Education Safeguarding team on 01274 437043 or email MEST@bradford.gov.uk