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09 April 2020

Dear colleagues,

I hope this letter finds you well.

Thank you so much for your support in ensuring that vulnerable children are attending school. Thus far, I understand that we have around 300 children who are considered vulnerable (subject to either a child in need plan, or a child protection plan) attending school provision.

I am sure you will share my concerns that the numbers of vulnerable children currently attending school is very low, particularly when we consider that there are around 4000 children known to social care.

The advice I have given to our social workers is as follows:

1. SW to contact parents and encourage them to send children to school (CP, CiN, EH and CiC – vulnerable placements)
2. If the parent refuses on the grounds of covid-19 symptoms, we need to check when the isolation period will end and contact the parent after this to ensure the child is attending school
3. If parents refuse to send a child to school and there are no valid reasons, there needs to be a Service Manager comment on the case note with an analysis of harm to the child/ren and consideration as to whether we have sufficient concerns to warrant an escalation process.

I am aware that all social workers have followed through with the above guidance, but despite this, the number of vulnerable children attending school remains low. For those children who are not attending a school because parents are not supportive, I have asked for that case to be reviewed.   However it is likely that consideration of an escalation or alternative approach would not be appropriate.  So this is where I need your support.

I would be grateful if you would e-mail the allocated social worker, where known, and copy in CS.Director@bradford.gov.uk where you believe or feel that a vulnerable child should be attending school.  I will then ensure that your concern is brought to the attention of the Head of Service so that we can take a view as to what else we can do to encourage school attendance.

Once again, I am very grateful for your support.

Best wishes,

**Irfan Alam**

Deputy Director

Children’s Social Care