LEARNING ACADEMIES SAFEGUARDING POLICY ADDENDUM FOR COVID 19 RESPONSE PERIODS.

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Contents

1	Introduction
2	Statutory Framework
3	Safeguarding arrangements during the closure period
4	Records and information sharing
5	Team conduct
6	Promoting positive mental health and resilience
7	Online safety for children inc. the use of online classrooms

1. Introduction

Learning Academies and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and, in conjunction with other agencies, we play a vital role in safeguarding children during the current emergency arrangements. This policy is an addition to our existing Safeguarding Policy and has been produced to cover arrangements in place during school closure due to Covid-19 and any

subsequent lockdowns.

This Child Protection policy is for all tutors, parents, volunteers. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our organisation and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- LA Safeguarding Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021)
- LA Behaviour and Organisation Policy
- LA Tutor Online Protocols

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (everyone under the age of 18) is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2. Current context / statutory framework

In March 2020, schools were instructed to close, although were required to offer a place to vulnerable children and children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response. We obviously want to continue the support of all the children currently tutored and, therefore, as well as these eligible groups, have considered making tuition available to other children with vulnerabilities. We will continue with this, although any decisions will be in discussion with other professionals involved and based on a thorough risk assessment process.

In May 2020, the government issued guidance which set out the expectation for the gradual return of children to early years, school and further education settings. The safety of our children and tutors remained paramount and all decisions about reopening and reengaging F2F in schools have been driven by our risk assessment process.

As the world continues to navigate the Covid 19 Pandemic and it's associated variants we will remain mindful of the need for continued vigilance and care in order to protect our students, tutors and team members.

3. Safeguarding procedures during the closure period

Clearly, there is a need to work differently during periods of partial or total school closure. However, the principles within our existing Safeguarding Policy still apply, as does the duty on all team members to safeguard children. We have, however, adapted our existing safeguarding arrangements to ensure we effectively safeguard our children during times of lock down or self-isolation, whether they are attending on site or learning at home.

As always, all tutors have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any team member who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead). All staff are aware of their responsibility in that respect.

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2019)
- Essex Effective Support
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be reporting immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the student's school and the DSL at Learning Academies. Concerns upheld will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the Essex Effective Support portal. Learning Academies may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency

about a concern, if additional information is required in order to ensure an effective response. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers. The procedure for responding to a Safeguarding concerns is shared in our LA Safeguarding Policy

4. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Learning Academies is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our organisation and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly. The Learning Academies Safeguarding Disclosure Form can be found at the back of our Safeguarding Policy.

5. Team conduct

All team members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct and the principles in our Staff Code of Conduct still apply during this emergency period. The usual processes for reporting concerns about a member of staff apply.

6. Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils is always a priority and it is recognised that, without the protective factor of attending our tuition, some of our children may be more vulnerable. Pandemics such as Covid 19 represent a worrying and challenging time for everyone and we understand that families will be placed under additional pressures and may be coping with issues such as increased anxiety, financial difficulties, caring for children at home all the time and bereavement.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents are encouraged to share any concerns about the well-being of their child with ourselves or their child's school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

7. Online safety

We recognise that the majority of children will not be physically attending tuition and that it is likely they will be spending longer periods of time online, which may increase their vulnerability. Particularly useful websites are:

- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
- Childnet
- Internet Matters
- Net Aware
- NSPCC
- Parent Info
- Safer Internet
- UK Council for Internet Safety

Tutors are aware that children are vulnerable to being bullied or groomed for abuse or radicalisation online. Tutors will be vigilant to any signs that that this may be occurring and report any concerns in the usual way.

It is important that parents make Learning Academies aware of any concerns they may have about the online activity of their child, or any particular vulnerability they may have in this respect.

Online Zoom Tutor Classrooms. All tutors have their own secure Virtual Tutor Room - and the address to that is protected with 3 levels of security.

- Password
- Meeting ID
- Unique address

These details are only shared with parents/carers. Additionally, even with all this information Learning Academies have set this up so that no one can enter the online tutor rooms without the tutor being present and giving their approval. All students who log on will arrive in a waiting room (that has no chat facilities) and they need their tutor to approve their entry into the classroom.

Designated Safeguarding Leads hold details of all tutor's classroom login details and manage this centrally. All sessions are recorded to a secure cloud and the control of this recording is managed by Head Office.

APPENDIX A - online safety resources for pupils

[Childline](#)

Childline helps anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. Children can talk with Childline about anything, whether big or small; their trained counsellors can help. See their website or call free on 0800 1111.

[BBC Own It](#)

Updated in relation to COVID-19, this website provides support for young people to take control of their online life. Topics include help and advice, skills and inspiration on matters such as friendships and bullying, safety and self-esteem.

[BBC Bitesize](#)

A free online study support resource designed to help with learning, revision and homework. Bitesize provides support for learners aged 5 to 16+ across a wide range of school subjects. It also supports children and young people's wellbeing and career choices; since 20 April daily lessons have been published to help pupils across the UK with home schooling.

APPENDIX B - online resources for parents and carers

[Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#)(ESCB)
The ESCB is a statutory multi agency organisation which brings together agencies who work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Essex. It has produced [guidance](#)for parents and carers to help them understand online safety and exploitation generally.

[Internet Matters – helping parents and carers keep their children safe online](#)

A not-for-profit organisation that has a simple purpose – to empower parents and carers to keep children safe in the digital world. See their website for further information.

[The Children's Society](#)

A charity fighting child poverty and neglect, and helping all children have a better chance in life. They have produced [information](#)

about online safety.

[The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)](#)

The NSPCC has produced several [online safety guides](#), from setting up parental controls to advice on sexting, online games and video apps.

[Parent Info](#)

A website offering expert safety advice in relation to a range of online harms, endorsed by the National Crime Agency's CEOP command.

[Common Sense Media](#)

Independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents.

[Parent Zone](#) for families

A website with a range of digital age resources for families, including guides on digital platforms and trends.

[Children's Commissioner](#)

The Children's Commissioner has published a [digital safety and wellbeing kit for parents, and a safety guide for children](#). The kit and guide have been designed to help ensure children are safe and their wellbeing is looked after while at home during the coronavirus outbreak – when their screen time maybe higher than usual.

[The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)](#)

The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) is a collaborative forum through which government, the tech community and the third sector work together to ensure the UK is the safest place in the world to be online.

[Disrespect Nobody](#)

Home Office advice on healthy relationships, including sexting and pornography