NAS
Interim Addendum to Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure for NAS(AT) Schools

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Consultation	Designated Safeguarding Leads
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This policy is an addendum to:

Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) NAS policy SO-0189 updated in January 2021

Purpose

On Monday 22nd February 2021, The Prime Minister announced the government's roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England. This included a direction that from 8 March 2021, all pupils should attend school.

NAS (AT) schools will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education (as amended, Jan 2021).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

We will ensure that where we care for children on site, we have appropriate support in place for them. We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners.

We will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of coronavirus.

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Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care plans (EHCP). Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

All of our pupils have an EHCP.

NAS(AT) schools will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the School or the person nominated as their deputy. Decisions must be signed-off by the Principal. This cannot be delegated.

We will encourage all pupils to attend school from 8th March 2021.

In circumstances where a parent is hesitant about or does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the school and /or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams

Attendance monitoring

We expect all pupils to attend school.

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of the illness and inform us of the reason for absence so that the correct attendance codes can be used in every case of absence. We expect parents or carers to make contact to make us aware of the status of any COVID-19 tests that have become necessary and to update the school on the welfare of the pupil.

From 8th March 2021, we will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) for all pupils.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

For children self-isolating or quarantining or shielding – we will use code X.

In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction will provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

We will offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- • self-isolating
- • shielding
- • vulnerable (and off-school)

The Department for Education expects schools to grant applications for leave in exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be penalised.

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. However, every child will be contacted by a member of school staff routinely and at least weekly to check on their progress and welfare if not attending on site.

The School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead / attendance officer / family liaison officer will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, the school will, when communicating with parents and carers:

- • confirm emergency contact numbers are correct
- • ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

All NAS(AT) Schools have a Designated Safeguarding Lead to whom any concerns must be reported immediately. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to provide advice and reassurance to the member of staff or volunteer and make decisions about what to do next. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that

appropriate contact is made with the Local Authority (Social Care/Police) to promote partnership working and good practice.

Where the DSL is not on site all school staff and volunteers will have access to a trained deputy DSL who will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection management system, CPOMS and liaising with the offsite DSL and as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in their Local School Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. Records must be precise, accurate and factual.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should use the normal reporting procedures . If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Principal whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Principal and reported in the normal way.

Concerns around the Principal should be directed to the Managing Director for Education and Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding Training and Induction

DSL training will be refreshed in line with the normal timeframes. DSL training can be completed online until which time face to face training has been resumed.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff or volunteers are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction via the online safeguarding training or face to face via the DSL using the NAS Safeguarding Children Induction Pack. We will train the staff in the use of Studio 3 (using the S3 interim training plan).

For movement within the NAS (AT) schools, the receiving school should seek assurance from the relevant HR team that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training. Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for the setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021).

Where a school are utilising volunteers, including for the purpose of testing, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as per NAS Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised while undertaking regulated activity.

The school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date.

We will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. We will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

Volunteers for testing etc

Where a school is using volunteers to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to students and staff members or building test kits, cleaning down areas and directing people, under no circumstances will such a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis, will be in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer is administrating a COVID-19 test whilst un-supervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, the school will continue to follow safer recruitment processes.

Online safety in schools and online safety away from school

The school will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system on school equipment.

Where students are using computers in school appropriate supervision will be in place.

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the school code of conduct and policies.

Any use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider if there are virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19

The NAS (AT) is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where a child is not in school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to COVID-19, the DSL should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

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This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

It is recognised that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

NAS (AT) schools are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our students.

School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish.

The School will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and testing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

Where the school has concerns about the impact of staff absence, the Principal will discuss them immediately with the Managing Director of Education and a decision will be made as to the support that can be provided using the NAS decision making matrix.

The school will ensure that appropriate support is offered to all students with respect to their mental health.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

NAS (AT) schools will encourage parents to send their children to school.

Where a parent of a child with an EHCP makes a decision to Electively Home Educate, they will need to write to the LA (not the school) to get its agreement to take the child off the school roll.

Where we feel that there is additional cause for concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as soon as the school is aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

The DSL will work with local authorities and, where possible, coordinate meetings with parents to seek to ensure EHE is being provided in the best interests of the child.

Children Missing in Education

Where the school and social workers have agreed that a child should be attending school and there is no valid reason (the child is: self-isolating, shielding or vulnerable and off-school) for the absence, the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend.

The School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

Where a child is known to be off school and the school are unable to fulfil their responsibility for welfare checks, the school with notify the relevant local authority Education Welfare Officer or the child's social worker.

In circumstances where a child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems may be exacerbated by anxiety relating to COVID-19, and in some cases returning to normality and school attendance as lockdown eases. Mental health problems may also, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at increased risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation due to family circumstances that have arisen in the COVID -19 pandemic.

Factors that may exacerbate mental health problems in the children in our schools

- Limited access to mental health and clinical appointments and other external professional support during the pandemic
- Parental mental health & parenting capacity
- Limited involvement of social workers and children social care services
- Decrease in support to the family home (respite / family support / in-reach services etc)
- Children away from education
- Domestic abuse

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

Contingency planning

Each NAS(AT) school will ensure that for individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding, that government guidance related to COVID-19, remote education plans is followed.

Schools will continue to operate as normally as possible. Each school with have an up to date contingency plan which outlines how the school should operate in the event that restrictions are need to help contain the spread of the virus.

Support from the NAS

The Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead (or the named person in their absence) will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to

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carry out their role effectively. This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

The Principal, under the direction of the Managing Director, NAS Education and Children's Services and NAS Academies Trust, will ensure that as children return they will endeavour to give Designated Safeguarding Leads and their deputies sufficient time to:

- support staff and pupils with new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals to children's social care and other agencies where appropriate