

# ADDENDUM - CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND OTHER PROVIDERS

April 2020

Approved by the Board: 8 June 2020

## OVERALL PRINCIPLES

- Further to the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, this document details how the steps taken by the Hart Learning Group to address the COVID-19 situation take account of and affect our Safeguarding policies and practice. In accordance with the guidance, we continue to work with the following principles at the core of what we do.
  - with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first.
  - if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately.
  - a Designated Senior Leader (DSL) or deputy should be available.
  - it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children.
  - children should continue to be protected when they are online.

*Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.*

*(From Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers  
Published 27 March 2020)*

- In essence, we will be operating "business as usual" with regards to having our safeguarding & child protection policy in place with staff maintaining a culture of vigilance and reporting all concerns to the Designated Senior Person (DSP) or a trained Deputy DSP. However, the way in which these people monitor safeguarding will be different, as students will not physically be present for staff to pick up any visual indicators of concern.
- Liaison with key contacts – eg family, key worker, social worker - for these students continues to ensure that support is still being provided both for learning and pastorally.

## Attendance

- With students not physically being present on site, the Government daily online attendance form has been completed once to confirm site closure. When any of our sites re-open we will re-commence completion of the daily attendance form.

- To ensure students are carefully tracked during remote learning, individual departmental engagement trackers have been created. These are completed daily and managers report back at regular meetings.
- For students who are not engaging, curriculum staff are liaising with the Student Services team for the pastoral staff to make contact and address any underlying needs. The Supported Studies team have their own pastoral staff undertaking this function.
- A Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating system is used to ensure swift identification of those at risk of dropping out or giving rise to potential safeguarding concerns.

#### *Contact with students*

- Tutors are maintaining regular contact with students as part of their learning. Those identified as not engaging in our trackers are then followed up as noted above.
- Some identified students have more regular schedules in place, up to daily calls, where there is an identified need.
- Should we not be able to contact a student at all for a few days we will contact a parent/carer. If this person does not respond we will attempt to reach the second emergency contact. We also use other relevant communication routes such as social media and other known contacts to reach the student concerned.
- If all this were unsuccessful, we would look at any underlying concerns and consider making a case either for a police welfare call or social services intervention. If we were planning to do this, we would send a final message to the student and parent/carer letting them know of our plans to give them last opportunity to contact us or answer calls.

#### *Reporting of safeguarding concerns*

- There will always be a trained designated staff member available to be contacted should staff have a concern.
- This will be particularly important during times of annual leave whereby trained staff will ensure there is suitable cover. Managers will remind their staff of the procedures during this time and this will be revisited regularly.
- The Safeguarding & Child Protection policy has recently been updated. The timing of this review gives another opportunity to refresh staff knowledge, as this is circulated as part of the annual update.
- Managers discuss the updated policy with their teams as part of continuing team meetings. Safeguarding will continue to be a standing agenda item for meetings

#### *Staff training and safeguarding induction*

- All new staff undertake an online Introductory Safeguarding Training package prior to commencing employment to ensure they are aware of the essentials of our safeguarding arrangements from day one. This practice will continue during lockdown along with remote induction by HR and relevant departmental staff.

- In our recruitment practices we adhere closely to statutory guidance. Owing to the remote nature of some of our staff deployment, video interviewing is already part of our processes. This will continue alongside the effective and rigorous checks that we have in place.

### *Mental health*

- Pastoral support from the Student Services team continues and staff are advised to continue to refer as before should they become concerned or receive an expression of concern from either student or parent/carer/peer. The College Counsellors will continue to operate offering a telephone counselling service for those that wish to access it.
- Information has been put online and circulated to teams for local and national services that can support.

### *Online safety away from college*

- Staff will continue to teach and stress the importance of safety online and against scams. Additional information has been posted on our internal support pages and on external webpages so that they are easily accessible by parents/carers. Tutors will be mindful of any indicators of concern and will report these in accordance with our processes. Where appropriate, referrals will be made to children's social care and the police as required.
- Due consideration is given to security of information and Data Protection obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Codes of conduct and IT policies include acceptable use of IT which students and staff must adhere to. These apply equally to working remotely.
- Students are reminded how to report all concerns, including online. The student intranet includes a Report Abuse button on the front page. General support pages signposting key services are available to students and include the recommended online safety services and reporting mechanisms.
- Staff have been provided with additional guidance materials when working online and we continue to update and refresh information for teaching staff via the technical teams and our Remote Learning page.
- Staff are in regular contact with parents, carers and key workers (where applicable) so it is understood what is being asked of our students online and who they will be interacting with.
- Should we have any concerns regarding our arrangements during the current situation we will use the designated government support:

DfE coronavirus helpline - 0800 046 8687