Safeguarding – to consider alongside health and safety checklists etc.

Self-reflection/Support

What have been the key issues / risk/referrals /welfare issues? Ensure you have access to support with cases.

Very importantly ensure you meet regularly as a DSL team for supervision, reflection and peer support.

Look at safeguarding website for updated resources and templates.

Planning groups

Consider friendships, group dynamics, relationships with key staff, vulnerabilities. What are the support arrangements for each group?

All vulnerable children should be attending school.

Who is able to provide 1:1 time if necessary when a young person needs to talk, to help resolve issues or in respect of a disclosure?

Preparing staff

Do you get feedback on staffs experiences throughout the lockdown period and once the school is more fully open? The impact of bereavement/safeguarding disclosures can be cyclical and strong feelings can be triggered by the most normal of conversations. See Education Psychology document on bereavement on safeguarding resource page& Remind staff of dealing with disclosures card. Ensure you have plans in place to properly supervise and support all your staff with capacity to respond to situations that arise.

Talking to children and young people about death

Some young people may have experienced bereavement during the lockdown. There is a useful document from Education psychology on the safeguarding resources page as well as national guidance.

Managing challenging behaviour

Physical/emotional/sexual abuse and neglect will have all increased during lockdown. As well as contextual safeguarding issues CCE/CSE/substance misuse/online abuse etc.

Remind staff of their training on ACES and how trauma impacts behaviour, students may communicate difficulties & distress in non-conforming ways. The Seen and Heard 1 hr training video program, recently sent out for all staff to complete, covers this very well. Staff should recognise poor behaviour as a form of communication and responding appropriately.

Domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse will have increased during lockdown with Wakefield social care reporting an increase in severity of cases. Many of your students will have been involved/caught up in incidents, many of which will not have been reported to police (so no operation encompass notification). Remember DA is not just physical, emotional and psychological abuse/coercive control will also have increased. Ensure your staff are aware of the different types of domestic abuse, are clear on how to deal with disclosures and are aware of operation encompass trained key staff.

Children's mental health

It has been a strange time and for many children and young people the stresses will have been high. Consider how your staff are equipped to support children Mind Ed (recommended by the DfE) provides a range of free e-learning courses for education settings. https://www.minded.org.uk/ link also on training page. It is aimed at anyone from beginner through to specialist. Ensure all staff are aware of signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, self-harm, eating disorders and suicidal ideation and what to do/who to contact.

https://www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-our-mental-health-and-wellbeing/supporting-children-and-young-people-with-their-mental-health-and-wellbeing/

Safeguarding

Advise staff of any changes to safeguarding arrangements. After such a long break this may be a good time to arrange some brief reminders for staff.

Consider your student safeguarding noticeboards -are there enough naturally occurring places where children/young people can get safeguarding information, who to call, where to go, without asking. Are all your safeguarding posters in place, do any need updating. Think about places where positive messages can be placed. Don't forget the toilet doors, all children/young people spend time in here, use the space for reminders and messages. Signpost students to https://wf-i-can.co.uk/

Safeguarding Training

DSL renewal date is wavered however DSL's are expected to reasonably keep up to date. Wakefield safeguarding advisor has recently sent out emails to all DSL's reminding staff of training tops ups for all staff and DSL's. (13th/15th & 19th May).

Planning with parents & carers

Communication is key to a safe transition. Build on communications during lockdown to ensure a smooth transition back into your setting. What contact is achievable and supportive going forward? Where lots of support has been provided, how will this continue? What has lockdown been like for them? Direct families to appropriate support for themselves and the child. Wakefield Families Newsletter featured helplines in the first edition.

Share your setting's plans with parents include transport arrangements and changes that have been made at school to keep children and staff safe. Are there any practical problems faced by the family, such as finances, transport or even whether the child's uniform still fits? Listen carefully for changes to family situations and ask about domestic abuse if this becomes relevant. It may be helpful to ensure parents are aware they may be contacted more often initially if child becomes upset/stressed.

Some parents may have decided on home education for this period. Ensure the appropriate conversations take place with parents encouraging children to return, and exploring reasons. Are there concerns that can be addressed? Ensure the proper local authority notification is undertaken promptly.

Time with and support for children

Ensure staff ratios allow time to be spent with individual children where there are issues, disclosures etc.

It may be helpful to have a space where young people can take themselves away from the group. Some children (not restricted to those with additional needs) may find being around a lot of people again, even in part-opening, to be stressful and difficult.

Consider what access is available to specialist services, such as a school counsellor, and ensure this can be scaled up or scaled down depending on student response. Check arrangements with local services who may be able to provide such support.

Give an opportunity for the child to ask questions about safety and well being when back in school/college. Update risk assessments in respect of children with SEND.

Ensure support is available for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children (including any dual-registered students) and put in place provision for the return of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in conjunction with families and other agencies. Engage with partners who will help to provide that support.

Learning

We are not back to life as normal. Leaders will need to take account of the government guidance on supporting student wellbeing with realistic expectations over the summer term. Learning creates some opportunities to explore the issues around Covid-19, but take care to allow children to escape from the daily reality of constant news briefings and anxiety about the pandemic.

Online safety

Students may have had time unsupervised on computers, tablets, phones and similar. They may not have completed the home learning tasks due to struggles with technology, access to technology or learning styles/abilities. Some may have been groomed, bullied or abused online. Ensure staff are made aware of these issues and that unwanted behaviours, in these initial stages, from students may be masking a fear around academic ability or signs of safeguarding issues and advise staff to approach these issues sensitively.

Continue to advice and support parents and children still at home on online safety issues. See resources on webpage.

Attendance processes

Ensure you have robust arrangements for tracking where children are expected to be. These systems should respond promptly if a child is not present at school when expected, or contact cannot be established with a family. Revise your attendance and CME procedures accordingly.

Advise the SENCo if a child with an EHCP/SEND is not attending.

Advise social worker if a vulnerable child, child in need or subject to child protection plan has not attended.

Advise the Virtual Head if a Looked After Child is not attending.

Ensure you have set out clearly to staff and parents how you will be responding to non-attendance in line with guidance

Consider any potential additional needs of any child who is not attending. Are they a young carer? Are there mental health issues arising? Are there other issues for the child or the family? What support could you put in place?

Safeguarding systems

Consider who is responsible for each child in the changed arrangements and that they have the expertise, access and information to protect children and young people.

Capacity of safeguarding team & DSL

Ensure your DSL is in role and ready to respond, together with trained deputies if they are unwell or not available.

Consider dedicating additional resources to the safeguarding team. It is likely after such a gap and with the additional stresses there will be more safeguarding work to do with individual children and in referring to other agencies. Ensure there are sufficient, trained people to undertake this work. Remote emergency initial DSL training is available from the safeguarding advisor.

Communication systems

Who is responsible for making contact with parents and communicating key information. How can parents get in touch with the school or with the person who will be responsible for their child that day?

Transition

See Education psychology document on transition, safeguarding page under resources.

For students moving on from the school or coming into the school next term ensure plans are up to speed and re-establish links, plans and communication around safeguarding and pastoral needs with the next school/college.

Set up any discussions/meetings to share safeguarding, pastoral or SEND information, especially for the more vulnerable children.

Start planning for the safeguarding file transfer securely once you have confirmation the child is on the next school's roll.

Other agencies

Check the contact arrangements for organisations who normally provide you with support, including children's social care and any organisations that provide early help. Update any contact/availability information and ensure this is communicated to staff. Please share opening and contact arrangements with these agencies.

Alternative provision/part time timetables

Contact providers your setting uses and ensure they have considered their staffing & safeguarding arrangements. You may wish to send them a copy of checklists you use.

Consider whether the needs of students accessing this provision have changed. Arrange a review to plan going forward.

Recruitment & Induction

Where you have new staff ensure someone on your interview panel is currently safer recruitment trained.

Online interviews can work well – a school visit can be reserved for a preferred candidate

Plan for how staff will undertake safeguarding induction.

Policy & governance

Governors update

Keep governors aware of the changes being made and any difficulties encountered. Consider providing a safeguarding report so they are able to see the bigger picture.

Behaviour policy

Consider revising the behaviour policy during this period. Change, excitement and stress are likely to lead to increased incidents and the school will want to respond appropriately and safely, taking the current situation into account.

Communicate changes to staff, students and parents.

Child Protection policy

Update your policy with any changes arising. Or direct staff to follow main policy or addendum depending if child is in school or not.

Ensure governors are aware of any changes.

Ensure this is read and understood by all staff.