R.E.A.L Covid 19 Safeguarding and Child Protection Arrangements Reviewed and updated 05.06.20

Introduction

During this period of time known as Covid 19, the following arrangements have been put in place for all learners accessing R.E.A.L Independent School, R.E.A.L Alternative Provision School and R.E.A.L Education (hereby referred to collectively as R.E.A.L for the purposes of this document).

The Department for Education (DfE) have issued specific guidance in relation to all compulsory school aged children, and those in post 16 provision. The following arrangements have been put into place for R.E.A.L learners in accordance with this guidance, and with specific reference to ongoing safeguarding procedures.

This guidance should be read alongside the following policies:
- The Safeguarding and protection of young people in our care
- E-safety Policy
- GDPR Policy

Definition of vulnerable groups

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 (EHC) plans.

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. For learners who are accessing alternative provision, the provider can deem any learner in the vulnerable category (even without an EHC, or allocated social worker) if the provider has specific concerns about their situation, or has reasons to believe they may not be safe during this time.

Those with an EHC plan have been risk-assessed by their Learning Manager, and in consultation with the local authority (LA) and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

From 01.06.20 Additional eligible groups

Years 6, 10, 11 (for alternative provision only) and 12

Based on this guidance, R.E.A.L learners have been identified on the timetable in these distinct categories:

1. **Not Required**

   These learners are not defined as being vulnerable, or in an eligible group. These learners will continue to have access to their online learning platforms, and will receive weekly contact from the Learning Manager (as a minimum requirement). Safeguarding concerns will be raised in the normal way if any Learning Managers have concerns. These learners, dependent on their circumstances could move into the vulnerable category if referrals to Children's Social Care are required.

   These learners will be marked with an X code (from 08.06.20) not required to be in school.

2. **Remote Learning**

   These learners are defined as vulnerable as stated within the DfE guidance, and have chosen to not attend the provision available to them. There are a number of reasons why they may not be accessing education at this time. They may have a member of their household, or they themselves may be shielding. They might be highly anxious, and although in a vulnerable category, are safe to remain at home. They may be showing symptoms of Covid 19. This category of learners is likely to change on a daily or weekly basis and should be continuously reviewed by the Learning Manager.

   Learners who are in a remote learning category will still receive their allocated sessions, with their allocated staff member twice daily. These daily checks will ensure we are able to meet our Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 requirements, and safeguarding concerns can be raised in the normal way. These learners will be marked as B if attending with us remotely, and engagement can be evidenced.

3. **Face to face sessions**

   These learners are accessing their provision as normal, and their timetables remain unchanged. This group of learners may change on a daily, or weekly basis depending on their circumstances following the DfE guidance with reference to those

in their household, or they themselves becoming ill, or showing symptoms of Covid 19. Their regular learning venue may be changed however as we react to the closures, and possible opening up of sites.

These learners are marked as present, and separate reporting of attendance is taking place directly with DfE. Any learners who we are expecting to attend, and don't, will be followed up by the Learning Manager as per our normal procedures. A range of absence codes will be used (Y, I, C) dependent on the reasons, all absences at this time are authorised.
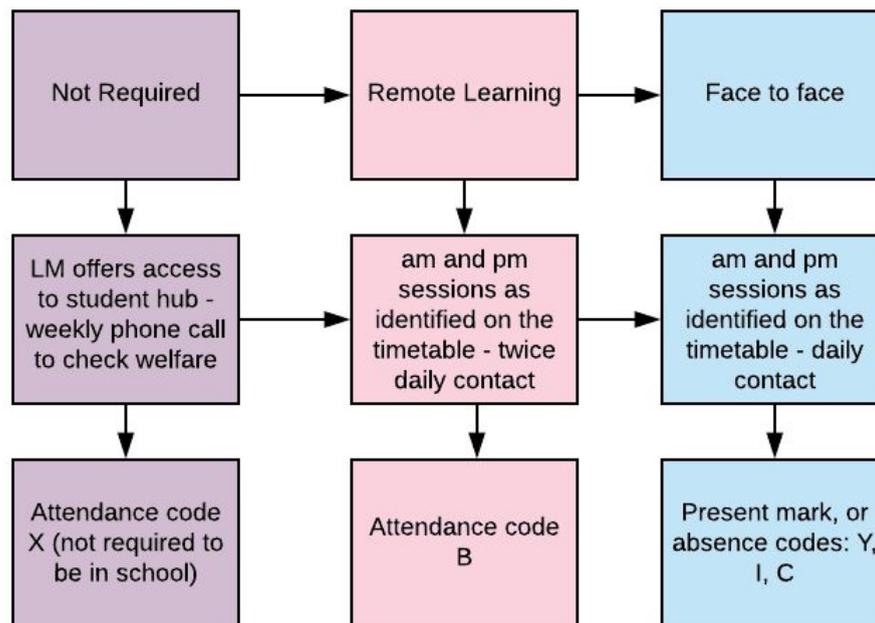
There is an expectation that all vulnerable children will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, R.E.A.L Learning Managers will work with the social worker to explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent. It is hoped over time, more learners will return to their face to face sessions.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, R.E.A.L Learning Managers or the allocated social worker should talk through these anxieties with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England (PHE) and DfE.

It is expected all learners within the additional eligible categories will have some offer of face to face education made from 01.06.20. Strict thresholds of the maximum amount of people on the learning hub sites have been agreed, so some learners may receive their education in outdoor settings where social distancing can be observed and maintained.

Processes for R.E.A.L Learners

These categories of learners will be required to be reviewed on a daily and weekly basis by their Learning Managers. It may be, depending on safeguarding concerns and issues, learners will begin to move from not required, into remote learning and face to face sessions over time.

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Not Required  →  Remote Learning  →  Face to face

LM offers access     am and pm              am and pm
to student hub -     sessions as            sessions as
weekly phone call →  identified on the  →   identified on the
to check welfare     timetable - twice      timetable - daily
                     daily contact          contact

Attendance code      Attendance code        Present mark, or
X (not required to   B                      absence codes: Y,
be in school)                                I, C
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Safeguarding concern, safeguarding tracker and actions: Learners may move in between these categories dependent on the type and nature of the concern. If you are unable to reach those in the remote category please raise this immediately with the Learning Manager or DSL

Maintaining Child Protection Procedures

The R.E.A.L Child Protection Policy remains in place. There are some specific updates to note during Covid 19 arrangements.

Social Work
- Nottinghamshire Children's Social Care(CSC) will prioritise its support to focus on those who are the most vulnerable, this includes those deemed in the vulnerable category (as defined by DfE, see the definition above). At the point of significant staffing shortages within social work services, Nottinghamshire CSC will mobilise colleagues from across children's services to support the most vulnerable children.
- Where schools are working with children in need, children on child protection plans and children looked after, schools will be required to continue their work as part of the multi-agency team supporting these children. In order to protect staff, partners, children and families, Nottinghamshire CSC have taken the decision that in all child

in need, child protection and looked after children cases, reviews and meetings will take place virtually, using technology. R.E.A.L members of staff should continue to be involved in meetings, but we are advising staff to do this via their telephone at this stage.

Raising a concern about a learner

- All R.E.A.L members of staff should remain vigilant, and raise any concerns about their learners via the online safeguarding concern form. Once submitted a DSL will be allocated and the concern can be tracked, and actions identified, as is our current procedures.
- The DSL arrangements remain in place. The Forum has 18 trained DSL's and should be able to maintain adequate staffing for these Covid 19 arrangements. The Head of Safeguarding can review this on a daily, and weekly basis.
- Learning Managers will continue to be the first point of contact for their learners for all other professionals involved with them, and their families. Maintaining contact through the procedures put in place for those learners in our remote learning, and face to face categories.
- Our approach to managing incidents of peer on peer abuse will remain the same, although we may see an increase in peer on peer online abuse. This should be reported as a safeguarding concern so appropriate action can be taken.
- Local authorities may utilise volunteers to make contact with vulnerable families in the community. R.E.A.L staff should raise any concerns about another adult in the normal way, so we are able to take action. Again, we should remain vigilant about the suitability of adults working with our learners.

DSL Training and Safer Recruitment

It is acknowledged that DSL training is unlikely to take place during this period (although R.E.A.L are exploring online options). For the period Covid 19 arrangements are in place, any DSL who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL even if they miss their refresher training.

Any volunteers, whether they are endorsed by the Local Authority, or as a result of R.E.A.L's efforts, will be required to undergo all checks as stated within safer recruitment guidance. Previous DBS checks issued by other schools, or organisations can be used by R.E.A.L at this time.

Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of all our learners and their parents. All teaching staff will be aware of this when setting expectations of remote learning. R.E.A.L will continue to put the learners emotional health and wellbeing first. The DfE are due to issue some further guidance on providing remote education, and this section will be updated accordingly.

R.E.A.L staff are best placed to identify and recognise how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Those learners who may be struggling with remote learning, or other issues and concerns are raised, could be brought back into provision swiftly. You can read further guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools here.

Safety online whilst remote learning

All R.E.A.L staff and Learning Managers should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all our learners safe. It is important in all our interactions with children, including online through the student hub, to continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be raised with a DSL without delay and a safeguarding concern submitted. We can then identify an appropriate course of action including referrals to CSC, or where appropriate, the Police.

The DfE will be providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. It will set out 4 key areas that leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. This includes the use of technology. Recently published guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and from the London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming can help you in the meantime to ensure remote learning is safe.

R.E.A.L staff should refer to the e-safety policy, including our expectation for learners' acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication. Please refer to the guidance contained within the Staff Code of Conduct.

Guidance has been produced for members of staff in the use of video conferencing with both other professionals, and only under strict guidelines, with a learner/group of learners. The Guidance for remote learning, Covid 19 arrangements, and the delivery of support services outlines all of the processes for remote learning.

R.E.A.L maintains a duty to ensure all online learning tools and systems are in line with our privacy and GDPR requirements. Any member of staff can check compliance of online tools and systems by emailing gdpr@real-education.org

An essential part of the online planning process is to ensure our learners, and their parents/carers have clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. This should be done through the Learning Manager and/or allocated teaching staff member. R.E.A.L can also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

All communications with parents and carers should be used to reinforce the importance of learners being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school or college online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. Our communication with parents and carers, should emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers