

Annex to SMB Group Safeguarding Policy

March 2020

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting and within the UK in response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments SMB group is making in line with the changed arrangements in the college and following advice from government and local agencies.

The current position is that, following the Government announcement, all college sites are closed and timetables have been postponed.

Despite the changes, the College's Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: the welfare of children and young people always comes first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and referrals should continue to be made in line with our established safeguarding procedure.

The pressures on children, young people and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures for a variety of reasons including through having to stay within the household, through financial hardship or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in terms of setting any work for students to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning and ability to access on line resources). Staff may be aware of the mental health of both students and their parents or carers, and should refer to safeguarding about any emerging concerns.

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable students and individual arrangements have been made with students who have an attached social worker and those with an EHCP.

For learners subject to a Child Protection Plan and Child In Need Plan, and who have an allocated social worker: contact will be made by the safeguarding team on a regular basis in agreement with the family or social worker.

For learners who are Looked after Children and recent Care Leavers: these will be supported by College staff who will keep in regular contact and raise any concerns to the Student Services Manager.

For learners with an EHCP: The Learning Support Team will maintain regular contact as agreed with student and parents / carers. Support can be delivered through individual arrangements based on curriculum activity.

NB Contact will be made remotely through telephone calls/email.

Reporting arrangements:

The college arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The Safeguarding Team is:

Simon Kibble – Stephenson Campus (DSL)
Lynette Parker – Stephenson Campus (DDSL)
Phil Clooney – Stephenson Campus (DDSL)
Lorraine Cox – Brooksby and Melton Campus (DDSL)
Amanda Williamson – Brooksby and Melton Campus (DDSL)

The arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

Staff will continue to follow the safeguarding procedures and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in college or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Normal safeguarding procedures apply for referrals to children's services. This contact will go through a member of the safeguarding team (listed above) who will follow appropriate measures in seeking the appropriate and necessary support.

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements in place, young people could be at greater risk of on line abuse. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any agency staff or volunteers working with learners during college closure will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

New staff or volunteers

All new starters must have an on line induction. They must read the college Safeguarding Policy, and the staff Code of Conduct.

All new starters or volunteers need to confirm that they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a college closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other education establishments as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff may ask about relationships between learners.

Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The College may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when students are learning at the College. The College continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place. Staff can access further guidance here:

<https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-10-safeguarding-rules-teachers-home>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely/>

Learners accessing remote learning will receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the college, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/internet-connected-devices/>

Mental Health

Restrictions to movement and contact with other people means learners are more likely to be at risk of mental health problems. The Department for Education have produced guidance to support parents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

The following organisations can also provide support:

www.kooth.com – *Free online emotional wellbeing and counselling with self-help articles*

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/>

Calm Harm App – A phone app providing help for those who use self-harm as a coping strategy; <https://calmharm.co.uk/>

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will receive information about keeping students safe online with peers, the College, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the College's approach, including the sites learners will be asked to access and set out who from the college (if anyone) their student is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:

o Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
www.internetmatters.org

o Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC www.net-aware.org.uk

o Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
www.parentzone.org.uk

o Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online o UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers www.thinkuknowco.uk

Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.