

Alder Community High School Academic Year 2020-2021
COVID-19 Addendum to Emotional Health and Well-being Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This addendum is written in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on the emotional well-being and safety of students within our school community due to the sudden school closure.

Staff advice and support

The safeguarding lead took responsibility for continuing to advise staff during school closure and revising procedures to ensure that any identified concerns were shared. An COVID-19 addendum to the safeguarding and child protection policy was written and shared with all staff on 6th April 2020.

School systems were altered and staff were given access to the Child Protection Online Monitoring and Safeguarding System (CPOMS) to enable them to share concerns remotely, securely and appropriately.

Online safety measures were put in place so that staff were able to provide work for students remotely using the systems available, including Microsoft Teams and through email contact. Support and advice was given to staff in establishing and familiarising themselves with this new way of working.

Vulnerable students

The Headway Support Team, including the SEND department, worked together to monitor and support those students identified as vulnerable by contacting them and their families regularly. By email, by telephone or by visiting their homes. A log of those requiring support was developed and updated and information recorded on CPOMS.

Advice was offered with regard to financial difficulties and accessing support during the most difficult of times. Parents were signposted to other agencies who could offer appropriate guidance, support and intervention.

School places were offered where appropriate and free school meal vouchers distributed to those eligible.

Where professionals from outside agencies were involved, contact was maintained and agencies worked together to support and safeguard our students.

Where concerns were identified staff followed school procedures to report them and the safeguarding team intervened.

Emotional health and well-being

Every 2 weeks throughout lockdown, all students received an email from the safeguarding lead. This was to remind them that despite school closure, staff were still available to offer advice, guidance and support and they were encouraged to reach out. There was also information shared on maintaining a good routine, how to look after their emotional well-being and links to key resources were shared.

The school website was regularly updated with information and links to signpost parents and students who needed support.

Through regular telephone contact with those who reached out, the Headway Support Team offered a listening ear for parents during challenging times.

Keeping in touch protocol

During the period of school closure, a keeping in touch protocol was developed. This involved form tutors emailing their tutees once every 2 weeks to check on their well-being and to enquire if any additional support was required. A parent message was sent where contact could not be established and where there was no response telephone calls and home visits were carried out.

The keeping in touch protocol has been revised and will be put in place in the event that school is forced into another full or partial lockdown situation or where students are required to work from home in line with the DFE tiers of restriction.

Moving forward

The reopening of school

School will reopen on Tuesday 1st September with the first two days of term being staff training days. On Thursday 3rd September Year 7 students will be welcomed to Alder and will have the experience of a transition day.

Students in years 8 – 11 will be invited by appointment to attend a review meeting with their form tutor. The meeting will be an academic review, a discussion about their online learning access (using latest reports) and a check on their emotional health and wellbeing considering the impact of COVID 19 on the individual. Any issues that arise during interviews which warrant further intervention or support, will be referred to the appropriate member of staff.

Pastoral support

The pastoral response in school will be impacted by the safe opening of schools guidance. We have considered that students have varying needs and some may find adapting to the new regime difficult, therefore:

- Packages of care for individual students will be created and monitored in line with the school risk assessment.
- Individual referrals for students requiring additional pastoral/SEN support will be considered by SLT in line with the risk assessment.
- Form tutors will be the first port of call for all issues with students.
- A temporary on-call system will be implemented as students will not be allowed to move freely around the school building.
- Progress leader support will be through the on-call system and through pro-active presence around school. Progress leaders will be available at student break and lunch time and by appointment after school.
- The Learning Mentor will be available by appointment only. Students will be collected from the classroom at the time of their appointment and returned afterwards.
- Students experiencing difficulty within the classroom will have the opportunity to take time out of the classroom with a member of the on-call team. There will be a 10 minute allowance given for this before a decision is made about what will happen for that student for the rest of that session.

- Students who are unable to resolve their issues may be placed into Headway Stage 2 or with a member of SLT.
- Parent meetings will be by appointment and by telephone between 3pm and 4pm once students have left site.

Safeguarding intervention and managing disclosures

The risk assessment allows limited opportunity for students to have private conversations to share worries or concerns.

Although every student will be offered a 1:1 with their form tutor or a member of the pastoral team prior to their return to school, it may be later that issues manifest themselves. Progress leaders will be available for drop-in during the course of a school day. For more private matters students can speak to their form tutor during form time. If the form tutor is unable to resolve their issue or worry the form tutor will email the progress leader or learning mentor to request an appointment.

Where a member of staff is given cause for concern for a student through direct disclosure, observations or from a third party, they must refer that through CPOMS without delay.

'Alderline' text for help – 07624 808 669

Where students need to share sensitive confidential information or worries and they do not feel able to speak to their form tutor, they can text the Alderline number for advice and support. This line will be checked each morning by a member of the safeguarding team and the student will be given a 1:1 appointment at the earliest opportunity.

Working with external agencies

Some students and their families have support from external agencies. In cases where there is statutory involvement we may need to facilitate professionals visiting a student during school time. This will be arranged in line with the school risk assessment and ensuring that safe social distancing measures and high standards of cleanliness are in place. Any plans to arrange such meetings must be agreed with the designated safeguarding lead (RAN) or another member of SLT in her absence.

All multi agency meetings will continue to take place virtually using the appropriate communication package, primarily Skype. Professionals will not be invited into the school building for meetings and staff will not attend multi-agency meetings off site.