**29 - School Closure - Coronavirus Protocols**

In the event of a pandemic and the school having to close, Colgate Primary School will continue to offer educational provision/childcare for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. For the list of critical key workers please click the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

**Vulnerable Children**

***“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.***

***Those with an EHC plan should be risk-assessed by their school or college 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.”*** DfE guidance.

Colgate will also look to provide provision for other children that we feel would benefit from support within school - eligibility for free school meals in and of itself will not be a determining factor in assessing vulnerability. ***”Leaders of educational settings and designated safeguarding leads know who their most vulnerable children are and will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children’s social care support.”*** DfE guidance.

**Attendance**

Daily attendance figures will be submitted to West Sussex using the following link:

Covid19attend@westsussex.gov.uk

The school will not need to complete the usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. **The school and any linked social worker will agree with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school will  follow up on any child we are expecting to attend, who does not. The school will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend.**

**In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, we will notify their social worker.**

**EHCP’s**

Guidance from the DfE will be followed using the following protocols:

* Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home
* The school and LA will need to consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, alongside the views of their parents, and make a risk assessment for each child or young person.

The school will contact the parents/carers of children with an EHCP and agree the best way forward for the child to continue to receive educational provision. The safety, mental health and wellbeing of the child will be major contributory factors in determining the most suitable environment for the child. The following list of assessments will be considered:

* The potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This must be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
* The risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
* The ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
* The potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered

If, however, there are challenges associated with this process or we require additional support to consider the risks and /or make decisions, the following key contacts within the Local Authority are available:

The Special Needs Officer

In the absence of our Special Needs Officer or if we do not know who this is, we will contact either of the following shared email addresses and SENAT will arrange for a suitable member of the team to contact us:

SENATNorth@westsussex.gov.uk or SENATSouth@westsussex.gov.uk

The  Assistant Director for Inclusion and SEND (helen.johns@westsussex.gov.uk ).

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans; with local authorities needing instead to apply ‘reasonable endeavours’ to support these children and their families. As such, where the Secretary of State has issued a temporary notice and a local authority is unable to secure the full range of provision stated in a plan, as long as they use their ‘reasonable endeavours’ to do this, they won’t be penalised for failing to meet the existing duty in section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

If the local authority has not yet issued an EHC plan for a child, then they will not automatically fall within the definition of ‘vulnerable children’ for the purposes of attendance at an education setting during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, the school and local authority have discretion to undertake a risk assessment and offer support if that is needed.

**Children looked after (For Designated Teachers)**

Children looked after by the local authority are a vulnerable group and will be considered for educational provision within the school. The school will ensure regular monitoring of attendance, contact with foster carers and the completion of statutory tasks such as PEPs. To support the monitoring of attendance and to further safeguard our children, we will update the local authority regarding the whereabouts of the children. To support with this we will use a dedicated email CLAAttendance@westsussex.gov.uk and email weekly attendance of any CLA at the school by Friday lunchtimes.

**School Closure in the Event of Staff Illness**

West Sussex will work closely with our school– ensuring sufficient provision is available across the local area. The school may need to redeploy staff (whether teachers, support staff or other critical workers) to ensure our school or schools in the locality have sufficient workforce to operate safely.

The larger schools within our locality may need to support the smaller schools should staff shortages mean the educational setting has to close.

**Safeguarding Principles**

Where schools across the locality collaborate and children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) continue to apply. In particular, the school or college that is acting as the hub in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required.

Although Colgate will be operating in a fundamentally different way, a number of important safeguarding principles will remain the same:

* 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 contact immediately a DSL or deputy who 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

Colgate will, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. Any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 will not weaken our approach to safeguarding or undermine our child protection policy.

There will not always be a DSL onsite however a senior member of staff will always be designated to deal with safeguarding concerns. All staff will act immediately on any safeguarding concerns and follow the normal safeguarding procedure as outlined within this policy. The senior teacher will be consulted and one of the DSL’s will be contacted.

**A trained DSL will always be contactable by phone.**

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

**Online Safety Protocols**

Within school our acceptable use policy and monitoring systems will continue to apply.

**The school is awaiting further DfE guidance** on children working remotely away from the setting.

The school will continue to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Parent’s will be reminded to reinforce the importance of children being safe online if pupils have been set school work by teachers.

Parents will be signposted to the following sites to ensure best practice in online-safety through remote learning:

* [Internet matters](https://www.internetmatters.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIktuA5LWK2wIVRYXVCh2afg2aEAAYASAAEgIJ5vD_BwE) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
* [London Grid for Learning](http://www.lgfl.net/online-safety/) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
* [Net-aware](https://www.net-aware.org.uk/) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
* [Parent info](https://parentinfo.org/) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
* [Thinkuknow](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
* [UK Safer Internet Centre](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers) - advice for parents and carers

**Amended in reponse to COVID-19 on 5th May 2020**