

Our Ref: Covid19(2)/MS/KJR/CS

18th March 2020

Dear Colleague,

I write to you knowing that the information is rapidly changing and you are providing brilliant leadership at a time when the next phase is unpredictable. Accept my sincere appreciation and gratitude for endeavouring to keep our schools open; the majority remain fully open and are supporting their communities. I am writing to give a further update on the current situation and guidance that you may find useful.

As you will understand any information and advice given is subject to change as the position develops.

Some points for schools to consider at this stage:

School Closure

If the head teacher and Governors make the decision to partially or fully close your school, please notify the LA school closures email account as this will be published and shared with partner agencies for the purpose of continuity planning:

Email schoolclosures@lincolnshire.gov.uk from the establishment's email account stating:

- Code word: **Banana19**
- School name and DfE number e.g. 925xxxx
- Message: e.g. "whole site(s) closed on (date)" or "partial site(s) closed – all except final year GCSE classes on (date)"
- Your name & position

In the event of a partial school closure, we respectfully ask that you may consider:

- Priority year groups e.g. exams
- Disadvantaged pupils who would benefit from continuity
- Learners of parents who are front line workers in the emergency services and/or public sector so that the system is enabled to continue to function

Staffing

Have you considered or planned for:

- Mapping of staff members, with contact details, who are:
 - in isolation,
 - fit and able to work but at home in the event of school closure,
 - social distancing due to being part of a vulnerable group.
- Have you established a plan to keep in touch with all colleagues?
- Who is able to work remotely on behalf of the organisation?
- Do you have contracted providers who might be able to provide broader services to the community in the event of school closure? E.g. Sports coaches, music teachers, pastoral support, and such like.

School Governance Arrangements:

We have fielded a number of questions about governance arrangements and have sent separate guidance directly to Governing Bodies. In principle, the ability to govern the school and lead the organisation still remains whether the school is closed or not. Therefore, mechanisms for fulfilling the statutory duties should be planned for. This should not cease due to school closure. Some schools have said that virtual governance meetings are effective. We anticipate further advice DfE advice on this matter.

Home learning

If you have children working from home, you may have seen a number of resources shared on social media and activities/resources in the local community that supports continued activity. You may wish to establish these links on your website. We are aware of a number of providers offering free access over the short term.

Safeguarding of vulnerable pupils and families

If a national announcement is made regarding school closure, business continuity must plan for safe provision for all vulnerable groups of children. These groups will include children who are subject to a plan (LAC, CP, CIN, TAC); identified as disadvantaged or eligible for free school meals. When you are considering what support may be required for these children over the coming days and weeks, please consider the following:

- Are there families that will require regular contact with parents and carers? If so, how can the school support with this?
- Is communication with social workers/other professionals necessary?
- What are the remote learning and options?
- Have the key contact details of key professionals, families and children been made accessible on or off site (including effective information governance precautions)?
- Are professionals informed of virtual meetings and can communications continue?

Lincolnshire Children's Services will, alongside our Education colleagues need to think creatively how we support vulnerable families at this time and how information is shared between the two services. With that in mind, please can we ask:

- Children and families already open to social care or early help; any necessary information should be disseminated through the allocated workers.
- New referrals in need of front line service support are to be made through the Customer Service Centre as normal.
- Please consider whether issues can be supported in the first instance by using other support services such as <https://www.kooth.com/> and www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellbeing or signposting some of the following: Family Lives (formerly Parentline), Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk, ADHD Lincs (Lincsadhd.org), PAACT, Building Resilience in the Community (formerly Homestart). The Family Services Directory may have helpful information as well.

Designated Safeguarding Leads:

If you are without access to a Designated Safeguarding Lead, you could do the following in the short term:

- Is the DSL working from home – they can still provide the DSL function
- Schools could share a DSL across partner schools

Staff could undertake the LSCP Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect Foundation Training on www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/lscp/3

Edulincs services/Paid for Services

Services purchased through this single point of access will be maintained wherever possible. Further information regarding such services can be found at <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/edulincs>. The Local Authority is aware a number of you are facing challenges with costs but we would ask that you continue with normal payments processing. The Senior Leadership Team will consider this position at the appropriate time.

We will continue to update you regularly.

Yours faithfully,

M. Smith

Martin Smith
Interim Assistant Director for Education