

SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH LEARNERS VIA ONLINE LEARNING / VIRTUAL CLASSROOM POLICY

This policy links to the Behaviour Policy, Email, Internet and Communications Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Attendance Policy and Managing Allegations and Whistleblowing Policy.

Introduction

These guidelines set out how Onwards 'n' Upwards / Achieve Your Potential will protect learners and staff whilst working virtually to enable us to continue providing mentoring and tuition support across Dorset and Hampshire during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We will be moving to a virtual classroom / online support service from Monday 20th April 2020 until we are able to return to normal services. We will offer an online learning experience / mentoring via a virtual classroom that allows teachers and learners to communicate, interact, explain ideas and complete activities together.

Alongside this, we will also be offering telephone sessions and safe and well checks.

Notifying Parents / Carers of the Virtual Classroom

Onwards 'n' Upwards will send a letter to parents / carers explaining the virtual classroom and the online support way of working. We will request an email address from parents / carers so we can communicate with them and send required links etc. These emails will be kept in accordance to the Data Protection Act (see policy Data Protection & GDPR).

Parents / carers will be sent a text message each week (as per normal) of the time of their child's sessions. We may follow this up with an email depending on the amount of information that we need to send over each week.

Virtual Classroom Platform

The virtual classroom programme we will use is: school-network.net

This programme has been rigorously checked and is in accordance to GDPR principles and Data protection Act.

All learners and staff members will have their own login details, which they will keep safe and not share with others. In the event of learners or staff forgetting their login details, there is an option to reset details safely and securely via the programme.

Session Format

The sessions will be offered as a one-to-one with a mentor / tutor and / or as a small group. We would like to be able to offer as much support as we can and will offer Maths and English sessions in small groups where possible.

Video Support

The video support option will be offered to learners so that they can see their regular tutor / mentor. This will be optional and will require the learner having the required technology. Parent / carer will need to provide Video Calling Consent (via email ideally) in order for sessions to take place in this way. A request for consent will be sent to parents / carers via a letter and they will be asked for an email to confirm they are happy with video calling to go ahead.

The video support might not be needed throughout the entire session as there is a chat facility and microphone option. If a learner does not have access to a webcam, they will not miss out on the session as they can interact using the other methods on offer.

If Parents / Carers Do Not Have The Required Technology

If parents / carers are not able to provide access to a laptop, computer or other suitable device for their child to use for online sessions or do not have access to the internet, we will request that they let us know as soon as possible. We will be able to offer telephone sessions and postal work. The postal support option will be available as long as Post Office / Parcel Delivery services are active during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Location for Video Calling / Virtual Classroom Sessions

Where possible, learners are to not to join virtual sessions from their bedrooms. If this is the only place in the household where they will access this support, we ask that the parent / carer checks in with their son / daughter every 15 minutes during the session and ideally the bedroom door will be left open slightly.

Learners should be located in a common space in the house, free from distractions but within earshot of parents / carers. Parent / carer to be present at the start of each session and at the end of the session before signing off.

Staff should be located in a space away from others in their household. They will ensure that family, personal details and items are not able to be seen within the call. Please appreciate that there may be occasions where the staff member may need to pause, mute or end a video call and revert back to the chat facility within the virtual classroom if a member of their household enters the learning space or can be seen in the background.

If the mentor / tutor is contacting your child by telephone or WhatsApp call / video, the same situation could arise and the member of staff may need to end the call if appropriate and call back when they can.

Parent / Carer and staff members will communicate appropriately to ensure sessions can run as smoothly as possible and with minimal distractions.

Interaction On-line

Staff and learners must interact with each other in an appropriate professional manner as per face-to-face sessions.

Staff and learners to arrive on time and be ready for learning.

Staff and learners **MUST** be suitably dressed and present themselves as if they were face-to-face on session.

Staff and learners to use suitable language during the session.

Students should have their camera and microphones off by default. These can be switched on when needing to ask a question or interact with others.

Staff are not to share personal contact details with learners at any point.

Onwards 'n' Upwards request that a parent / carer is present or nearby at the beginning and end of the online session (as mentioned above).

Learners will have the opportunity to interact with other learners via the online programme. This will be during classroom time only and therefore closely supervised by staff. The facilitator of the virtual classroom has access to various controls at the time of the session and is able to deal with any inappropriate behaviour online and / or remove any learners being disruptive. Where necessary, a learner will be blocked from the session and / or removed from the virtual classroom. If this happens, the parent / carer will be informed.

Onwards 'n' Upwards will send out a short guide to accessing the virtual learning classroom. Prior to sessions commencing online, there will be an opportunity for the learner and a member of their family to have a short tutorial before we go 'live'.

This is a new approach to learning for all staff and learners and we ask that we respect this and support each other as much as possible. This is to ensure learning and mentoring support can continue until face-to-face contact can be offered again.

Safeguarding Procedure

As always, we are committed to ensure that all our learners and staff are kept safe and well. If staff are worried about someone or something they witness during an online session, they will follow normal safeguarding procedure (see Safeguarding Policy). They will contact the parent / carer (if appropriate) and complete a safeguarding concern form following our normal procedures, which then may be referred to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) depending on the concern.

Staff, learners and parent / carer can contact a member of the Management team if they have any concerns.

Emotional Well-being on Sessions

Should a learner present heightened emotions during an online session, staff members will use emotional intelligence coaching skills to help the learner to acknowledge their feelings and work through them. Staff will encourage the learner to use some coping mechanisms to reduce the large emotion/s they are experiencing. If a learner remains heightened then the staff will suggest that the parent / carer is involved in the session, either asking the learner to get them or by calling them.

If appropriate, we can bring the session to a close and follow this up with a telephone call to the young person and parent to discuss further.

Individual Session Plans (ISPs)

As with face-to-face work, all virtual sessions will be planned by staff prior to sessions, setting out key learning objectives. After a session the staff member will complete an ISP (Individual Session Plan), detailing the learner's engagement and the activities / learning that has taken place.

Telephone Sessions

The above guidelines relating to location, safeguarding, emotional well-being and ISP's detailed above also apply to telephone calls.

Where possible, the parent / carer's phone will be used for the call rather than the learner's.

Sharing of Inappropriate or Illegal Content

Staff are not to share any content which is inappropriate or illegal.

If a learner shares inappropriate or illegal content, the staff member will cease the online session, explaining to the learner why they are doing so. Staff will then notify parent / carer and a member of the Management team.

Parent / carer will inform a member of the Management team if they feel that a member of staff has shared inappropriate or illegal content.

The Management team will decide how we move forward with the learner's programme and whether using the online approach is still appropriate.

Storing Work

Work will be stored via the online programme system and will be done in accordance to GDPR and the Data Protection Act. The work will be printed and stored in learner's individual files when we have access to our offices.

Recording of Sessions Online

The tutor / mentor of the virtual classroom has the option to record sessions. We plan to record all sessions for the purpose of safeguarding and quality assurance. The recordings will not be shared with anyone outside of Onwards 'n' Upwards / Achieve Your Potential (unless a safeguarding concern is identified).

The recordings will provide a good resource for us to check the chat facility and for the tutor / mentor to go back over conversations with learners to ensure any support needs are addressed and to record accurately any contributions made.

Quality Assurance and Online Safeguarding Measures

Due to the nature of the online learning platform, a member of the Onwards 'n' Upwards Management team will conduct ad-hoc quality assurance checks during this time. This will allow us to monitor teaching and mentoring support and to ensure learners and staff members are adhering to the safeguarding policy. It also provides us with the opportunity to check how sessions are going in general and that they are working well for everyone involved.

The tutor / mentor and learner will be able to see when a member of the Management team enters the virtual classroom. At a time when convenient, we will make our presence known and ask how things are going. We will maintain suitable records to document our quality assurance checks and will contact parents if appropriate with any concerns that we are made aware of.

This policy is available in hard copy at the centre, electronically on Findmyshift and on the Onwards 'n' Upwards website.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date updated	Policy approved by	Signed
03/04/2020	Linsey Spicer	