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SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION UPDATE

ISSUE: 4 **Monday 25 April 2022**

We hope that you have had a well-rested Easter break and feel refreshed as we return. To help you prepare, please read the fourth instalment of our termly Safeguarding and Child Protection Update. We hope you find the update useful, and we appreciate you taking the time to read it in full.

Social media

Social media can be a brilliant and powerful tool for learning and communication, but it is important to remember that online conduct is equally as important as real-life conduct for those in the education sector. It is crucial that you remain professional online. You can learn more about our expectations for appropriate boundaries online in our Social Networking Policy.

Privacy settings

We would encourage you to review your social media profiles and privacy settings at regular intervals to ensure that you portray yourself online in the most appropriate way. Different platforms can be used for different purposes, eg LinkedIn for your professional life and Facebook for your personal life. You should consider how you use each platform and make sure that your privacy settings align.

The South West Grid for Learning Trust provide some great social media checklists to help you manage your settings on popular apps – www.swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists.

It's important to remember that even with a limited friends list, anything you post online can be turned into a lasting record via a screenshot (also known as a 'screengrab' or 'screencap'). This is a record that can then be saved, duplicated and shared by another user. This also applies to encrypted messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp, where you may assume that your content is private. Your photos, thoughts and words may reach a wider audience than you intend, including the school that you are working in.

Just as with social media platforms, it is also important that you maintain professional boundaries in relation to gaming profiles. You should adhere to the same rules as you would for social media and be aware that your position of trust within education settings prohibits you from 'friending', 'following' or interacting with students via these channels.

Social media continued...

Harms threshold

As we have seen in the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance for schools and colleges, the harms threshold can be met by an allegation that you have behaved in a way that indicates that you may not be suitable to work with children, and this behaviour may have happened outside of school, college or other relevant placement settings. The Guidance for Safer Working Practice advises that 'email or text communications between an adult and a child/young person outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet-based websites.'

Not on social media?

For those who do not use social media profiles, it is still important to consider whether information is posted about you online by friends and family, for example photos posted from a night out which you feature in. It's a good idea to have conversations with those around you about how your portrayal on social media can affect your professional life, and to advise them of your expectations around posting.

Online safety training

As we all know, use of the internet both at home and school can be a very useful learning resource. However, we need to be aware of the risks of being online. There is a lot of tailored information available to teachers and support staff and the following links are a great place to start:

- NSPCC – Online safety resources for schools and organisations.
- Internet Matters – Online safety resources for teachers.
- Childnet – Help, advice and resources for teachers and professionals.

Supporting young people with SEND online

For children with SEND, they may encounter further challenges and therefore additional support may be required. These links offer SEND tailored support for those working within SEND settings:

- NSPCC – Online safety for children with SEND.
- Internet Matters – Inclusive Digital Safety Resource Centre.
- Childnet – Supporting young people with SEND online.

These websites cover a variety of different topics including helping children browse safely online, digital wellbeing, activities to help talk about being online and the steps you can take to help protect children online.

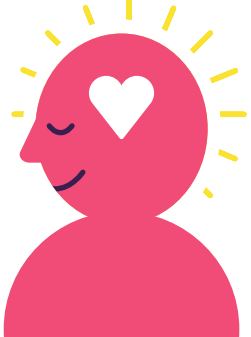
Mindfulness and wellbeing in the classroom

School can be stressful for many pupils, and with the added disruptions that we have experienced in recent years, this has added to the pressures which pupils were already experiencing. Using mindfulness in the classroom can help pupils to navigate through these unsettling times. The practice helps to train the mind to enhance awareness of thoughts, feelings and sensations and can help to increase attention span, concentration and emotional resilience. The resources below will help you to understand mindfulness and how it can be used in the classroom:

- Pearson – The Wellbeing Zone.
- Mindfulness in the classroom.
- Calmer Classrooms.

It's important to look after your own wellbeing also and the guides below will offer some help and advice on how to achieve this:

- Education Support – A guide to meditation for teachers and education staff.
- Education Support – The building blocks of good mental wellbeing.



Guidance resources

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Our huge network of staff support thousands of students each day, and we ask that staff regularly refresh their knowledge of the statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One guidance from the Department for Education, so that safeguarding is always at the forefront of what we do.

Guidance for Safer Working Practices

The Guidance for Safer Working Practice covers a wide range of situations to establish the safest environments to safeguard children and young people. It is important to recognise that the guidance cannot cover all eventualities and there will be occasions where professional judgement is required. That said, the guidance should assist you to monitor your own standards and practice to reduce the risk of allegations of improper or unprofessional conduct being made.

Code of Conduct

Please take this opportunity to refresh yourself on the key advice from our staff Code of Conduct.

When working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, you must not:

- Allow allegations or concerns to go unreported.
- Take unnecessary risks.
- Consume alcohol, smoke or use illegal substances.
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children, young people or vulnerable adults. If you think a student may be infatuated with you, speak to the school or setting's DSL (designated safeguarding lead) or Deputy DSL as soon as possible, so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Make inappropriate promises to children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Touch a student in any way that could be considered indecent, nor indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.
- Engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive, including having any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Let a child, young person or vulnerable adult have your personal contact details (including but not limited to mobile number, email or postal address), or have contact with them via a personal social media account.
- Accept gifts from students or their parents/carers. That said, occasionally students or their parents or carers may wish to give tokens of appreciation (for example at Christmas). These may be accepted if they are not of significant value.
- Offer lifts to a child, young person or vulnerable adult outside the agreements of your role.
- Spend time with students off-site outside of the agreements of your role.
- Accept invitations to events on the school grounds offered by students, without first making school staff aware that you plan to attend.
- Use pupil toilets.

When working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, you should always:

- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect.
- Be patient with others.
- Exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Be vigilant and respond accordingly to instances of peer-on-peer abuse, including any sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Ensure your contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults is appropriate and relevant to the work you are involved in.

Code of Conduct continued...

When working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, you are responsible for:

- Prioritising the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Providing a safe learning environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- Reporting all safeguarding and child protection concerns immediately in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Following our principles, policies and procedures.

Our policies should all be observed alongside those of the site you are working in. Schools and colleges will have their own policies and procedures. If these are not presented to you when you arrive at your placement, please seek them out and familiarise yourself with them. Some school policies and procedures can also be located on their website for you view prior to your arrival.

Training resources

It's important to keep your training record with us up to date. If you have completed any recent safeguarding or child protection training via schools, voluntary roles or other agencies, please email copies of your certificates to your consultant.

The following free training courses are available for CPD:

- **PREVENT training** – Please see the link below for more information about the free training course offered by the government. At the end of the course, you will be provided with a certificate of completion, which you should forward to your consultant to be added to your training record.

  www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance (via EduCompli)** – This course can be completed on a web browser or via an app on your mobile phone. We would recommend this course if you have not undertaken a safeguarding course within the previous 12 months, but anyone can complete it who wishes to. Please contact your consultant to express your interest and you will be enrolled. Your consultant will need to provide EduCompli with your name and email address – please see our Privacy Policy for more details.

Protecting your data is really important to us. You can find out more about how we comply with the legislation in our Privacy Policy and Data Retention Policy, which you can view on our website.

Please note that the resources detailed are from third party providers and are not part of The Edwin Group (Vision for Education/ABC Teachers/Smart Teachers) and should be used at your own discretion.