

POLICY DOCUMENT

• Safeguarding Policy Appendix (COVID-19)

| Name of Policy | Date Effective | Review Date | Signature |
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| Safeguarding Policy (COVID-19) | March 2020 | As required according to guidance |  |

Safeguarding Policy during COVID 19 outbreak

This appendix to the Safeguarding Policy sets out interim measures to ensure that any new processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening FW Solutions' approach to safeguarding or undermining the main Safeguarding policy.

Introduction

The way colleges and Further Education providers are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most learners are no longer in the workplace and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

This annex to our Safeguarding policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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Version control and dissemination

This is version 1.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve

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or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on FW Solutions' website <https://www.fwsolutions.net/about/policies/>

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all learners registered with FW Solutions – whether they are currently at home or attending their usual work placement – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of learners continue to come first
- if anyone in our organisation has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- learners should continue to be protected when they are online.

FW Solutions' current position

We provide our learners with opportunities throughout their apprenticeship or learning programme to develop the skills they need to stay safe, healthy and recognise and respond to abuse and harmful behaviours and this is extended to the time they are in isolation. During this uncertain time, we have switched all of our learning to distance learning via online platforms according to the learner's needs. These platforms include Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp. In between teaching and assessment time, learners will receive a welfare call to ensure their safety and wellbeing during the lockdown period.

It is important for our learners and staff to ensure they are safe online and e-safety is paramount. Being in isolation and living our lives online comes with risks and we encourage our learners to recognise cyber bullying, grooming, radicalisation and trolling and how to increase their online security and reduce these risks to their safety. We are committed to ensuring overuse of social media and over exposure to the news around COVID-19 does not impact on mental health and wellbeing. More information can be found in FW Solutions' Wellbeing During COVID-19 Policy.

We are providing isolation support to learners in the form of ensuring they have a safe place to isolate, advice and guidance on financial matters, signposting, maintaining open communication, pastoral support, regular social media posts and robust referral processes.

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Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting learners in schools, colleges and training providers and supporting learners with health and care (EHC) plans. We continue to work with the local authority designated officer and our referral process remains unchanged

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding at FW Solutions remain in line with our Safeguarding Policy

Any concerns relating to the welfare of a learner should be directed to DSL Nicola Balmforth n.balmforth@fwsolutions.net

In Nicola's absence the Deputy DSL is Sandra Hardy s.hardy@fwsolutions.net

FW Solutions' employees recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility irrespective of their role. During this time in isolation you have the right to feel safe where you learn and work.

Other people should not:

- Hurt or abuse you in any way
- Threaten to hurt or abuse you

If you wish to share information with FW Solutions staff members, please note: If the staff member feels that what you tell them puts you or any other young person at risk of harm; they will have to pass it on to the designated person who may have to take it further to support you or others and keep everyone safe. This is in accordance with our safeguarding referral procedure. They will only tell those who need to know

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Vulnerable learners

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education or health 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.

Vulnerable children will continue to be risk assessed and supported according to the Safeguarding policy.

Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of learners and apprentices. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of learner's work where they are at home.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of learners and those they are isolating with and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

Attendance

Learners and apprentices will continue learning via online study platforms. Apprentices do not need to attend physical 1:1 sessions or to have physical contact with teaching staff in order to continue their apprenticeship study. So those working from home or furloughed apprentices, for example, can continue with all skills, knowledge and behaviour aspects of their Apprenticeship via our flexible learning delivery methods and using our virtual learning environment and e-portfolio.

If an apprentice is sick due to COVID-19 and/or is unable to do any learning for four consecutive weeks or longer, we can arrange for them to have a break in learning.

All learning that they take part in will be logged in their Off the Job Training log and will count towards their total time at the end of the apprenticeship. We will continue to review progress every 8 weeks.

All learners are expected to attend online learning sessions with their TLC at least once every four weeks and attendance will be logged.

Reporting concerns about learners or staff

The importance of all staff acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff will continue to follow our Safeguarding procedures and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any learner, including those who are on a break in learning.

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The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that learners may face from staff. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy

Online safety

It is likely that learners will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks including trolling, extremist content and activity, coercive behaviour, fake news and disinformation, intimidation, violent content, advocacy of self-harm, promotion of female genital mutilation, incitement of violence, pornography, modern slavery, encouraging or assisting suicide, sale of illegal drugs and services such as drugs and weapons, sexual abuse and exploitation and sexting of indecent images by under eighteens.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Safeguarding Policy

Staff will continue to look out for signs a learner may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a learner, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL. All FW Solutions staff are trained in identifying addressing reviewing and monitoring the online safety of their learners. They are building safety online into isolation learning and checking digital literacy to ensure learners can safely access learning online.

Learners are taught the associated risks of spending a lot of time online and are encouraged to switch off Geotagging and location services and to identify when their behaviour online becomes a risk to their own safety. Learners are encouraged to safeguard their personal information whilst online and how to conduct themselves safely when using social media.

Alcohol and Drug Misuse

During these times of significant change and isolation it is important that FW Solutions' staff are aware of the dangers and signs of alcohol and drug misuse. Forced isolation, lack of familiar routines, limited communication, stress and boredom can lead to the consumption of alcohol and drugs increasing, resulting in a higher risk of mental health illnesses and secondary health conditions.

Alcohol misuse is the main concern at this time as this is still available to buy at supermarkets, while finding drugs can be difficult during lockdown.

Staff will continue to look for the signs that a learner may be consuming higher than recommended amounts of alcohol. Regular wellbeing calls are in place to allow learners to talk about any concerns they have with their Teaching and Learning Co-

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ordinators. Learners will also be taught about the World Health Organisation's recommended Alcohol consumption for males and females.

If a staff member is concerned about a learner, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or deputy DSL.

Prevent Strategy

As a result of training provider and college closures and increased isolation, young and vulnerable people are using online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and online calls as a way to communicate. This means young people are at a higher risk of being influenced by extremist groups, negative influencers and groomers.

All staff have been trained on how to recognise the signs of radicalisation and how to raise concerns following Prevent guidance. FW Solutions is committed to the North Yorkshire Strategy **"Let's talk about it"** co-ordinated by Prevent and is aimed at young people who may be at risk of being groomed or radicalised. <https://www.ltai.info/>

Regular wellbeing calls are in place to allow learners to talk about any concerns or viewpoints they have with their Teaching and Learning Co-ordinators.

Prevent and Cultural topics will continue to be taught as part of our teaching strategy, focusing on Prevent and the fundamental British values.

This works alongside our Online safety strategy detailed above.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed in line with Government guidance as often as is required.