**LEICESTERSHIRE SECONDARY EDUCATION AND INCLUSION PARTNERSHIPS**

**Policy for Safe Use of Synchronous On Line Contact with Students**

Definition:

Synchronous On Line Contact is defined as live contact between teacher and a student or groups of students using software such as, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Team etc.

**Introduction and Rationale**

This Policy has been developed as a result of the closure of most “home based” provision and Alternative Settings during the Corona Emergency.

A significant proportion of SEIP students meet the DFE definition of “Vulnerable” as set out in Guidance. The Partnerships take the view that all our students are vulnerable as a result of their inability to maintain their places in their mainstream schools. These children and young people are at higher risk than the general school population of:

* Experiencing difficulties and tensions at home as the period of isolation continues
* Breaking the rules of social isolation set out by Government Policy
* Coming under the influence of older adolescents and adults and as a result being drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour
* Losing their already weakened sense of engagement in and commitment to education
* Losing any educational gains they have made

The Partnerships recognise that the ending of daily contact with the staff at the SEIPS and APs, the loss of a regular routine, and the weakening of relationships particularly with key workers is likely to have a more detrimental effect on these students than would be the case for mainstream students. The Partnerships also recognise that there will be a significant challenge, with many of our students and their families, in maintaining regular contact and even more so in developing that regular contact in a way that will support an ongoing education programme.

In summary our students are likely to have a much lower inclination to participate in distance learning (via paper and on line) but a much greater need for that participation.

Our Goals

The Partnerships have defined four goals for our work during this period of closure. These are in order of priority:

1. To do all we can to ensure that our students are safe and well at home
2. To work to support students and their families in adhering to the rules of social isolation.
3. To sustain and, where we can, strengthen the engagement of our students in the education activities that are provided for them
4. To secure educational progress in English, Maths and other courses.

These goals make it imperative that we do what we can to maintain communication with our students and continue to foster the relationships between staff and students that are the foundation of our work with them. **This is why the Partnerships are working towards the use of synchronous on line contact with all students.**

How this Policy Differs from School Safe Use of ICT Policies

Schools and Colleges are able to use filtering and other technical controls to ensure that the use of school IT equipment can be controlled and monitored in order to maintain a safe on line environment. Teachers communication with students on line is invariably school based, or operates through school IT systems and structures.

The special needs of Partnership students and the goals that Partnerships have set in order to meet those needs have led to a decision to develop the capacity to make direct on line contact with students. This means that students may be using home equipment that is connected to the internet without the filtering and firewalls that exist in school.

The Partnerships believe that the risk of misuse of the internet and the potential for exposure to potentially harmful material and contacts is not increased by our use of synchronous on line contact with students. The regular contact of teachers and key workers and the reminders they will give on safe use are likely to reduce rather than increase risk.

**The Development of the Policy**

The Policy has been developed through discussion of the team of Co-ordinators as they prepare to meet the challenge of home based working for all their students and staff.

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| --- | --- |
| This Policy for Safe Use of Synchronous On Line Contact with Students was approved by the Chair of the Partnership on | *Insert date* |
| The implementation of this online safety policy will be monitored by the: | *Insert name of group/individual (e.g. – Online Safety Coordinator/Officer/Group, Senior Leadership Team, other relevant group)* |
| Monitoring will take place at regular intervals: | *Insert time period (suggested at least once a year)* |
| The Chairs of Partnership will receive a report on the implementation of the online safety policy generated by the Co-ordinators group at regular intervals: | *Insert time period (suggested to be at least once a year)* |
| The online safety policy will be reviewed at the end of the current Covid19 emergency |  |
| Should serious online safety incidents take place, the following external persons/agencies should be informed: | *The child’s school’s DSL and Link Staff Member. The Chair of Partnership* |

**Key Safeguarding Measures**

In order to:

1. Protect students from any risk of on-line interactions being used by adults to develop exploitative relationships
2. Protect staff members from any risk of on-line interactions being mis-used by students in order to undermine the authority, safety and security of the member of staff
3. Protect all users from the risk of exposure to unsuitable materials during the on-line sessions

Each Partnership will:

1. Use software that is approved for use by the local fund holding school
2. Manage access to that software through school portals
3. Only run sessions at times that have been agreed in advance
4. Ensure that all users are familiar with the Rules of Participation (see below)
5. Ensure that sessions are recorded
6. Ensure that two members of staff are present in on line sessions
7. Ensure that a DSL or designated stand in member of staff is available to contact at the time of any on line contact sessions
8. Monitor sessions including:

* Logs of reported incidents
* Surveys/questionnaires of
  + students/pupils
  + parents/carers
  + staff

**Responsibilities:**

The Chair of Partnership is responsible for initial approval and subsequent review of the policy and is accountable to the local Headteachers Group and to the Chairs of Partnership Meeting

The Partnership Co-ordinator is responsible for:

* ensuring that all Partnership staff are aware of the policy and understand their roles and responsibilities as set out in the policy
* ensuring that a process is in place for on line incidents to be reported, investigated and dealt with appropriately
* acting as or designating another member of staff as “On Line Safety Lead” who will advise staff on how to manage on-line learning , will liaise with IT and technical staff, advise parents, ensure that appropriate records of activities and incidents are kept.
* Ensuring that sessions are recorded, that the recordings are stored securely and erased at the end of each school year.
* Ensuring that the Partnership staff communicate with parents and students so that they know and understand the rules of participation and are aware of any data protection issues.
* Ensuring that the decision as to which software to be used has been considered with the advice and guidance from schools based IT technical staff, who are themselves guided by their own schools’ Safe Use of ICT policy.
* Ensure that Partnership staff follow guidance in their use of personal IT equipment and mobile phones in communicating with students to set up on line sessions and in carrying out those sessions.
* Develop over time with teachers and key workers an “on – line teaching and learning policy” to cover issues such as rewards and sanctions, homework and assessment
* Carrying out any risk assessments for individual students where any concern about the students’ capacity to engage in the sessions has been raised. Acting as the final arbiter as to who should be prevented from participating.

Teachers and Key Workers are responsible for

* Ensuring that they have read and understood this policy and its appendices and confidently adhere to the guidance it contains.
* Ensuring that they adhere to the Partnership procedures for logging on line activities and reporting any issues that arise as a result of those activities
* Ensuring that they have undertaken some training to equip themselves with a wide understanding of the opportunities and implications for teaching and learning on line.
* Ensuring that they have raised any concerns they may have about the participation of individual students with the Co-ordinator.
* Ensuring that each on line contact includes a reminder to students of the Rules of Participation and that from time to time reminders about the safe use of the internet are built in to the session
* Adhere to the policy that all contacts with students are logged, form part of the Partnership’s planned programme of teaching and learning and/or pastoral care and use authorised software and equipment.
* Responding to any concerns the student or parent raises about the session

Students are responsible for

* Acknowledging and agreeing to the Rules of Participation at the start of a session
* Letting teachers or key workers know of any concerns that they have arising from the use of the technology
* Reporting any infringement of the safe practice that they may come across to their teacher or key worker
* Joining any on line synchronous sessions at the agreed time and in conformity with the Rules of Participation

Parents and Carers are responsible for

* Supporting their child in accessing the on line synchronous sessions at the correct time
* Assisting their child in finding a suitable space to work in
* Providing indirect supervision of their child as (s)he participates in the session
* Responding to any concerns that the teacher or key worker might raise resulting from the session
* Checking that their child has not used the software provided for the sessions for other purposes without permission

**The Rules of Participation**

1. Participants will join the session at the agreed time
2. Participants will do their best to ensure that they are in a space at home where they are not likely to be disturbed during the session
3. Participants will be dressed appropriately for the learning activity
4. Participants will align themselves with their web cam so that they can be seen clearly by all other participants.
5. Participants will be aware that the session will be recorded by the staff participant.
6. Participants will follow the normal rules of classroom work – taking turns to speak, listening to the teacher, using classroom appropriate language.
7. Each Partnership will develop its own code for rewards and sanctions related to students participation in on line sessions.
8. Partnership Staff will not use personal email addresses or mobile phones in any activity associated with launching and running on line sessions. Usually any software used will be embedded within the IT platforms operated by the Partnerships.

Appendix One

Risk Assessment of students’ suitability to participate in synchronous group on line learning activities

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The student and parent have signalled agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct | Yes | | No | |
| How confident are you that the student will turn up at the specified time |  |  | |  |
| How confident are you that the student will sustain in engagement for the session |  |  | |  |
| How confident are you that the parents will support the student |  |  | |  |
| What can you do to improve your confidence rating? |  | | | |

Appendix Two

Sources of Advice for Parents about On Line Safety

Online safety information will continue to be shared regularly with parents. Parents will be made aware that they can find further information at:

Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

London Grid for Learning - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC

Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online

UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers

Appendix 3

Click to go to:

[Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings Addendum April 2020](https://www.leicsseips.org/what-else-is-out-there)