**COVID Risk Assessment Guidance re: Looked After Children attending school**

Following the government announcement late on 4.01.21 please find guidance that has been published. NationalLockdownGuidance.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk). Some information is provided about schools, colleges and childcare providers on page 15 to 17 which states:

National guidance -

**Going to school, college and university Colleges, primary (reception onwards) and secondary schools will remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term. In the circumstances, we do not think it is possible for all exams in the summer to go ahead as planned. We will accordingly be working with Ofqual to consult rapidly to put in place alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly.**

We have checked out with regional colleagues and the guidance states that Early Years provision will remain open to all children. Schools including reception will therefore be open for **vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. The Government is very specific that looked after children are ‘vulnerable children’ and must be offered on-site education.**

We are aware that our carers do not necessarily view the children they care for as ‘vulnerable’ due to the good level of care and protection they provide. Therefore, we can also refer to our Looked After Children as having **‘Priority’ for on-site education**.

All carers have received the following letter explaining our duty as a Corporate Parent to ensure our looked after children are in receipt of on-site education where this is safe for them.



If this Guidance changes, we will update this document. However, the current position is that there will be only 2 criteria for agreement from Shropshire Council as a corporate parent for home education:

* Risk due to the child or someone in their household having a letter advising they need to be shielded;
* Risk due to the child having a positive COVID test, or COVID symptoms or needing to self-isolate due to being in contact with someone with COVID.

However, we are aware of the anxieties and vulnerabilities that exist for some children and their carers where there is a view that the child should not receive their education on-site and be educated at home.

Therefore there are additional criteria we will use where this is being proposed, so that we can seek assurance that the child’s educational need are being met and they are safeguarded.

In these circumstances we will risk assess using the criteria in the attached form and if all agree we will respect the decision made.



The criteria used to risk assess falls into 4 main categories:

* Safeguarding-will the child be safe if home-educated?
* Placement stability- will the stability of the child’s placement be compromised if home-educated?
* Access to equipment and availability of carer to provide home education?
* Progress and attainment? Will this be compromised if the child is not receiving on-site education?

The assurance can only be provided following consultation with all relevant parties.

The process agreed is as follows:

1. The child’s SW / carers’ Supervising SW will discuss with carers covering the points within the form and notify the Virtual School of the outcome (can be via an e-mail, case note alert or completing bullet points and returning form).
2. The Virtual School will liaise with the school and check out: the school offer, progress and attainment, access to IT, including broadband / data.
3. The Virtual School will complete the form collating the information.
4. The Virtual School Head and relevant Service Manager for the child will sign to approve the risk assessment.
5. The Virtual School will be responsible for adding the completed form to the child’s LCS docs
6. The Virtual School Head will add a case note to record that assurance is provided and the decision of the carer is respected.

**Where assurance is not provided this must be escalated to the relevant Service Manager for discussion between Virtual School Head, Service Manager and Assistant Director to determine what actions need to be taken.**