

LA Hub Guidance

6th April 2020

Given the ever-changing context within which we are currently working, this guidance **MUST** be read alongside the most recent government guidance which can be found on the Kelsi page via this link.

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news/primary/coronavirus>

Who is this guidance for?

This aims to support all schools setting up closed or open hubs for after Easter.

Current situation

All schools and childcare providers are being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable as well as children whose parents are key workers and are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

When schools struggle to safely stay open due for example to low staffing levels, school to school support will be key to providing places for key worker and vulnerable children. Currently the number of pupils in most schools is very low. This may rise as the crisis unfolds and as greater demand is placed on key workers.

KCC and TEP are working with schools across the county to ensure that there are effective contingency plans in place to do this. To this end we are working with schools to set up hubs which will offer emergency places if other arrangements have failed.

The current arrangements for most schools are as follows.

- In line with government guidance, most schools are making provision available for their own eligible children
- Many schools have formed collaborations or 'closed' hubs of schools, often within trusts or federations, to provide places
- Identified schools in each district are forming 'open' hubs to work with any local school who may need emergency support

Please contact your SIA or your AEO, if you haven't already done so, to establish your contingency plans.

Key terms

Closed hubs – this refers to groups of schools who are working collaboratively to support each other. The support is only on offer to those within the group.

Open hubs – this refers to a school or group of schools who are happy to provide support to any local school who may need emergency backup support.

Home school - this refers to the school that an eligible pupil normally attends.

Host school – this refers to the open or closed hub school who might have pupils temporarily joining the school.

Key principles for hubs

- All home schools retain ultimate responsibility for their eligible pupils, whatever hub arrangements are in place.

- Hubs are not drop in facilities and pupil attendance at a hub will be pre-arranged and agreed between the host and home schools.
- All hubs will have a designate hub lead, in most instances, the Head of the host school, and a hub deputy who will retain operational responsibility for the site. This includes all day-to-day arrangements for the hub.
- The designated hub lead will base their hub management decisions on government and LA guidance and in line with the best interests of pupil and staff from the schools within the hub.
- Hub leads, in collaboration with the partner schools, will be responsible for making appropriate decisions about all aspects of the hub including the age range that could be appropriately cared for within the setting (dependent on the facilities and available staffing), the timing of the day, the hub model and the working arrangements.
- Hub leads will commit to establishing effective working relationships between the home and host schools and implementing robust communication.
- The relevant AEO and/or the SIA will function as the intermediary to support hubs and connect them to schools who are no longer able to access closed hub support.

Hub models

Hubs are likely to function in a range of ways, for example:

1. Hubs may require eligible pupils to be accompanied by staff from their home school and could, in effect, be running a 'school within a school' model.
2. Hubs may accept individuals or groups of pupils and staff from home schools to join current groups within the host school.
3. The staff of either the home or the host school may be shared to enable continuity of provision, in either location.

Leadership and areas of responsibility

Leadership of hubs will be based on the principles outlined above. The areas of responsibility between the home and the host schools need to be clearly communicated at the outset of the arrangement.

There should be a designated school lead on the site at all times. This is likely to be someone on the Leadership Scale but could be an experienced and trusted member. It is down to the leads professional judgement to make the staffing arrangements appropriate to the number of children and young people that will access the provision. The lead should ideally be trained in the DSL role (designated safeguarding lead) however if this is not possible, they must know how to access advice from and have access to a DSL in case of an issue arising.

Staffing

When resourcing the provision, schools will want to take into consideration the number of staff who are available and volunteer, the qualifications, skills and experience of those staff and critically, the number and young people that will require access to the provision to ensure it is staffed appropriately.

Planning should include consideration of the use of rotas, scheduling, room usage and break arrangements to ensure social distancing is maintained where possible. Staff from other schools

will need an orientation and clear information about procedures at the host school. Normal good practice will apply such as ensuring that all staff need to wear their ID at all times.

Expectations should be clear about the roles of staff from the home schools. For example, if running a 'school within a school' model, home school staff may be expected to have complete responsibility for their own students whereas if all students are working together, home school staff may be scheduled to work with any of the student groups.

Whatever staffing model is used, you need to ensure that any personal data relating to staff and students is always kept secure. Be mindful of what data you are processing, where it is being stored and how you may be sharing it. Follow this link for more help about data security: <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/school-management/data-and-reporting/access-to-information/information-security>

The Schools' Personnel Service have produced a set of FAQs which provide guidance on a range of staffing issues associated with the current situation, including the need for staff to work more flexibly. This guidance is available via this link:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news/primary/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains the priority and schools should continue to have regard to the principles of statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. However, these are exceptional times and additional guidance has been written by the DfE to help consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual.

<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>

Schools should ensure they have in place arrangements which are proportionate to the risks presented, for example, they should have access to a DSL if it is not possible to have a DSL on site. The Education Safeguarding Service have developed a hub toolkit and resources to help consider what needs to be in place.

If further advice is needed on safeguarding issues, please telephone the Education Safeguarding Service. Contact information, including phone numbers can be found via <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts>

The safeguarding toolkits can be found via https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/106210/COVID-19-Safeguarding-Toolkit-for-Education-Settings.pdf

The Education Safeguarding Service have produced a hub safeguarding tool kit and a range of templates to support hubs including the following:

- A hub CP induction leaflet
- Hub safeguarding training
- Collection guidance
- Suitability letter
- Safeguarding record front sheet
- Online safeguarding guidance

This can be found via this link

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/file/0006/106746/Hub-Safeguarding-Toolkit-and-Appendices.zip

Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Children with an EHCP should be risk assessed by the school, in consultation with the LA and families, to decide whether they should attend or whether their needs can be met at home.

For children with a social worker, including Children in Care (Looked After Children) and those subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan, the expectation is that they will attend an education setting, as long as they do not have an underlying health condition which would put them at severe risk.

Senior leaders, especially DSLs, know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.

Social workers in Kent have been using a variety of ways to remain in contact with their allocated families and are encouraging parents to send their children to school where it is safe to do so. Some of the families are self-isolating and this is influencing their decision as to whether they will send their children. In these cases, the social workers are continuing to encourage the children to attend when safe to do so and will respond accordingly if their concerns increase as a result of non-attendance.

Home schools know from their own records the children who have additional needs, including vulnerable children. Arrangements should already be in place where DSLs and pastoral teams are contacting these families to be assured their needs are being met. Home school DSLs are encouraged to communicate with the allocated social worker to discuss any child or young person they believe should be at school and is not, particularly where there has been no contact from the district social work team and where schools' own enquires or follow up with the family do not reassure DSLs of a child's safety or welfare.

Regular meetings will still take place, for example Child Protection Conferences and Child in Need meetings and the home school for the child will need to have arrangements in place to attend these meetings remotely. Concerns or issues regarding attendance can be shared in these meetings, if appropriate.

For schools who have vulnerable pupils attending, if there are any immediate child protection concerns please contact the Front Door directly on [03000 411111](tel:03000411111).

First Aid and Fire Wardens

Where possible schools should ensure that there is a provision of first aiders and fire wardens during school hours. Where this is not possible due to these extraordinary circumstances, the school must draft a plan to explain alternative arrangements and emergency procedures to be followed. This plan must include a named responsible / nominated person who takes charge of an emergency situation and coordinate the response. The plan should also be shared with all staff working at the site.

Social distancing

Please follow the guidance issued by the DfE about social distancing in Education via

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

As you plan your provision, you should consider, amongst other things:

- ensuring children, parents, carers and staff know not to enter the school if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- ways of keeping class sizes as small as possible and rotating staff
- promoting social distancing in all interactions and situations
- scheduling of drop off and pickup, room and IT usage, activities, break times and movement to minimise close contact or gatherings
- regular cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces

The best public health advice remains handwashing with soap and hot water and frequent disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces with clean disposable cloth.

Operational detail

The hub school, in discussion with the home schools, will retain the oversight and management of the operational detail within their hub including aspects such as:

- Setting up emergency contact information for schools, staff and parents whilst always considering data protection principles when collecting and using personal data. Follow this link for more information: <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/school-management/data-and-reporting/access-to-information/the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr>
- The home schools are responsible and accountable for the handover of emergency contact details for all pupils attending. The hub school will make decisions about how this information is managed.
- Pupil registration should be in line with the latest DfE guidance on Kelsi re registers and attendance.

Arranging places for pupils

It is each individual schools' responsibility to provide the required places for their own pupils. All schools are expected to have made partnership (closed hub) arrangements to deal with any period where there are no staff to cover their own provision.

In the event that these collaborative arrangements break down, schools should contact the area SIA or AEO for details of open hubs within their district. It is the home school's responsibility to liaise with the leadership of the open hub to confirm:

- Number and dates of pupil places
- Number of home school staff required on each day
- Expectations around the handover of emergency contact and other pertinent information

Teaching & Learning

The hub will need to set the expectations around the work prepared for students however, preparation is essential if the days are to remain interesting for children. Depending on the facilities available, a broad range of activities could be organised including some independent art/craft, increased outdoor sports, web based activities, videos, as well as core subject lessons if appropriate.

There are a wide range of resources on offer on the internet. Lists of useful sites have been collated by KAH and TEP which you might find useful for planning.

KAH <https://kah.org.uk/covid19/resources>

TEP <https://www.theeducationpeople.org/>

The government have also produced a range of high-quality resources which can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>

Communication with parents

Parents will need clear information about any changes to provision and regular ongoing points of contact throughout the relationship with both the home and the host schools. Emergency parent contact details will need to be held by the hub school for the duration of the hosting arrangement.

Keep personal data secure in line with the GDPR/Data Protection legislation. Consider where the personal data is being stored and who has access to it. Think about the impact on a vulnerable person if the information they entrusted you with becomes lost or stolen. Then apply measures to reasonably reduce the risk of that happening.

Provision hours

The Government has stated: “We expect schools to operate as close as possible to their normal hours. Where possible, we would encourage breakfast club and after school provision to help support the children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response.” Schools should note the use of the phrase ‘where possible’. We know from data collected that a significant number of breakfast and after-school clubs have been suspended. We appreciate the tremendous pressure school staff are under, but also the importance of such clubs to critical workers in particular. Where possible, including through the use of suitable volunteers, we would ask schools deliver these services, but we respect the fact this may not be possible at this time. Responsibility for communication of timings needs to be agreed between the home and host school.

Hub leads will know their parents best and we would ask that they liaise with them to find out what hours would enable them to carry out their employment as key workers. This will have to be balanced with the staff you have available to ensure safe provision.

Catering

Where possible hubs will have a hot meals service available, either via on site facilities or food being transported in. The hub would, therefore, be able to make free school meals available to eligible pupils on behalf of home schools. Where a meals service is not available, all families will be asked to send their child with a packed lunch.

Home schools will need to liaise with their hub regarding the meal arrangements in place. It will be for the home school to determine whether it is providing its eligible free school meal children regularly attending the hub meal vouchers or requesting the hub give them with a meal. If the latter, home schools and the hub will need to track the numbers of meals provided and reconcile financially at a later date.

The DfE have issued guidance for free school meals which can be accessed via

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>

This includes information about the FSM voucher system which can be accessed if there is no other option available. Local guidance is also available from

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/106368/FSM-Guidance.pdf

Transport

If the child or young person has already been assessed as eligible for free school transport, this will continue to be provided to the new hub. It may not be possible to provide the same vehicle or driver that the child is used to travelling with and there may be some changes to public bus networks that impact a child's usual travel arrangements. It is also possible that there may be some unavoidable short-term interruptions in transport while these changes are organised. We will work to keep these disruptions to a minimum. Please contact homeschooltransport@kent.gov.uk to inform them of any required changes.

If the child or young person is not currently eligible for free school transport, parents will need to [apply](#) and transport will be provided if they meet KCC's [transport criteria](#).

Costs and funding for additional costs

Arrangements for cost that can be attributed to the home school, such as the cost of meals, will need to be agreed between the hub and the home school.

KCC will be providing schools with a proforma to capture additional costs related to Covid-19. All additional hub running or additional cleaning costs related to hub provision should be included on this. A record of these costs needs to be kept to ensure a successful claim can be made.

Governance

Governing Boards should ensure that there are effective communication systems in place between the home school and the hub school. They should ensure that the Headteacher of the hub school has been given the appropriate information from the home school with regard to any additional needs that the pupils attending may have and that staff have the appropriate resources for those pupils. They should ensure that the LA Safeguarding Toolkit is available to all staff and have had sight of this as Governors.

The hub school policies will apply, this could be pertinent in relation to GDPR issues, Health and Safety etc. The GB should ensure that the hub school are operating in the way determined by the government and Local Authority in all matters relating to CoVID19 and appropriate guidance documents.

We expect further guidance for governors from the DfE after Easter. Work with governors should follow a common-sense approach which does not put barriers in place where we should be supporting.

If Governors require any further guidance, they can contact their Area Governance Officer or the Governor Services Team at governorservices@theeducationpeople.org who will be available to discuss any specific issues.

GDPR

The Information Commissioner (ICO) has said that they understand that the you might need to share information quickly or adapt the way you work, and that data protection will not stop you doing that.

The ICO has also reassured us that they won't penalise organisations that they know need to prioritise other areas or adapt their usual approach during this extraordinary period.

The ICO can't extend statutory timescales, but they will tell people through their own communications channels that they may experience understandable delays when making information rights requests during the pandemic.

If you need more help, call the ICO on [0303 123 1113](tel:03031231113)

Insurance

All schools have liability insurance in place, which covers their own staff and pupils and visitors to site. Where KCC schools are working in hub, all schools will have insurance. If KCC pupils and /or staff are being sent into host Academies, it might be prudent to check that their insurance is up to date. Dynamic risk assessment should be taking place to ensure that the provision and activities for those children accessing school is safe.

If there are further questions, please contact Lee Manser on Lee.Manser@kent.gov.uk

Sharing approaches and resources between hubs

Thank you to the Kent Heads who shared their thoughts and experiences as this guidance was developed. Many have also shared templates and resources that anyone working in a hub may find useful. To access these or to share documents that you have produced, please contact business.support@theeducationpeople.org