

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

COVID-19 Annex

Coronavirus information and support for Learners

Virtual Learning UK (VLUK) announced that from Monday 23 March 2020, it will close its centres until further notice. This follows the announcement made by the Prime Minister on Wednesday 18 March, ordering schools and colleges to close in order to reduce the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19.

Virtual Learning UK (VLUK) is introducing the following measures:

- Teaching will continue via on-line learning channels. Timetables will remain the same. If any amendments are to be made then all learners, staff and parents will be informed in advance.
- The government has announced that GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics exams will not be taking place in May and June, but learners will still receive their qualifications. Further information will be provided as soon as possible.

Virtual learning support

Our Education sites are closed; however, learning continues online. VLUK is here to help learners continue their studies and achieve the best possible outcome.

VLUK is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This commitment remains the same in the difficult circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak. During this period the principles and practices of VLUK's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Safeguarding Procedures (including the Code of Conduct) will continue to apply.

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of children whilst working in extraordinary circumstances, VLUK will adhere to the DfE coronavirus guidance:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#)

In practice, the following procedures will apply:

Designated Safeguarding Lead

There will always be a nominated DSL available, contactable by phone or online video. Where a DSL is not available a Senior Leader will take responsibility for safeguarding.

Neil Ouldrige : VLUK Lead Safeguarding Officer & Designated Safeguarding Lead - Midland sites

Craig Sumner: VLUK Designated Safeguarding Lead Northern Sites

Kat Brown: VLUK Designated Safeguarding Lead Southern Sites

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Learners or parents with a safeguarding concern should telephone or e-mail the relevant DSL to share their concerns using the details below:

Neil Ouldrige : 07871 272274, neil.oultridge@vluk.org

Craig Sumner: 07814 183018, craig.sumner@vluk.org

Kat Browne: 07925 884775, kat.browne@vluk.org

Vulnerable Children

Where necessary, VLUK will continue to work with and support children's social workers and local authorities to help protect vulnerable children. This will include liaising with relevant providers and ensuring that vulnerable children and those on the edge of receiving social care support can attend a site if appropriate.

Remote Learning

VLUK will provide a safe environment for online learning. All learners and staff must remind themselves of and adhere strictly to the Online Safety Policy.

Pastoral Support

We recognise that an educational establishment can be a protective factor for children and young people, and that the current circumstances could affect the mental health of learners and their parents. Staff will be in regular contact with learners and will continue to be vigilant for signs of safeguarding risk or emotional distress.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the DSL as outlined above. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Pastoral concerns will be addressed initially by the tutor, who may involve the site leader depending on the nature of the issue.

All safeguarding and pastoral concerns will be logged on the behaviour log or Notification Form in the usual manner.

Learners or parents with a pastoral or educational concern should contact the VLUK Tutor in the first instance.

Where a learner is already known as being in need, the DSL will ensure that a regular communication plan is in place for that learner and record the outcomes to ensure their safety is maintained during this period. This may include email, phone or online video contact. The plan will be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

Ongoing general updates and developments in relation to coronavirus will be communicated to all relevant parties concerned.

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Mental health support

Recognising that a period of social distancing or self-isolation can have an impact on mental health and wellbeing, VLUK is providing information about external services which are available to give online support.

During this time, it is important to look after your mental wellbeing as well as your physical health.

There are services available to you if you need to talk. These include online and/or telephone services who will listen and help if needed.

The [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website has more advice in their [staying at home guidance](#)

Kooth

- Online counselling service (available for under 18s only)
- Monday – Friday 12pm – 10pm
- Saturday – Sunday 6pm – 10pm

www.kooth.com

Samaritans

- Call 116 123 or visit the website
- Helpline or email service – not just for crisis
- Available 24/7

www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan

Shout

- Text Shout to 85258
- 24/7 free text service

www.giveusashout.org

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Winston's Wish

- Support for bereaved children and young people
- Helpline for parents/families
- Email and online chat support services
- Online resources

www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you