

Safe and Well Checks Conversation Guide



KD Safeguarding

Many families will welcome support. A friendly face by video call or voice over the phone maybe more than enough to help most people to feel connected and cared about. For the majority, simply keeping in touch maybe all we need to do. But we know that the context we are all living in has changed, we need to consider risk within the evolving context of COVID-19. Just like before, there will be some families who need more support than others and we are now thinking differently about how we offer that support. This guide has been designed to help you consider all the different aspects of undertaking a whole school approach to safe and well checks during school closure.

Planning and preparation

- Think about each child and family. Scale your concerns balanced against their strengths and protective factors. Consider how this may have changed in the context of COVID-19. For example, how many adults are there in the household? What support can they safely access from wider family and friends? What coping strategies do they have? Living conditions and access to outdoor space?
- Consider any language barriers or learning difficulties and how you can overcome this.
- When you have considered the different factors, use a tiered approach to help you decide what level of support is appropriate – Remember, this will need to be reviewed regularly as circumstances change.
- Where other agencies are involved, co-ordinate a communication plan for the child and family – Who will make contact, how and when. Agree how concerns and information will be shared.
- Let children and families know how they might be contacted, when, who by and what they can expect to be spoken to about. Provide information about how they can share concerns.
- Have access to resources that will help you to signpost families to support. This may include a list of helplines and organisations or referral mechanisms e.g. Local foodbanks, early help, housing, mental health, benefit advice, free school meal vouchers, domestic abuse, social care etc.

Keep yourself safe

Whilst we have adapted the way we interact; we should never compromise our safer working practice. Always follow your code of conduct and maintain your professional standards. Here is some additional advice to support you to keep yourself safe.

- If you are video or conference calling, think about where the recording is taking place. Ensure personal and sensitive information or data cannot be seen in the background.
- If you are using a platform to connect, you should only use those with a school account. Check privacy and security settings and consider whether it is age-appropriate.
- Confidential information should not be discussed within earshot of family members. Consider who can hear you and fully turn off smart home devices e.g. Alexa.
- Disable location on your device settings if you are undertaking the contact from your home address.
- Ensure you are appropriately dressed.
- Hide your contact number and IP address if it has been agreed with SLT that you will need to use your personal device to contact families.
- Undertake online teaching in groups and ask parents to remain in the room. Ensure private chat is disabled.
- Obtain parental consent to talk to children.
- Consider any additional safeguarding measures you can take where one to one contact with a child needs to take place. For example, ask the parent to remain in the room and use loudspeaker. If you need to talk to the child away from their parent, consider adding an appropriate colleague to the call.
- Be alert to any child protection and safeguarding concerns and know what to do if you are worried about a child – Observe what's happening in the background, how does everyone look and sound? Any changes to mood or appearance?
- Ensure you know how to access resources and organisations that can support parents and carers e.g. online safety, mental health, food banks, domestic abuse.
- Ask your IT Lead for any technical support you may need.

Quality conversations

- Remember – We're here to help! Be positive and optimistic. This period isn't forever, and we will get through it together.
- Let the person know that you are calling to see how they are getting on. The call is there to support both the child and the parents/carers.
- Consider your communication style – Use a supportive and non-threatening tone, pitch and pace. Listen and show care and empathy within your responses.
- Encourage the parent/child to talk by asking open questions and allowing time and space for them to respond at their own pace. If you are uncertain of what they mean, clarify what they have said and don't make assumptions.
- Be professionally curious. Ask probing follow-up questions, for example, if there is only one adult in a household with young children, and they tell you that they are managing to go to the shops – Ask 'who is caring for the children while you're out?'
- Use open questions and sentence starters, such as 'tell; explain and describe; what; where; when; who? how?'
- If any concerns arise during your conversation, explain the concern in a clear and respectful way. Be honest about your role, remind them you are there to help. For example, 'It sounds like things are getting difficult for you, I'm worried about how you are coping right now. How would it feel to talk to... they may be able to help?'

Key questions

Use the key questions to help you plan your conversation and assess the level of support a family may need. Select the questions based on what you need to know or check out since the last time you had contact with them. We need to make sure that our conversations do not become a 'tick box' exercise. You know your children and families best, these questions are intended to support the natural flow of your 'safe and well' conversations – So adapt, personalise and add your own.

- How are you? How are your family?
- What have you been doing?
- How are you keeping in touch with people?
- Is there anyone/anything you are worrying about?

- Who is at home with you? Is there more than one adult in your household at the moment? Are any of you Key Workers?
- If only one adult, is there anyone you can contact in an emergency? What is your support network?
- Is everybody well at the moment?
- Does anyone in your household have underlying health conditions? Is anyone required to shield?
- Does your child take any medication/Are you able to get hold of it?
- Do you know how to contact your doctor?
- Have any other Services been in contact with you over the last few weeks? If so, who? [e.g. Health / Social Care]
- Do you have enough supplies for intimate care? e.g. nappies
- Do you have enough food for him/her? [especially if child only eats certain foods]
- Do you have a child friendly garden or access to safe outdoor space?
- How is your child coping with not being able to go out?
- How are you managing with having your child at home all day?
- Are you getting enough sleep?
- How would you describe your mood over the last few days? Have you noticed a change in your mood? If so, how?
- What things are helping you to cope?
- Is there anything else we can help you with?

Make it fun

Try 'Since the last time we spoke quiz'. You can adapt the questions to suit the age and understanding of each child or mix and match with some of your own. Ask the child to pick a number between 1 and 30 and ask the correlating question. It can be a fun way to find out how things have been and how they are feeling and coping. The last time we spoke quiz....

1. What made you laugh the most?
2. What has worried you the most?
3. What's the kindest thing you've done for someone else?
4. Your favourite meal?
5. What's the worst meal you've eaten?
6. Who has annoyed you the most?
7. Who have you been closest to?

8. What things have you done to make yourself feel good?
9. Something that has confused you?
10. Something that you have found interesting?
11. Something you wished that you could have done
12. Someone you wish you could have seen?
13. Who has made you laugh?
14. Someone who made you feel happy?
15. Someone who made you feel safe?
16. Something you've been thinking about but not said out loud?
17. A dream you've had?
18. Have you had any arguments?
19. Something you've been proud of?
20. Something you have enjoyed?
21. What has surprised you?
22. Best thing you've watched on TV is?
23. The worst thing you've watched on TV is?
24. The best or your favourite memory/thing you've done?
25. Your dream or wish for the future?
26. One thing you wish hadn't happened?
27. One thing you wish had happened?
28. If you could change one thing?
29. Something you've done that you would like to do again?
30. Something you've learned about yourself?

Reflect, record and review

- Using the agreed system, record the name(s) of who you spoke to, the method of contact, the date, time and duration.
- Did you speak to the child? If not, what was the reason? What level of concern does this raise?
- Use descriptive and respectful language to record your contact. If you are concerned, explain the reason for your concern. What is your evidence-base?
- Note any key points of the conversation or video call, including observations made about appearance, mood, tone, background

observations and interactions. Has anything changed since the previous contact?

- Use scaling tools to rate responses to questions or your overall assessment of the contact. This will help you to notice and track any changes between contacts.
- Record any agreed actions or advice given.

**Always speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead
about any safeguarding concerns**