



Safeguarding: School Holiday Arrangements

Policy:	Safeguarding – School Holiday Arrangements
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At the Upper Nidderdale Primary Federation, we recognise that the school holidays mean that some pupils might face difficult situations, impacting their wellbeing and safety, without the support and protection of school. We would all hope that children's experiences of holidays are fulfilling and safe, however, the reality is, that for many they lose the 'safe haven' of school life and such times immerse children into anxious, difficult, unpredictable, and sometimes unsafe environments. This is why we need to be mindful and most importantly, prepared.

We maintain a mentality that 'it could happen here.' We know our pupils best and are best placed to spot any worrying changes or causes for concern.

Possible Safeguarding Issues

We recognise that for some families, the school holidays can present extra challenges, especially if there are already difficulties in the family home. It is common for extended families to come together over a holiday period, so long-standing issues within families could be heightened. Children might face difficult situations that could lead to new safeguarding issues.

We are aware that some of our pupils might be exposed to:

- Domestic abuse
- Lack of basic care, such as heat, shelter or food
- Eviction, moving around in temporary housing or homelessness
- Parents or carers with mental health or addiction issues
- A generally stressful home environment

There could also be increased risks of both child sexual abuse and child-on-child sexual abuse, as pupils sometimes share bedrooms or even beds with siblings, cousins and friends.

Pupils might spend more time alone

Families facing financial pressures might struggle to afford activities or childcare, so pupils might spend more time at home alone or without any/enough supervision over the holidays.

Some pupils might spend more time:

- **Online** and be exposed to more online risks, such as harmful content, cyber-bullying, grooming (including child sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation) and radicalisation
- **Out and about**, making them more available and vulnerable to groomers, gang members or extremists, to find and target

Pupils might be taken out of the country

The school holidays allow families time to travel abroad without worrying about school attendance. This makes some children more at risk of different forms of so-called "honour"-based abuse, such as:

- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Faith-based abuse

Forced marriage and FGM are **illegal** in the UK, and teachers have a [statutory duty](#) to **personally** report cases of FGM on girls under 18 to the police (as well as reporting to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)).

What do we do as a Federation?

Before the school holidays

We believe that it is vital that all staff are made aware to be extra vigilant, especially for those children that may be most vulnerable or at risk, by observing and recording any changes in behaviour or issues. The DSL team put robust safety plans in place, including updating any external services currently involved with families, such as social care or Early Help.

Our Federation CAPSO will contact families that we know to be vulnerable (e.g. where we know domestic violence has occurred in the household, or where we have supported with food banks). The CAPSO will ask if any support is needed to support the family during the holidays. The CAPSO will signpost any families to the appropriate support where appropriate.

The CAPSO will make contact with families where pupils have been identified as red – requiring substantial SEMH support.

We educate all children on potential risks, such as reminders about online safety, physical risks as well as personal safety. This includes embedding the message to children that it is okay for them to say 'no' if they feel unsafe, or unsure, and ensuring that they know how to contact emergency services, relevant local support services and other helpline services such as Childline, if needed.

The CAPSO provides all parents and carers with contact details of local and national organisations and charities that can offer relevant support such as food banks, debt management, mental health crisis care, social care, substance abuse, or bereavement support. Domestic abuse and / or violence is one of the main themes featuring in safeguarding situations, so it is essential that details of local and national support services are known and shared. This includes contact details for the specialist Police teams. This is shared via social media.

During the school holidays

During the school holidays, the DSL team will ensure that the DSL emails are monitored and will action any incidents that they are alerted to, such as Operation Encompass. A rota will be organised before the holidays and the DSL team will be made aware.

The DSL team will identify any particularly vulnerable families that we feel contact should continue during the holidays. The CAPSO will make weekly contact with these families during the holidays.

After the school holidays

As pupils return, we will remind them of reporting systems and who they can talk to if they need help or support.

The DSL team will use the start of term to:

- Check in with pupils who have a case with social services or are receiving early help, especially if they haven't heard from the relevant services
- Have conversations with individual pupils who are vulnerable, or who they might have concerns about, and encourage staff to do this too

All staff will be encouraged to look out for changes in pupils as they return to school

Any significant changes in pupils as they return to school might suggest something could be wrong.

Changes in appearance

Ask yourself:

- Has the pupil lost or gained a lot of weight?
- Are they wearing very different clothing, or have new possessions?
- Do they look rested?

Sometimes a lack of change can also be an indicator of a concern. For example:

- Are they wearing uniform that's either too small, or doesn't look like it's been washed over the break?

Behaviour or mood

Ask yourself questions such as:

- Are they acting differently compared with last term? For example, are they:
 - Being unkind to other pupils?
 - Hyper-vigilant, anxious or on edge?
 - Agitated or irritable?
- Has their behaviour become worse?
- Are they showing new hostility towards a group of people, such as women? This could suggest they've been exposed to extreme content online, or pornography

Any contacts made will be recorded on CPOMS

Linked Policies

- Attendance Policy
- Children in Care Policy
- CPOMS Use Policy
- DSL Supervision Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy