Dear All,

In response to the Governments announcement requiring schools to close indefinitely as of Friday, we wanted to write to you about keeping your staff healthy and safety and the building safe during the coming weeks whilst schools are closed.

I will address these issues on a topic by topic basis, as listed below. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the H&S Team on [\_healthandsafety@slough.gov.uk](mailto:_healthandsafety@slough.gov.uk) or phone 01753 875046 (phones will be transferred to mobiles at all times and staff have laptops and access to all necessary systems if they are working from home).

**Your Staff**:

* During this time there is much uncertainty which can cause staff (and pupils) much anxiety and stress. Hence we want to encourage you to keep in touch with staff as much as possible. This can be achieved via emails, 1-2-1 phone calls or through group chats using systems such as:
  + Whatsapp Group Calling and video calls for up to 4 people
  + Skype – conference calls for up to 50 people
  + Zoom for up to 100 people
  + Group Face time chats – invites up to 32 people
* Remind staff that they can access the school’s employee assistance service which normally includes counselling or that they can contact charities that provide free counselling services
* Provide them with work to keep a sense of purpose – routine is a good thing.
* Set in place systems for staff to raise concerns or issues – so that they are responded to in a timely manner, so they don’t feel ignored and get frustrated.
* DSE: Remind staff working at home to set up their workstations as close as possible to the preferred workstation position and to regularly take breaks to exercise. Please find attached some flyers that you can distribute out to staff on this topic. Where possible staff with pre-existing conditions should complete DSE Assessments.
* Lone working: this must be managed in line with the school policy, so that no one is at risk during this time. Please also consider the impact of fire and review your procedures for emergency evacuations in light of reduced staffing.
* If you need any specific advice, please contact us.

**Pupils in schools:**

* The school must continue to apply all the government advice, available on the public Health England website https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england to pupils and staff within the building. This should include the regular handwashing, maintaining a high level of cleaning and social distancing (reducing the number of pupils sat around each table)
* If you have keyworker or vulnerable pupils in schools you must ensure that all escape routes are unlocked to ensure rapid escape. Be aware that if you have pupils of different age groups in just a few classrooms, they may not be familiar with their new escape routes, hence you will need to practice this with them.
* Please do not go out on any trips into the community.
* Ensure that rooms that are not in use are kept locked so that pupils cannot inadvertently access equipment or chemicals that they should not be exposed to.
* Please ensure that you remind site controllers not to leave tools or chemicals lying around the school, as they may do in holidays. The school is still operating and hence they should adhere to the same term time rules at all time.
* Ensure that any contractors on site, sign in and following the schools normal operating procedures regarding safeguarding and hygiene.
* Ensure you have some first aid cover – for example a 1 day appointed first aider

**Record Keeping**

* At this time schools still have a responsibility to ensure that their codes of practice are still followed, hence all accidents on site still need to be formally recorded, any administration of medication must be recorded and risk assessments must still occur.
* Please also note where there is a change in the way you are delivering your classes / activities the risk assessment for those classes and activities should be reviewed to ensure that that the risk have not changed and that the control measures are still effective. If they are not still effective you will need to look to implementing additional control measures to make the activity / class safe. Any new hazards introduced, due to the way of working must also assessed.

**The Building**

The building needs to be managed and maintained during this period, otherwise it could generate other problems later down the line. Hence please manage it as you do in the summer holidays:

* + Ensure that it is kept secure and safe at all times – as there is potential for vandals to break in and for arsonists during this time.
  + Ensure that your site controllers continue with all of your internal compliance (maintenance, testing and inspections) of equipment: this is particularly important for fire and legionella management. Please ensure that you keep the boilers on at over 60+ degrees and ensure that you weekly flush little used outlets. This could mean that all outlets need to be flushed if the school is completed closed.
  + External Compliance Contractors: We recommend that you contact all of your contractors for all items of equipment to seek reassurances regarding their business continuity plan so that you know what equipment will be serviced and any that might not.
  + If contractors cannot or will not come out to the building during this time, you MUST keep a register of this and ensure that the equipment has passed its required testing and maintenance before the school is reopened.
  + Furthermore – if this does occur, you must assess the risk of the maintenance or testing not occurring, determine what you can do to mitigate this risk, and determine if you can continue to use the equipment or keep the school open for key worker / vulnerable children. For example if your electronic gates cannot be tested, this is less of a risk, than if your fire alarm, showing a fault and not being able to be repaired.
  + Ensure that chemicals are appropriately stored so that there are no likely spillages or leaks. Please do not increase the strength of the use of any cleaning chemicals that you may have, in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID19 without contacting the manufacturer for advice and undertaking a COSHH assessment.
  + Continue with your cleaning regime in areas of use

**Secondary School Information**

* Preparing D&T for close down: Please refer to the CLEAPSS guidance on the attached document.
* Preparing science for close down: Please refer to the CLEAPSS guidance on the attached document.
* WE recommend the science department undertake visual inspections of their gas taps and the pipework leading to these units as per CLEAPSS guidance…to ensure that there is not a gas leak during this period.
* Ensure all Gas systems are switched off, before closing down.
* CLEAPSS can be contacted for advice on: 01895 251496 or visit their website on: www.cleapss.org.uk

**Business Continuity**

As a school, this is a really crucial time to review your Business Continuity Planning to determine what is actually working and where improvements can be identified and what else needs to be implemented during this season, particularly moving forward as the situation changes.

**Our Business Continuity (H&S Team) at this time:**

At this time we will not be visiting schools unless it is absolutely necessary, so that we do not carry anything between the schools. However, I can confirm that:

* + We are available on email [\_healthandsafety@slough.gov.uk](mailto:_healthandsafety@slough.gov.uk) (this is a joint email box that the five members of the H&S team have access to at all times)
  + You can contact each adviser individually on their direct email address listed below
  + Call us on our land line number :01753 875742 or 01753 875046. Please note that if we are not in the office, they will be forwarded to the H&S advisers mobile phones.

We appreciate that you have a lot of issues to consider at this time, and we hope that this information will be helpful in ensuring that everyone is kept safe now, during the coming weeks and months and ready for when operations return to normal.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the H&S Team on the numbers below. We are more than happy to support you in any way we can.

Regards,



Robin Pringle

H&S Manager Slough Borough Council on behalf of the whole H&S Team

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