

Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children during Covid 19

The roles and responsibilities for Local Authorities and for schools have been laid out in the DfE document [Safeguarding Schools and other providers](#). As part of the Local Authority response to monitoring Vulnerable children we have agreed, together with schools to put in place a comprehensive monitoring system to ensure we have a shared understanding of the vulnerable groups and their families. In order to support this all schools have been provided with a template to return to the LA which provides key information about the pupils on a pre-populated list and any others who they feel may be vulnerable at this time. Schools were provided with a RAG rating system and an escalation flow chart as shown below. **The RAGs provided by schools will be agreed by the school, SENCO if appropriate and other professionals working with the family and adjustments will be agreed as needed. The actions required are shown below.**

RED rating - These children should be in school as they are at greatest risk.

The DfE have made clear that *“There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an educational setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an educational setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and educational setting should explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.”* If the child is not in school, follow your safe to school procedures (i.e. telephone call by 9.30am). If child does not return to school, allocate a key worker and have daily check in by *phone/email and an ‘eyes on’ **skype call once a week to see the child. You should notify your DSL immediately so they can contact the social worker or escalate if the child does not have one. **Concerns about children in care (RED) should be escalated to the Area Learning Advocate in the first instance as per the Virtual school guidance note sent to all schools.** Calls to the MASH should only be made when they would normally be necessary. You can however refer to the EWOs or safeguarding leads.

Children in this category include: this is not an exhaustive list and schools need to use their professional judgement to include children who they feel should be in this category:

- Child protection
- CIN – if due to direct factors, immediate impact on the family home, children with significant safeguarding concerns that are ongoing but have not yet made threshold (there is an assumption that something will soon happen to meet threshold), families who have recently moved down from CP.
- Any child we know who is living in a home with DV, drug and alcohol abuse and adults with serious mental health issues
- Any child who may be a young carer for someone in their home, e.g. their parents, younger or older siblings, with little or no protective factors and support
- Any child living with a violent sibling where the parent is not a strong protective factor
- Any CIC where the placement is vulnerable/breaking down (Notify your ALA of any concerns as per Virtual School guidance)
- Any child who is known to be involved with County Lines or a victim of exploitation
- If the child is at high risk of FGM
- Homelessness

AMBER rating

Allocate a key worker who will introduce themselves to the family and contact at least twice a week and speak to the child during a call*. If you are concerned please notify your DSL who if necessary, will then escalate, as per the flow chart below, to the school’s EWO or, if unavailable, send to one of the safeguarding leads named in the links below.

Children in this category include: this is not an exhaustive list and schools need to use their professional judgement to include children who they feel should be in this category:

- CIN – if due to indirect factors – i.e. an estranged parent
- Children who have had some sort of police intervention within the last 6 months
- Any family working at Early Help where there is a broader range of agencies involved to help manage the child’s safety
- A child living with a violent sibling
- Children with EHCPs who have additional health and care needs
- A child with medical needs that are not consistently met by parents.
- A child who is vulnerable in the online environment to exploitation
- A child who has attachment difficulties with their main carers
- A child who has had fixed-term exclusions this academic year
- Families in temporary accommodation or serious debt
- Concerns regarding neglect that don’t meet threshold

GREEN rating

Call* once a week dependent upon level of risk after initial call. First day phone calls should be made for children who are expected by who do not arrive at schools Concerns should be escalated to your DSL as per the flow chart below.

- Children who we know are not always safe when online
- Children with underlying medical conditions that require specific management by the adults in the home
- Parents living with financial difficulties who will struggle during this period.
- Children in Care in secure placements
- Children with SEND with additional support in schools
- Families who are engaging with Early Help successfully

Reassuring phone calls and “eyes on” contact by schools and EWO’s

It is vital that all conversation (phone, video or in person) with parents, regardless of who undertakes them, are logged in an easy to access way (eg spreadsheet) with detail also recorded on the usual school safeguarding log and chronology. (eg CPOMS , Eclipse or ONE).

By setting the RAG rating schools will have agreed (with social workers if involved) the frequency of contact calls home to their vulnerable pupils not attending school, and will also have a first day calling process (for pupils who’ve previously attended that are now absent). Concerns may be alleviated following school phone contact however,

Should concerns persist an escalated an ‘Eyes On’ visit will be required. ‘Eyes On’ can be a skype/video call or home visit. If making a skype call be mindful of the surroundings where staff are situated making that call e.g. a quiet space, backgrounds do not contain any sensitive displays etc. **Ensure you have access to the information you need and calls are made from school devices.** Check who is in the background at the home, is the conversation appropriate for ‘all ears’. Have you considered when the best time for such a call would be?

For any **phone call or ‘Eyes On’** contact ensure you have as much knowledge as possible to make sure you have the fullest possible picture of the child(ren) involved and their family context. Consider the following:

- What are the concerns and the risks to the child at this point in time?
- What do you know about the family in terms of possible risks and protective factors
- What information do school records offer? How does this add to your current concern?
- Are there siblings and if so are there similar concerns? Where siblings attend a different school, have you considered contacting the DSL at this child’s school to see if there is a similar concern at this time and discuss what actions have been taken

Have an idea of the concerns raised for the child and form a bank of questions to support your conversation. Open questions can offer parents the chance to further share information and/or their own concerns. Questions such as:

- ‘I’m just phoning to check that...’,
- ‘We’re a little worried that we’ve not heard from XXX today’.
- ‘Have you managed to get everything from the shops you need?’
- ‘How are you coping with all the children at home?’
- ‘How are you finding the work set by school?’
- ‘Are you managing to keep to agreed routines etc?’
- ‘It would be great to have a chat with XXX’

Remember to have a bank of questions too for the pupil, but try to weave these into an age appropriate conversation.

Where concerns are more specific it’s important to be clear with parents/carers about what your concerns are. Should these concerns reach a level where you are looking to make an enquiry to MASH, it is likely you will require parent’s consent. Where concerns do not warrant a MASH enquiry remember that DSLs/EWOs can contact the consultation line (0345 155 1071) for support.

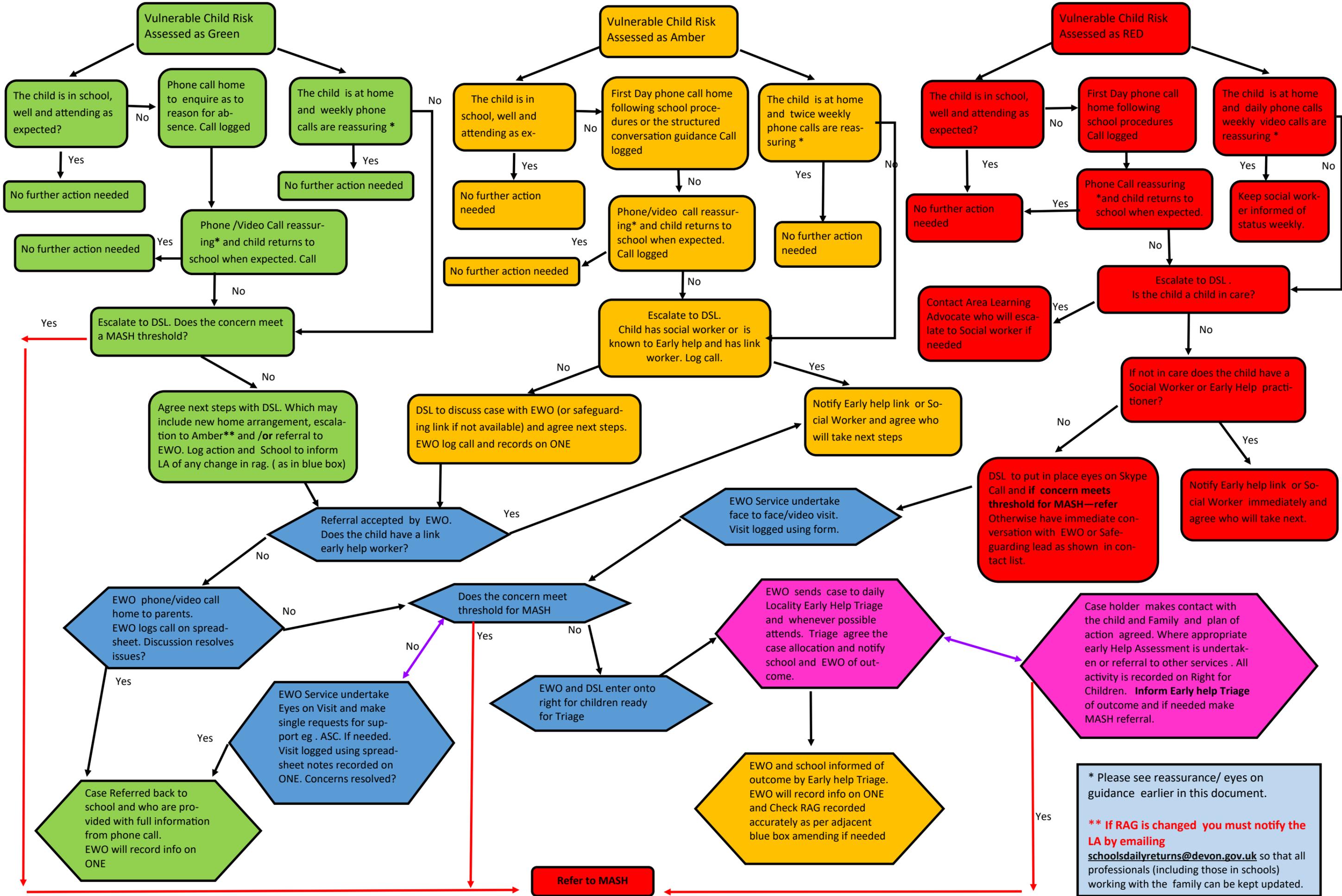
The health and safety of yourself and others is important, if there is a need to make a home visit, **you do not need to enter the home.** Make sure that you

- have your ID with you and appropriate Key Worker documentation if you are travelling.
- have considered the best time for the visit
- have considered whether you can make the visit alone or need another professional in attendance
- **follow the Covid 19 social distancing guidance**

Whatever the ‘Eyes On’ contact outcome it is essential that all conversations and visits are recorded in the pupils safeguarding file and chronology. Should the ‘Eyes On’ conversation escalate concerns follow the appropriate pathway as demonstrated on the flow chart below. **The flow chart is designed to ensure schools are kept informed of the outcome of any escalation they make.**

If as a result of your call/ visit and any follow action the RAG for the pupils is changed you must notify the LA by emailing schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk so that all professionals (including those in schools) working with the family can be kept updated.

Devon's Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children Flow Chart— Implementation Date 14th April



* Please see reassurance/ eyes on guidance earlier in this document.

** If RAG is changed you must notify the LA by emailing schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk so that all professionals (including those in schools) working with the family can be kept updated.

Early Help changed arrangements.

Over this COVID-19 period a strategic level group has been launched to build on work already underway at an Early Help locality level. The aims and objectives of this team are to:

- Ensure the Early Help offer is a robust Devon-wide offer
- Develop an offer that is agile in meeting the changing demands brought about by COVID-19
- Facilitate a clear line of sight to our most vulnerable children and families in Devon
- Ensure robust transitions between universal and statutory services

Early Help Locality Partnership and Triage meetings will continue for North, Mid-East, South and Exeter localities at an increased frequency of Weekly partnership meetings and daily triage meetings. Details of the timings of these meetings and the key contacts for the different localities are shown in the table below. **Ideally children will be added to right for children (Please ensure that you check that the family are not already recorded on the system to avoid duplication) but as a minimum a request for additional Services form (RFAS) should be completed** with the family's details and information of their current circumstances and support being requested. This will enable the panel to make a timely and informed decision. This RFAS should be emailed to the appropriate locality mailbox as below.

Early Help Locality Area	Weekly Locality Partnership Meeting	Daily Triage Meeting	Key Contact ** Early Help Locality Manager
North	Fridays, 12-1pm	Weekdays, 10-11am	Earlyhelpnorthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk **Sarah Simpson sarah.simpson@devon.gov.uk
Mid-East	Mondays, 9:55-10:55am	Weekdays, 1-2pm	Earlyhelpmidwestsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk **Ian Flett ian.flett@devon.gov.uk
South	Tuesdays, 11-12pm	Weekdays, 2-3pm	Earlyhelpsouthsecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk **Karen Hayes karen.hayes@devon.gov.uk
Exeter	Wednesdays, 10-11am	Weekdays, 11-12pm	Earlyhelpexetersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk **James Tisshaw james.tisshaw@devon.gov.uk (Triage)

The project will work with the Early Help Locality Managers to communicate the purposes of these meetings, how babies, infants and children that are not currently known to services will be escalated and how Early Help will work at the interfaces with Education, Social Work, Disabled Childrens Service ,MASH and universal services to ensure robust transitions for children and families to and from Early Help.

Key Contacts

Safeguarding leads contact info is shown below and these staff can be contacted should the EWO not be contactable or for any other safeguarding queries.

Jon Galling	jonathan.galling@babcockinternational.com	07896 421943
Lara Stead	Lara.stead@babcockinternational.com	07734 979190
Caroline Pinsent	caroline.pinsent@babcockinternational.com	07708 316374

Lead EWOs

North– Linda Page	linda.page@babcockinternational.com	01392 287223 /07933 397834
East/mid/ Exeter - Julie Jarman	julie.jarman@babcockinternational.com	01392 287223 / 07850 215439
South– Emma Hamilton	emma.hamilton@babcockinternational.com	01392 287246 07514 926615

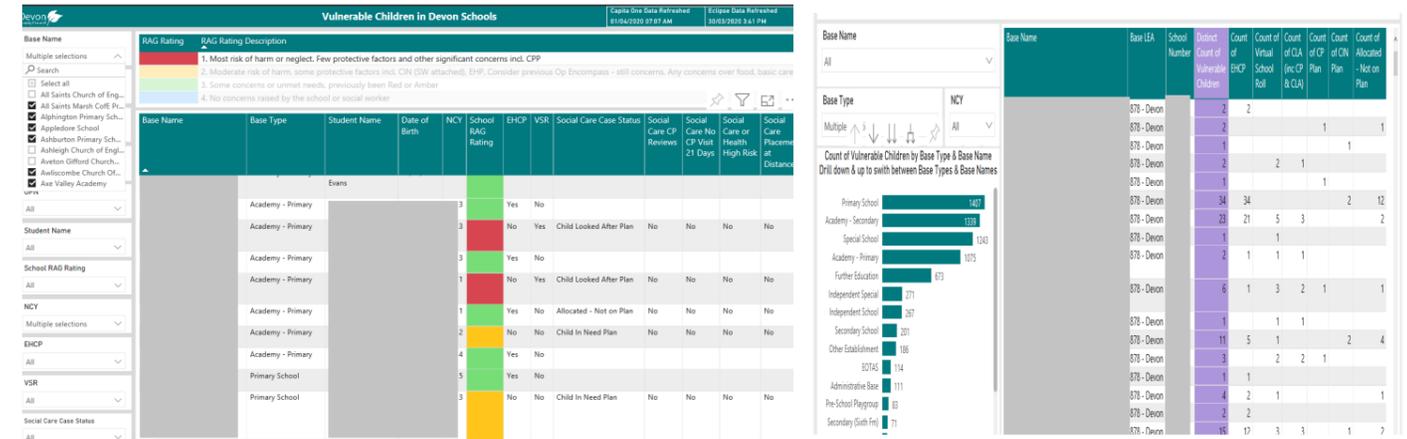
Area Learning Advocates: your first point of contact for Children in Care

North Devon:	kim.piper@devon.gov.uk	07967 681256
Exeter & East Devon:	wendy.ohlson@devon.gov.uk	07791 312694
South & West Devon, (& Adopted/SGO advice):	andrew.squire@devon.gov.uk	07528 940661
Mid Devon & Exeter:	danny.mead@devon.gov.uk	07890 530337

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Schools have provided the Local Authority with their risk assessments and daily attendance records. This information will be combined with information from services such as Social Care and Early Help etc and **will be displayed in an extensive drillable Power BI reporting tool that will allow close monitoring by Devon's Childrens Services in order ensure we keep children safe.** The RAG information includes children from 0 to 25 and the RAG itself will be agreed with other professionals, ie so if schools RAG green but if child is known to the multi agency child exploitation group (MACE) then we may agree the RAG should be amber or red. This will ensure everyone has a shared understanding of risk.

A screen shot of some of the reporting is shown here. Other columns include type of concern, (eg DV, emotional, neglect etc) contact info for school lead and any other professional lead (eg Early help or PHN, Social Worker) and attendance by day.



Quality Assurance

In addition to this reporting, **Local Authority Officers** will take on the role of sampling for QA purposes the schools implementation of the plan by offering appropriate support, advice and challenge. Where concerns remain after challenge with the school these will be escalated to the Head of Education. If concerns exist regarding individual children then the Local Authority Officer will raise these in the first instance with the CEO, Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of school as appropriate. If further escalation is required they will take this up with the Education welfare Officer attached to the school. **ALA's** will quality assure checks on Children in Care.

Through the **Local Learning Community** work, additional quality assurance will be undertaken and if there is a need to collapse schools, appropriate checks and measures will be in place to ensure the monitoring of vulnerable children is secure.

The Missing Education Meeting is a weekly multi disciplinary meeting and includes the MASH Manager, Early Help Manager, Strategic lead for Inclusion, YOT Officer, CME Officer, SEN Officer, Compliance & Policy Officer who are monitoring and tracking children who are identified as 'missing education' or currently missing attending a setting. During COVID-19 period this group will help ensure that children who are now not in a setting are highlighted and appropriate measures and strategies are in place and that there is clarity about the oversight of them and their vulnerabilities.

Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) will inform the local authority daily of the number or escalations received (and their rag rating to) Tis will be sent to schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk.

MASH will provide weekly updates of escalations to MASH from schools/Education Welfare)

Schools will be updated on any changes to social work practice.

SEND Helpline

This helpline is for SENCO's or school leaders who need advice, guidance or support on wide ranging SEN issues. The helpline is now available (term-time) daily from 9-4pm on 01392 287248 or email: LDP-SencoHelpline@babcockinternational.com.

Alternatively contact Jeanette.Savage@babcockinternational.com (Lead for SEND & Inclusion)

Operation Encompass Teachers' Helpline

This helpline for Domestic Abuse work, funded by the Devon and Cornwall Police Commissioner, will operate from 8.30 am - 10.00 am, Monday to Friday and will be staffed by a Child and Educational Psychologist or Clinical Psychologist from Psychology Associates. HELPLINE NUMBER 07562 250050. **You can of course also still use your Babcock Link EP.**