



## Safeguarding Alert – anti-vaccine protests

October 2021

As the vaccine programme for 12-15 year olds begins to roll out in Cornwall, it has been drawn to our attention that groups of anti-vaccine protesters have been gathering at school gates.

Protesters have been observed with megaphones and loud music, encouraging children to film, take photographs and selfies, and use hashtags on social media. Leaflets have also been handed to children.

Whilst the vaccine programme is a polarising issue, and peaceful protest is a legal right, these protests that target children pose a number of safeguarding risks:

- Potential for unauthorised personnel to enter schools
- Road safety risks where there are large gatherings
- Confusing and unsubstantiated information on leaflets handed to young people
- Unauthorised footage of children on social media sites
- Protests continuing beyond the school day, children out later than planned/missing buses
- Children from local primary schools walking home may be drawn into the protests

### What you can do

- Plan in advance – liaise with local police, request advice and guidance ahead of any potential protest;
- Write a formal safety plan in conjunction with staff and ensure this is communicated to parents – often the process of planning gives a new angle and fresh ideas;
- Ensure that staff stay on gates in order to prevent any unauthorised persons entering the school;
- Deploy extra staff to ensure the safety of children leaving school – pay particular attention to road safety outside school where there are large gatherings;
- Reassure children and parents of your awareness of the possibility of protests and the appropriate extra safeguards that are in place;
- Contact the police for advice and, if you are concerned that the protest may involve anti-social behaviour, obstruct the highway or breach the law, request police presence;
- Be aware of attempts at vaccine sabotage and encourage staff to raise the alarm if they observe any suspicious behaviour on or near site;
- Inform other local schools of protests;
- Ensure that pupils and parents are aware that footage of other pupils should not be posted online without their consent. Encourage parents to monitor children's social media usage to ward against this;
- Use the opportunity to have open conversations with children about appropriate social media usage, awareness of fact versus opinion and legal right to protest.



If you would like this information  
in another format please contact:

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