

COVID-19 School closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection and COVID arrangements for national lockdown students who are self- isolating

(Addendum to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

Date: January 2021

To be reviewed as necessary

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Context

From 20th March 2020 until June/September 2020 (dependent upon year group and school circumstances) parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend. Children returned to school from September 2020 to December 2020 with track and trace in place which meant that some were educated at home whilst others attended school. From 5th January 2021 parents were asked once more to keep their children at home if possible, save for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. At the time of updating this document it is unclear when all children will return physically to school.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children – children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact Number	Email
Duty School Safeguarding Lead	Chris Sweet Michael Vassiliou Chris Martin	07379589953	inclusion@standrewtheapostle.org.uk
Local Authority MASH referral details	Barnet	020 8359 4066	mash@barnet.gov.uk
	Enfield	020 8379 5555	childrensmash@enfield.gov.uk
	Haringey	020 8489 4470	mashreferral@haringey.gov.uk
	Hertfordshire	0300 123 4043	protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Those with an EHC plan have been and will be risk-assessed if there are further lockdowns in consultation with the Trust, the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home in the event of a lockdown.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself will not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

- Vulnerable children and young people include those who:
- Are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 including children and young people who have a Child in Need Plan, a Child Protection Plan or who are a looked-after child;
- Have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP);
- Have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities; (including children's social care services) and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance. This might include:

- Children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services or in the process of being referred to children’s social care services
- Adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
- Those at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training)
- Those living in temporary accommodation
- Those who are young carers
- Those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or a quiet space to study)
- Care leavers
- Others at the provider and local authority’s discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health
- A consideration of a child in Year 11 where they may become NEET should also be made.

The guidance from the Department for Education was updated on the evening of Friday 8th January and a key change has been made to minimise the risk of Covid-19 spreading. They have stated that parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support where necessary.

The school will continue to work with and support children’s social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children’s social workers and the local authority Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) for children looked-after and previously looked-after. The lead person for this will be Chris Sweet.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of a child contracting COVID 19, the school will discuss these anxieties with the parent/carer and any relevant social worker/health care professional/education welfare officer. Public Health England may also be consulted.

Bristol Free School will encourage our most vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if applicable (lockdown or self-isolation).

Attendance monitoring

Where there is a full lockdown or self-isolation is in place, all relevant students will be coded ‘X’ on the register.

Children attending on site provision will have their attendance recorded in line with normal school attendance requirements.

Where a lockdown or Tier 4 plus is in place, children who are extremely clinically vulnerable are advised not to physically attend school.

Where teachers are teaching remotely, they will record attendance to each lesson using ClassCharts. This will be determined by students logging in and by their participation in the lesson.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

The school will also challenge unauthorised absences and/or non-attendance to online learning/non completion of set work.

Please also see Procedure – Attendance during remote learning

Where a family is self-isolating awaiting a COVID test or having tested positive, the school will stay in close contact with parents/carers to determine when a child is well enough to participate in school work.

To support the above, the school will, when communicating with parents/carers confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker where relevant.

The school will complete any Government's online attendance form and supply any information regarding attendance requested by the Trust and the Local Authority where relevant.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSLs detailed in our main policy. Contact details are reproduced above.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site during a lockdown. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home. The DSL/DDSL will consult the Headteacher and Lead Adviser where issues arise related to safeguarding to ensure a consistent and proactive response.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and, as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

School staff will have access to the DSL or DDSL.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, this may be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they will continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Verbal disclosures will be by telephone if there is a lockdown. Phone numbers to be used are as above. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay and to record on CPOMS.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns regarding the Headteacher should be directed to the Russell Education Trust, which can be contacted on admin@russelleducationtrust.org.uk

Russell Education Trust will provide support for managing allegations against staff and serious child protection concerns. DSLs/DDSLs will make contact with their Lead Adviser

Safeguarding training and induction

All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 and Annex A Keeping Children Safe in Education. The DSL will communicate any new local arrangements to staff so that they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where staff are newly recruited or new volunteers CS, MV or CM will provide them with an annual update or introductory briefing where applicable. This can be done remotely via Microsoft Teams if necessary (the RET training powerpoint can be emailed in advance of this meeting).

DSL face to face training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID19 virus. For this reason, online training is appropriate where necessary.

All Leadership Team members will ensure they have 'in date' (updated every 2 years) Lead online training. This is available from SafeCIC. See link below.

<https://www.safecic.co.uk/41-online-training/safeguarding-courses/97-leading-on-child-safeguarding-course>

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, the school will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check;
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children;
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the school will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact. From September 2020 (as ever), schools must ensure they see appropriate documents for checks first hand.

Where the school is utilising volunteers, it will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. The Trust advises that new volunteers should not be taken on during a lockdown unless absolutely necessary e.g. for Lateral Flow testing roles. In case of the latter, the Lead Adviser should be informed.

The school will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

The school will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for

making a referral. During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the school will continue to ensure that all staff, volunteers and essential visitors sign in and out of the premises and will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

The school will follow the separate RET guidance for safer recruitment encompassing all of these points and more. This is available on the Headteacher Microsoft Teams shared area.

The school will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The school will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRAs 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral'

Volunteers

The school may use volunteers to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to students and staff members. Other duties may be required such as cleaning down areas and directing people.

Under no circumstances for whom there is no security check or risk assessment be left unsupervised or permitted to work in regulated activity.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already been DBS checked.

All volunteers will receive appropriate training and a safeguarding annual update or briefing (whichever is appropriate)

Online safety

The school's Online Safety Lead is the Duty DSL.

The school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect students when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources.

All staff who interact with children, including online/remotely, will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

The Trust and the school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Teachers will read and comply with RET advice for online learning which is separate to this document and has been sent out in a newsletter to all RET staff in all RET schools on Monday 30th March 2020.

Supporting children not in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Where the DSL/DDSL has identified a student to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that student. All contacts with the student will be recorded on CPOMs.

Contact with children that the DSL/DDSL consider vulnerable (not limited to the government definition) will be made at least once weekly and will be by telephone wherever possible during a lockdown or self-isolation. The responsibility for this contact can be split across the teaching and support staff but all employees must keep the DSL/DDSL up to date. If a family are not contactable, they DSL/DDSL should in the first instance contact the Education Welfare Service and explain concerns. Where the EWS is not working or is also unable to make contact, the DSL will call 111 and ask for a police welfare check. Where concerns related to contact or other aspects of safeguarding arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate and where unsure will discuss with the Headteacher, The Lead Adviser and/or the Trust Safeguarding Lead.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and any communications to families.

The school recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers at the school will take this into consideration when setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. Teachers and support staff will also consider this during the academic year 20.21 when planning for and interacting with students.

Supporting children in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. The school will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend where necessary and flourish.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The school will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement appropriate distancing and continue to follow the advice from the government on handwashing, sanitising and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

The school will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site during a lockdown, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each student.

Where the school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with our RET Lead Adviser.

Where staff are self-isolating awaiting a test result or having tested positive, appropriate measures will be taken to inform those who need this information and to cover lessons and provision appropriately where possible.

Children moving schools

If any students are temporarily attending other schools or transferring to another school, the school will ensure that they provide the receiving school with all relevant welfare and child protection information. Any change of school for looked after children will be led and managed by the Virtual School Headteacher with responsibility for the child.

The school continues to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR and are aware that they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Mental Health

The school is aware that negative experiences and distressing life events such as the current circumstances can affect the mental health of students and their parents.

The school will ensure that appropriate support is in place for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children whilst on site during a lockdown.

The school will continue to offer support to students who are not on site during a lockdown, this will be done remotely or by phone.

The school will ensure that all students have contact details for appropriate support services.

www.kooth.com is a good example of online mental health support for young people.

Peer on peer or child on child abuse

The school recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

The school will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded using the school's procedure and appropriate referrals made

Support from the Multi-Academy Trust

The Multi-Academy Trust Central Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

This includes remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purposes of quality assurance, support, guidance and supervision.

The MAT will also provide group and individual supervision sessions. These may take the form of telephone or online meetings.

Elective Home Education

There is a difference between 'Home Schooling' and 'Elective Home Education'. Home schooling means the child stays on roll and is educated full time by school staff when they are self-isolating or in lockdown (remotely for the most part).

Elective Home Education is where a parent decides to remove a child from the school roll and educate the child themselves. Should any parent be considering EHE, they should contact the school to discuss this. The school has a duty of inform the local authority of any intention to electively home educate.

