

Addendum to Safeguarding Policy 1st June 2020

The current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy does not accurately reflect new arrangements in light of the response to Covid-19. This addendum intends to summarise any key changes to procedures, and supersedes the addendum dated 30th March 2020. This will be subject to frequent review as circumstances continue to evolve and updated information and guidance is published by the Department for Education.

From the week commencing 1st June 2020, the DfE is expecting a phased return of pupils in nursery, reception, Yr1, Yr6 and some face-to-face contact for Yr10. *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019* remains the statutory safeguarding guidance that schools are required to follow, and it is essential that schools continue to be safe places for children to attend.

The most recent guidance from the DfE, published 20th May 2020 states:

‘The way schools and colleges are operating in response to coronavirus continues to be different to business as usual. However, as more children return, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online’

As most children will still not be attending school, these principles present unique challenges at this time. School staff still have a responsibility towards all pupils, not just those accessing education or the childcare provision. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to how we can continue to safeguard all children, whilst ensuring that guidance and legislation is followed with regard to social distancing and minimising risk to children and staff on the school site.

Safeguarding children accessing school

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy remains unchanged with regard to general safeguarding duties for those children accessing school. Staff should continue to report concerns to the DSL and record on CPOMS. However, these additional considerations will apply:

- promoting messages regarding social distancing and frequent, thorough hand-washing for children and staff
- promoting messages regarding social distancing for parents/carers when dropping off/collecting children from school
- children and staff to remain in allocated ‘bubbles’ to minimise contact with large groups, as per individual schools’ planning documents and operations manuals

- risk assessments regarding children with an EHCP or those whose behaviour presents a challenge, to ensure their needs can be safely met within school.
- visitors to the school to be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, eg a social worker completing a statutory visit to a child on a CP plan

Safeguarding children who remain at home

School staff continue to have a duty of care to those children who remain at home, however, monitoring children's welfare when they are not at school will be more challenging. Although children classed as vulnerable are entitled to access the childcare provision, this option should only be used when it is not safe for them to be cared for at home. As a result, very few vulnerable children are currently accessing school and this requires more consideration with regards to safeguarding. The following is a minimum expectation regarding vulnerable children:

- All children on CP or CiN plans to be called by DSL/DDSL *at least* twice per week to check on safety and wellbeing. DSL/DDSL to speak to parents and children. Record discussion on CPOMS and notify social worker.
- If no response to calls, Social Worker to be informed for further welfare checks to be made.
- Other vulnerable children to be called *at least* once weekly (more often if you feel there is a more significant need). Speak to parents and children. Record discussion on CPOMS
- If no response to calls, and if there is a worker involved, eg Early Help or Key Worker, then inform the worker for further welfare checks to be made. If no worker involved, consider door knock for welfare check, police 101 for welfare check, or referral to Children's Services if threshold is met.

For all other children, where staffing allows, teachers or teaching assistants should call once weekly to check on general welfare. Any concerns raised should be reported to DSL and recorded on CPOMS. Staff should also record any issues they may have witnessed where families live in their local community, not just when they have made direct contact.

Online safety

Schools have been proactive in producing work-packs and identifying opportunities for online learning, to enable children to continue to access education whilst remaining at home. The school's Online Safety Policy will still apply with regard to any online learning taking place. The school will ensure that systems are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. An addendum will also be added to the Online Safety Policy to ensure any additional considerations are appropriately addressed.

Communication with parents should reinforce messages about online safety, identify which sites children are being asked to access to complete work, and be clear about whom from the school (if anyone) their child will be interacting with online.

Availability of Designated Safeguarding Lead

DSL or DDSL must be on-site at all times when schools open more widely. If this is not possible, a senior leader who will coordinate safeguarding on-site, should be identified. In this case, DSL/DDSL must be available remotely to offer advice and support. The Trust Safeguarding Lead can also be contacted. All staff on-site should be aware to whom they should report.

DSL/DDSLS training may have lapsed during this period. Guidance states that *'It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.'* DSL/DDSLS should use *Educare* courses to ensure they remain up-to-date until refresher training becomes available.

Impact of lockdown

During lockdown, referrals to Children's Social Care have reduced significantly, most likely due to lack of professional contact with children. However, it is unlikely that the extent of abuse has decreased. Families have been under increased pressure and stress, with the emotional, physical and financial implications of the lockdown. School staff need to be prepared to address a likely increase in concerns for children as they return to school. Therefore:

- On-site DSL/DDSLS to be allowed sufficient time to deal with a likely increase in workload as more concerns arise.
- Awareness-raising/training for on-site staff regarding the likely increase in safeguarding concerns as children return to school. Staff to be advised of the need to consider children who previously may not have been considered vulnerable, as well as those who were always 'on the radar'.
- All staff on-site to have appropriate access to IT equipment to access CPOMS to record concerns
- Where possible, dedicated space to be made available at school for 1-1 sessions with children, eg for therapeutic work, sessions with Early Help workers or Social Workers. Cleaning regimes for this space to be considered.
- Where possible, create opportunities for parents to meet with DSL/DDSLS to raise/discuss concerns and seek support. Resources/signposting information to be available, eg re domestic abuse, substance/alcohol misuse, parenting support etc.
- Consideration of PSHE curriculum, to include topics regarding abuse, personal space, PANTS rule, online safety etc as appropriate to age-group.

Referrals to Children's Social Care

Local Authorities are continuing to operate essential services, therefore referral routes into Children's Social Care remain unchanged. Safeguarding concerns should be reported in the usual way.