

ADDENDUM TO CHILD PROTECTION POLICY EFFECTIVE DURING CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK 2020

The way that the Trust schools are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be immediately (in person or remotely)
- 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

Where some of our schools are collaborating and children and staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#) and this guidance continue to apply. In particular, the schools that are acting as hubs in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required. The following principles apply:

Advice and guidance:

- the school will follow any updated advice received from the local safeguarding partners
- the school will act on any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

Reporting concerns:

- If staff and volunteers have any concerns about a child, they should follow their home school's child protection procedures regarding informing the DSL *if* they are working at home or in their home school. Where staff are working at a host school, they should follow the host school's procedures. It is the responsibility of the host school's DSL to share their policy and procedures with visiting staff and the responsibility of the visiting school's DSL to ensure all visiting staff are familiar with these.
- It continues to be of paramount importance that all staff and volunteers act immediately on any safeguarding concerns. The DSL should communicate this to all staff on a regular basis, either face to face (for staff in schools) or by electronic communication (eg for staff working from home)

DSL (and deputy) arrangements:

- The optimal scenario is for one trained DSL to be on site in schools that are open whenever possible. As this could be a challenge for schools in this period where there is likely to be increased staff sickness, the following procedures can be put in place:
 - 1) A trained DSL or deputy from the school can be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home
 - 2) If it is not possible to contact the school DSL, the most senior member of staff should contact the CEO/COO who will arrange for a DSL from a different school to support. Staff should not hesitate to contact either Education Safeguarding Advice Service or First Response themselves if it is necessary
 - 3) DSLs should ensure all senior staff are aware of phone numbers in 2) above.
 - 4) Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, a senior leader should take 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.

- 5) Contact details for the DSLs in all schools have been shared centrally.
- 6) All school staff and volunteers need to know on any given day who the DSL is and how they can speak to them. This is particularly important if there are changes to the usual arrangements.
- 7) The DfE have said that 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.

Staff training and safeguarding induction:

- All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The important thing for these staff will be awareness of any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.
- Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up to date child protection policy (described above) will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE.
- The existing school workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Children attending other settings:

- Schools whose children are attending another setting must do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving school with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

Working with other agencies:

- It continues to be of vital importance for school staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Peer on peer abuse:

- Staff should continue to be vigilant for any examples of peer on peer abuse and follow the school's normal procedures for reporting and dealing with this.

Reporting concerns about a member of staff or volunteer:

- If staff and volunteers have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children they should follow the school's normal procedures and share these immediately with the headteacher of the school they are working in or the LADO.

Support for vulnerable children who are not in school:

- The school has put in place the following arrangements to support children the school are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition and vulnerable children who are not attending school:
 - 1) Weekly telephone contact by senior member of staff JC/RW/JT
 - 2) Children attending school on days agreed with parents

Keeping children safe who are not in school:

- The school will keep in touch with parents in the following ways – texting, email, newsletters, website updates and phone calls where appropriate. These communications will include advice to parents on how to keep their children safe, especially online and should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school who (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.
- Staff should be extra vigilant to any concerns they may have about pupils during this time
- Guidance on safe use of the internet and online safety will be made available to staff and parents via newsletters and the website
- The online planning process will ensure children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school this will also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of: Childline - for support; UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content ; CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Vulnerable children:

The Local authority has the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. *There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend provision, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.* The school will liaise closely with social workers. School staff will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Senior leaders, especially DSLs know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.

Attendance:

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

- Schools and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not.
- Schools should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend.
- In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school should notify their social worker.
- The daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff:

- If schools are recruiting new staff, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. 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.

- Where schools are utilising volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.
- Where members of the school workforce are already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier.
- The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on schools to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.
- Schools and colleges must continue to follow their 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 KCSIE.

The single central record:

- Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, 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.
- Schools must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.
- The SCR can, *if a school chooses*, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, *if a school chooses*, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Mental health:

- Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents.
- Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.
- Where they are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, schools should ensure appropriate support is in place for them.
- Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services.

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this addendum to the new policy and will be kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should be made available publicly.

Policy updated on 30.03.2020