



South Gosforth First School

'Roots to grow and wings to fly'

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Covid-19 Addendum to the School / Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy **Addendum (COVID-19)**

January 2021 Update

Introduction

In light of the ongoing challenges faced by schools in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the necessary arrangements and ways of working schools are developing to meet the challenges of supporting

- pupils identified as vulnerable
- children of key workers
- the wider pupil population
- providing and delivering community support
- responding to identified local needs

We have produced this document to act as an additional element / addendum to your existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

It is not exhaustive, and we would encourage schools to consider this document and amend it to reflect your specific context and situation, and to ensure it addresses the way in which your school is delivering safeguarding support, and responding to community issues.

Schools are asked to read any new guidance and act in accordance with the advice provided.

Key Messages

KCSIE 2020 must still be adhered to. Schools / academies must continue to

- provide a safe environment
- keep children safe
- ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required

Key safeguarding principles remain unchanged

- with regard to safeguarding, 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

Annex to Existing Policy

Context

Our existing school policy continues to be compliant and fit for purpose. It recognises and responds to the key guidance documents

- ✓ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- ✓ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- ✓ Existing Local Authority / Safeguarding Partnership Advice and Guidance

From 5th January 2021 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. 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. This addendum of the Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Advice from our Local Safeguarding Partners

We will continue to respond and act upon the guidance and advice provided by our 3 Local Safeguarding Partners during the period that new arrangements are in place. We will review any updated advice, share with appropriate staff and ensure school / academy practice reflects new guidance.

Advice from the Local Authority

Where the Local Authority issues further advice and guidance regarding the following areas of our activity, we will review our practice, share with appropriate staff and ensure school / academy practice reflects this new advice.

Areas to consider:

- Pupils with EHC plans
- Advice from the L.A.D.O / Children's Social Care
- Reporting concerns where issues are identified
- Changes in referral thresholds
- Response to those identified as Children in Need

Responding to concerns regarding a pupil.

All staff are expected to follow all existing procedures for responding to concerns. This includes:

- ✓ any newly shared guidance developed as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic. making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home staff should not solely rely on CPOMS but should ensure direct contact is made with the DSL either face to face or by telephone

Where staff have a concern it is expected that this information will be shared with a named DSL to ensure appropriate advice is given and actions taken to safeguard the pupil. All staff and volunteers must act immediately on any safeguarding concerns which may be identified. **See flow diagram.**

DSL (and deputy) arrangements

All staff have been advised of the arrangements we have in place, and contact details for the identified DSL / Deputy DSL during the period of this pandemic.

See flow diagram.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site.

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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 online management system, CPOMS and 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 or college.

- ✓ Within our Trust we will operating a DSL support system if needed. In the event of staff absence each school will be provided with additional DSL contact details for our Trust schools.
- ✓ It is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them. The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The schools recognise the vulnerability of any of our pupils identified as L.A.C or previously L.A.C. Key staff will continue to support and liaise with Children's Social Care staff, and the Virtual Head of School for LAC to ensure that the educational and support needs of all LAC pupils continue to be met during this period.

Peer on Peer abuse

We recognise that during the period where new working arrangements are in place, some pupils may be potentially vulnerable to different forms of abuse, including Peer on Peer abuse. The school will continue to respond to any concerns which may arise. Staff must follow existing reporting arrangements, discuss concerns with a DSL and continue to follow the guidance set out within our existing policy.

Responding to concerns regarding staff conduct / behaviour

All staff are aware of their responsibility to report any concerns regarding the conduct or behaviour of colleagues. Our Whistleblowing Policy clearly sets out the reporting process, and this reflects the key messages set out in Part 4 of KCSIE.

Should staff have any concerns they must follow existing school /academy procedures.

Vulnerable Pupils

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 (EHC) plan
- 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 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 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

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with 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. Eligibility for free school meals in itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) 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.

We 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 head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: **Mr Robert Adams (Headteacher)**

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and we will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the school or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. The school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Supporting all Pupils

During this period, the vast majority of our pupils are not expected to attend school. These pupils do not currently meet the agreed definition of a '**vulnerable pupil**'.

We recognise our ongoing responsibility to provide advice, support and guidance to all our pupils and our staff are in regular contact with all pupils on our roll. Safeguarding these pupils remains **everyone's responsibility**.

We continue to seek to communicate with, and provide advice and information to all pupils.

Our staff are aware of their responsibility to seek advice regarding any issue which causes concern and are expected to continue to adhere to existing school reporting and recording procedures for any potential safeguarding issue.

Supporting children not in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people. Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

- ✓ Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as should a record of contact have made.
- ✓ The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits.
- ✓ Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The school and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

- ✓ This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.
- ✓ The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.
- ✓ We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.
- ✓ Teachers need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.
- ✓ The school will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS.

Online safety

During the period where new working arrangements are in place we recognise that our pupils may be using a range of technologies and using on line materials, as well as potentially accessing a range of different sites as part of their home learning programme.

We will share appropriate and recognised on-line learning materials with our pupils and we will ensure we continue to reinforce our expectations regarding safe on-line behaviour for all pupils during this period. (

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- ✓ No 1:1s, groups only

- ✓ Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- ✓ Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- ✓ The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- ✓ Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- ✓ Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- ✓ Staff must only use platforms provided by the school to communicate with pupils
- ✓ Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.
- ✓ Where staff have a concern, then they must follow existing school reporting procedures and our on-line safety policy using CPOMs.

School attendance procedures

Local authorities and education settings need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. The procedures will be as follows:

- ✓ Updated DfE codes will be used to record attendance / absence
- ✓ We will follow LA / DfE guidance on recording absences
- ✓ school and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school.
- ✓ school will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.
- ✓ school will also follow up with any parent or carer **who has** arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.
- ✓ To support the above, we 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.

Staff training and Induction

DSL training is still taking place virtually. However, 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. In order to support staff and keep children safe:

- ✓ Any DSL who has not completed the DSL annual refresher 2019-20 session can access this via video in the online training section of the website
- ✓ Staff refresher training is available virtually
- ✓ All existing school staff should have read part 1 and annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

- ✓ The DSL will communicate with staff 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 will continue to be provided with a **safeguarding induction**.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we 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
- ✓ For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training. Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer Recruitment and procedure for movement of staff and volunteers

- ✓ The school recognise that this situation requires us all to work in different ways and respond to new and emerging circumstances.
- ✓ We remain committed to the principles of Safer Recruitment practice and guidance as described in KCSIE Part 3.
- ✓ Should volunteers be permitted to support the school, we will continue to undertake all appropriate vetting and checking procedures and ensure we are compliant with the principles of regulated activity.
- ✓ We will ensure that our Single Central Record is maintained and all required elements are compliant.

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy addendum and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

January 2021