

Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Covid-19 Addendum

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure, due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from local safeguarding partners, including Shropshire Council.

It sets out changes to the normal Child Protection Policy, in light of the Department for Education's (DfE's) guidance 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers', and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, the normal Child Protection Policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable children' refers to those who have a Social Worker, including children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. It also refers to those children where professionals are concerned that they may be at increased risk of significant harm if they are not in school. This could be due to contextual safeguarding issues and existing or new pressures within a family household.

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education. Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy should be available at all times
- It is essential that unsuitable people do not enter the school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online.

3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

Schools should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and Deputies) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or Deputy DSL on site wherever possible.

If our DSL (or Deputies) cannot be in school, they can be contacted remotely by email or phone.

We will ensure that our DSLs (and Deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

On occasions where there is no DSL or Deputy on site, a Senior Leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding.

The Senior Leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or Deputies) to make sure they can:

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school
- Update and manage access to Child Protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with children's Social Workers, where they need access to children and/or to carry out statutory assessments.

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with Children's Services and with Virtual School Heads for looked after and previously looked after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from local safeguarding partners.

6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance. The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure does not attend or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents/carers by contacting them to ascertain the reason for the child's absence
- Notify the child's Social worker, where they have one

We are using the DfE's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school. We will make arrangements with parents/carers to make sure we have up to date emergency contact details and additional contact details, where possible.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Support for other vulnerable students

We have the option to offer places in school to children who do not meet the DfE's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this. If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place.

10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

10.1 Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a Social Worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and Social Worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or
- They would usually attend, but have to self-isolate

These plans set out:

- How often the school will make contact
- Which staff member(s) will make contact
- How they will make contact

We have agreed these plans with the child's Social Worker, where relevant, and will review them on a regular basis. If we cannot make contact, we will inform the child's Social Worker, where they have one.

10.2 Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk. Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on students' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately. In particular, children are likely to be spending more time online.

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff IT Acceptable Use Policy.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school and signpost them to other sources of support too.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors, if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online.

12. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our support for students' mental health.

We will also signpost all students, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for students learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

13. Staff recruitment, training and induction

13.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents, when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who are not in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

We will assess the risks of any staff 'on loan' working in our school and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks.

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

13.3 Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our children protection policy and this addendum
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our Child Protection Policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements.

13.4 Keeping records of staff on site

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them. We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

14. Children attending other settings

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or Deputies) and/or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The child's EHC Plan, Child in Need Plan, Child Protection Plan or Personal Education Plan
- Details of the child's Social Worker
- Details of the Virtual School Headteacher

Where the DSL, Deputies or SENCO cannot share this information, a Senior Leader identified will do this.

We will share this information before the child arrives, as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local safeguarding partners or the DfE is updated and as a minimum every four weeks by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, it will be approved by the Governing Body.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- E-Safety Policy.