

Addendum to Safeguarding Policy COVID-19 Response

This policy is an addendum to our existing Safeguarding Policy, which is available on the school website. This policy sets out key information regarding safeguarding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Version Control

April 20	SF	Policy created
Aug 20	KS	2.2 revised and 2.7 added to reflect September full opening

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.** Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and, in conjunction with other agencies, they play a vital role in safeguarding children during the current emergency arrangements.
- 1.2.** This policy is an addition to our existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and has been produced to cover arrangements in place during school closure due to Covid-19.
- 1.3.** This Child Protection policy is for all staff, parents, trustees, volunteers and the wider school community.
- 1.4.** It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and should be read in conjunction with the following:
 - 1.4.1.** Child Protection Policy
 - 1.4.2.** Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2020)
 - 1.4.3.** School Behaviour policy
 - 1.4.4.** Staff Code of Conduct);
 - 1.4.5.** Safeguarding response to children missing from education
 - 1.4.6.** Role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE)
- 1.5.** Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (*everyone under the age of 18*) is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:
 - 1.5.1.** Protecting children from maltreatment
 - 1.5.2.** Preventing impairment of children's health or development
 - 1.5.3.** Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - 1.5.4.** Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2. Context

- 2.1.** Schools are currently operating differently in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- 2.2.** In March 2020, schools were instructed to close, although were required to provide care for children who are vulnerable and for children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. Our school remained open for this purpose during this time.
- 2.3.** We continue to work with our Safeguarding Partners during this time and follow advice given by the Local Authority. We will continue to work with other agencies and professionals, such as Social Care, Police and Early Help, as necessary.
- 2.4.** Any concerns will be reported in the usual way, by contacting the MASH Team and submitting a multi-agency referral form (MARF) as necessary.
- 2.5.** Where we have concerns about the impact of staff absence, such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead, First Aiders or members of the Leadership Team – will discuss them immediately with the relevant members of our SMT.
- 2.6.** In May 2020, the government issued guidance which set out the expectation for the gradual return of children to early years, school and further education settings. The safety of our children and staff is paramount and all decisions about reopening have been driven by our risk assessment process. We have written to parents separately about reopening arrangements.
- 2.7.** In August 2020, the government outlined plans and issued guidance for the full reopening of schools from 1st September 2020.

3. Updates

- 3.1.** This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated in line with the guidance provided by the Government and Department for Education.
- 3.2.** Information, including any updates, is available on the school website and will be circulated to staff via email.
- 3.3.** We will continue to update our school website with any information.

4. Safeguarding

- 4.1. The safeguarding and welfare of our students continues to be our priority, whether they are attending school or whether they are at home, and our existing safeguarding policy remains in place.
- 4.2. As always, all staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse.
- 4.3. Any member of staff who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead).
- 4.4. All staff are aware of their responsibility in that respect.

5. Reporting concerns:

- 5.1. Staff will continue to report any safeguarding concerns via our internal reporting system and to the member of the Senior Leadership Team on site. All concerns will be actioned immediately.
- 5.2. The DSL and Deputy DSLs remain contactable during this period.
- 5.3. Only staff members who are working during the crisis will be allowed on site.
- 5.4. Any concerns regarding the conduct of staff will be reported to the Principal, as per the existing safeguarding policy. Any concerns regarding the Principal are reported to the Executive Headteacher.
- 5.5. Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Local Authority Children and Families Department and / or the Police.
- 5.6. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the Multi Agency Referral system of the appropriate Local Authority.
- 5.7. The school may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it.

- 5.8. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or The Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

6. Key Safeguarding Staff

- 6.1. Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jo Green
- 6.2. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Debbie Jennings, Debbie Gowers, Susan Francis
- 6.3. The roles and responsibilities of all staff remain as stated in our Safeguarding Policy.
- 6.4. The DSL (or DDSL) remain responsible for managing safeguarding within the academy and are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is effective.

7. Records and information sharing

- 7.1. Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies.
- 7.2. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm.
- 7.3. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm.
- 7.4. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 7.5. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

- 7.6.** Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and will include the action taken. The record should be emailed immediately to the Child Protection Hub. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.
- 7.7.** Any records related to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the pupil file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school / educational setting.
- 7.8.** During this period, there may be occasions where we have children from another school attending our site, or where our pupils may have to attend another school. In these circumstances, relevant information will be shared between schools to ensure there is knowledge and an understanding of any safeguarding issues so that appropriate measures can be put in place to keep children safe. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a 'need to know' basis.

8. Vulnerable Children

- 8.1.** The term 'vulnerable children' refers to children who have a Social Worker. This includes children that are in the care of the Local Authority (LAC), children subject to a Child Protection Plan and CIN Plan, under Assessment and children with EHC plans.
- 8.2.** Some children may also be deemed as vulnerable if they potentially need social care support.
- 8.3.** The DSL and Deputy DSLs have identified these children and offered a school place as necessary.
- 8.4.** There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, except where they have an underlying health condition, which may place them at risk.
- 8.5.** We encourage all vulnerable children to attend school where possible. If a parent or carer makes the decision not to send their child to school, this will be discussed with the Social Worker and a plan agreed.

- 8.6.** All vulnerable children have been risk-assessed and if the decision was made for them to remain at home, a telephone call will be made on at least a weekly basis to ensure the safety and welfare of the child, and to provide support as needed. The information regarding these checks is then shared with the Local Authority.
- 8.7.** Children with an EHC Plan have been risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents/carers.
- 8.8.** A school place will have been offered but many children can remain safely at home. It may be that certain services can be provided at home, e.g. therapists or clinicians who provide essential services.
- 8.9.** Any children with EHC plans who decide not to attend school, are telephoned on at least a weekly basis at home to check on their safety and welfare. The information regarding these checks is then shared with the Local Authority.
- 8.10.** It is important to note that some children that have not been 'at risk' previously become more at risk in this new COVID-19 context; there is an expected rise in domestic violence and we must respond by considering who should be offered place at the academy provision and keeping in contact with the child's home.
- 8.11.** Children potentially suffering from Domestic Violence, Neglect, Abuse, Child Criminal Exploitation or Child Sexual Exploitation will be elevated to the daily contact list to ensure that a referral can be made as soon as there is a concern raised.

9. Attendance

- 9.1.** The school is taking an attendance register for Students who are attending school, and this is shared with the Local Authority and Department for Education.
- 9.2.** The Social Worker is notified if a child does not take up their offered school place.
- 9.3.** If a child is expected to attend school but does not arrive, the family will be contacted using the contacts on the school system.
- 9.4.** If we are unable to contact the family:
 - 9.4.1.** a home visit will be completed,
 - 9.4.2.** a letter/email will be sent home
 - 9.4.3.** the Social Worker will be informed.

- 9.4.4.** If the Social Worker is not contactable or there is no Social Worker involved, the MASH Team will be notified, and a referral submitted as necessary.

10. Safer Recruitment and Movement of Staff

- 10.1.** It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.
- 10.2.** The Senior Leadership Team are aware of any staff that are on site working during the closures.
- 10.3.** All staff have an enhanced DBS check.
- 10.4.** If any staff are entering the school site due to schools joining or amalgamating because of COVID 19 measures, information regarding those staff members will be shared between schools, including ID and enhanced DBS checks.
- 10.5.** If any new staff are recruited, we will follow our existing safeguarding and safer recruitment policies and procedures.
- 10.6.** 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.
- 10.7.** We will continue to maintain our Single Central Register to reflect any changes to staffing as necessary.

11. Peer on Peer Abuse

- 11.1.** Abuse can occur between children and this is taken very seriously. Our safeguarding procedures regarding peer-on-peer abuse remain in place, as per our safeguarding policy.
- 11.2.** We recognise that this can occur during school closures, whether the children are attending or not attending school.
- 11.3.** If a staff member has a concern regarding peer-on-peer abuse, they will report this to the SLT member on site and record this on our internal recording system.
- 11.4.** This will be reported to the Social Worker, or a referral will be made to the MASH Team if a Social Worker is not already involved.

12. Online Safety

- 12.1.** We recognise there is likely to be an increase in online activity, including the use of gaming and social media during this time.
- 12.2.** Our filtering systems within school will remain in place and parents/carers have been provided with advice and guidance regarding online safety.
- 12.3.** Staff are aware that children are vulnerable to being bullied or groomed for abuse or radicalisation online. Staff will be vigilant to any signs that that this may be occurring and if a staff member is concerned about a child and online safety, report any concerns in the usual way.
- 12.4.** Where pupils are using devices in school, appropriate supervision will be in place and staff and pupils should continue to follow the E-Safety and E-Security policy.

13. Interacting with students that are not present in the academy

- 13.1.** It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that the child may be at risk of harm or experiencing harm.
- 13.2.** Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.
- 13.3.** Online teaching should follow the same principles as normal or in line with new guidance issued in the Covid-19 context.
- 13.4.** If staff are unsure they should seek clarification with the academy leadership before making or responding to any contact from a child.
- 13.5.** We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.
- 13.6.** When we are in contact with parents and careers, communications will additionally be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online.
- 13.7.** 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 academy their child is going to be interacting with online.

14. New Joiners at the School

- 14.1.** Children may join our school from other settings. If this is the case, the DSL will request information from the other setting, prior to joining or as soon as reasonably possible, including safeguarding, medical, SEN or other relevant welfare information.
- 14.2.** This includes relevant documents, such as Child Protection Plans and EHC Plans, and the name of the child's Social Worker and any other agencies involved.
- 14.3.** This is to ensure the agreed plan of support can continue. A risk assessment will be undertaken, and a plan agreed.
- 14.4.** Relevant information will be shared with staff as necessary.

15. Support

- 15.1.** We recognise that these are unprecedented and difficult times. Therefore, there may be an increased need for support by our children and families.
- 15.2.** We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our students.
- 15.3.** We continue to provide support to any families that may need it, in any way reasonably possible during this time.
- 15.4.** 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 the academy, the DSL will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.
- 15.5.** All communications will be logged on the BEP Academy student records.

16. Mental Health

- 16.1.** Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents.
- 16.2.** Colleagues are made aware of this when considering the setting and expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.
- 16.3.** We will follow the DfE's guidance on providing education remotely.

- 16.4.** The DfE’s guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person’s behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem.
- 16.5.** 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. You can access the guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools for further information](#).
- 16.6.** We will support families who have experienced a loss or bereavement during this time and will liaise with relevant agencies, such as Early Help, Educational Psychology Team, and Child Bereavement UK, to offer practical support as needed.
- 16.7.** Information has been provided to all families indicating many outside agencies and organisations that can offer support during this time, including mental health support and online safety advice.
- 16.8.** We continue to provide support to families who are eligible for Free School Meals and those who are finding it difficult to buy essentials for their family, by providing food vouchers and food parcels, in partnership with our local food banks.