COVID - Child Protection Addendum

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum sets out changes to our normal Safeguarding (Including Child protection) Policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance <u>Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers</u>, and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal Safeguarding (Including Child protection) Policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' Vulnerable children and young people for the purposes of continued attendance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak are those across all year groups 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

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, <u>Keeping Children Safe in Education</u> (September 2020). Although, due to the COVID-19 crisis, 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 (see section 4 for details of our arrangements) to deal with safeguarding concerns and any other matters pertaining to child protection
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't 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 immediately on any concerns they have about a child/young person. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children still attending school and those at home.

Leaders and teachers should be aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of young people (and their families) and with a phased return of pupils, ensure the dual focus is upon ensuring the safety of pupils at home and in school.

For children/young people who are at home, where there are previous safeguarding concerns, each school has formulated a RAG rated system which determines the frequency of contact that will take place with the child/young person's family; this agreed contact will be made by members of each school's welfare team and records of all contact recorded accordingly. Any concerns that arise from this contact will be dealt with in line with ordinary safeguarding procedures, including referring to Children's Services where appropriate or contacting other professionals involved with the family, such as a Social Worker.

Furthermore, a continuous dialogue will take place between Social Workers allocated to each school's families and the welfare team, in order that both parties can keep abreast of concerns.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

There will always be DSL who can be contacted and have responsibility for safeguarding students as per normal procedure.

If a DSL cannot be on a school site, in addition to being contactable, a Senior Leader should have responsibility for safeguarding.

For the period of coronavirus measures, a trained DSL will continue to be classed as such, even if they miss their refresher training. They should remain up to date through networks and other relevant information.

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care 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:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners
- The local authority about 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

6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school 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 doesn't attend, or stops attending.

In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by contacting the Headteacher of the school at which the child is registered, who will arrange for contact to be made with home but not by home visit
- Ensure the school notifies their social worker, where they have one
- If appropriate, the home school will report the absence to Children's Services

When required, we are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school in addition to school and Trust records.

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 – about both children attending school and those at home.

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 – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

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 children who have been assessed as vulnerable

As per section 1, we have the option to offer places in school to children who have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable. We will work with parents/carers to do this. This includes children we have risk assessed as vulnerable, who may have had a social worker in the past or where they have not met the threshold for referral or where staff still have any concerns.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

10. 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
- Each child has an individual plan devised by each school, which sets out:
  - How often the school will make contact
  - Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
  - How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone or via email
  - The action that the school will take if contact with a family cannot be made

11. 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 pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line with the procedures set out in section 3 above.

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support pupils' mental health.

12. Online safety

12.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school. We will continue to use our XMA ticketing system for IT support.

12.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff behaviour policy and IT acceptable use policy

Staff should not be using personal emails or live streaming lessons unless this is an additional intervention or to support the well-being of pupils. Only pre-recorded lessons with consideration of a staff member's environment should be in place for pupils up to and including Year 11. Where live-streamed interventions and activities are in place, the school will have a well-published protocol to safeguard all parties. Staff and pupil relationships should remain professional and all rules regarding online safety and social media apply. Staff should use email communication and block their phone numbers if required to make a telephone call from home.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, acting on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

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.

13.3 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 websites 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

- To sign agreements to school protocols regarding live streamed sessions, including an agreement not to record these sessions and permission to attend

This will be achieved via newsletters and emails to parents, as well via our websites and school social media.

13. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our support for pupil mental health for all children and young people.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. This will include the Government's COVID-19 guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

When setting expectations for pupils 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.

14. Staff recruitment, training and induction

14.1 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 schools are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures and will adhere to 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.

However, new staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at any of our schools.

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

14.2 Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure all 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 Safeguarding (Including Child protection) Policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated and, as a minimum, every 3-4 weeks by trustees and trust central team.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding (including child protection) policy
- Staff code of conduct
- IT acceptable use policy
- Health and safety policy
- Online safety policy
- GDPR
- Whistleblowing

17. Further government guidance

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people

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