

# **Child Protection Policy Temporary Addendum**

## **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School**

**This Policy addendum is effective from  
4<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

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## Context

From 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 primary age parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children who are deemed to be vulnerable and for the children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

School opening is currently set as: 8.30 am – 3.30 pm, Monday to Friday

This addendum of the Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Wessex Gardens Primary School and Nursery is in Tier 4.

## Key contacts

Remain as per the School Safeguarding Policy.

## Vulnerable children

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 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 school and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a 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 **Helen Ruthven**.

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 increased 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 school 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.

We will encourage our vulnerable children to attend school, including remotely if needed.

### **Critical workers**

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

Shielding advice is currently in place in tier 4 areas, and so all children still deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

The school and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – we will then follow up on any pupil that we were expecting to attend, who does not.

We 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.

Phone calls will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

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, we will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Wessex Garden Primary School and Nursery has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:** Helen Ruthven

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is:** Alexander Banks

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 child protection records, 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.

Staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child protection Policy. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the headteacher.

If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally over the phone and followed up with an email to the head teacher to confirm the discussion.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

## **Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL should 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 enter the school, they 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 consider 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

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/volunteers and movement of staff**

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

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

Where we are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

We will continue to follow the 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.

We will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, 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.

As such, we will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers are not in school presently.

## **Online safety**

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Online safety lessons will be provided for children weekly.

Parents will be informed of general online safety issues via National Online Safety bulletins.

### **Children and online safety away from school and college**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. 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.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the staff code of conduct.

We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider IF there are 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 specified by senior leaders and approved by our computing leader to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Online safety lessons will be provided for children weekly.

Parents will be informed of general online safety issues via National Online Safety bulletins.

### **Supporting children not in school**

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children. Where a child has been identified to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, we ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child.

The communication plan may include, remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits and is carried out by a member of the Safeguarding team; often the Lead Learning Mentor. Outcomes of these contact meetings are recorded and discussed at our weekly safeguarding meetings. 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 the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers need to be aware of this when setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

### **Supporting children in school**

We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

We will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

We 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.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

We recognise that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.