

COVID-19 : Safeguarding and Child Protection Update

(to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

September 2020



1. **Purpose**

- 1.1 This update outlines the procedures that will be put in place in the following circumstances:
- A local COVID-19 outbreak and the academy is asked to close temporarily for most learners.
 - Individuals or groups of learners need to self-isolate, but the rest of the academy is still open.

2. **Safeguarding team**

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Mr J Bailey (Vice Principal)
Mr J Gardner (Director of KS4)
Mrs H Hogg (Learner Support Team Leader)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)

Miss L Buchanan (Head of House)
Mr T Owens (Head of House)
Mr J Tellwright (Head of House)

Safeguarding Governor and Chair of the Board of Trustees

Mr M Jeffery

3. **Vulnerable learners**

- 3.1 Vulnerable learners include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.
- 3.2 Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- 3.3 The academy recognises that previously looked after children are a potentially vulnerable group who may not have a social worker and will consider the support and offer to this cohort of children. In particular, families and friends carers may need additional support. Some previously looked after children may still have significant emotional wellbeing needs



linked to their journey into care. Education settings have a key role in supporting the stability of those children with special guardianship orders or in adoptive homes.

- 3.4 Those learners with an EHC Plan will be risk assessed in consultation with the local authority and parents¹ to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school 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.
- 3.5 Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the DSLs, know who the academy's most vulnerable learners are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

- 3.6 The academy will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable learners. This includes working with and supporting learners' social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked after and previously looked after children. The academy will work with social workers to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for looked after children are up to date with the current education offer that looked after children are accessing.
- 3.7 There is an expectation that vulnerable learners 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 will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.
- 3.8 Where parents are concerned about the risk of their child contracting COVID-19, the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England.
- 3.9 The DSL will continue to provide support to teachers and learner support staff to ensure that contact is maintained with learners (and families) who are not yet returning to school

¹ Within this document, the term *parent* refers to those with parental responsibility for a learner



4. Attendance monitoring

- 4.1 The academy will follow guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to daily attendance monitoring
- 4.2 The academy and social workers will agree with parents whether a vulnerable learner should be attending. The academy will then follow up on any learner who it is expecting to attend and who does not. The academy will also follow up with any parent who has arranged care for their child(ren) if the child(ren) subsequently does not attend.
- 4.3 To support the above, the academy will, when communicating with parents, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.
- 4.4 In all circumstances where a vulnerable learner does not take up or discontinues their place, the academy will notify the relevant social worker.

5. Designated Safeguarding Leads

- 5.1 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 telephone or online.
- 5.2 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 systems and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with learners' social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the academy.
- 5.3 As more learners return to school, the DSL will ensure all relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on learners remains accurate, and complete. If a learner from the academy attends another setting, the academy will do what it reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with relevant welfare and child protection information.
- 5.4 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 who that person is and how to speak to them.
- 5.5 The safeguarding team will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings which can be done remotely.



6. Reporting a concern

- 6.1 Where staff have a concern about a learner, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 6.2 Staff must report any concern immediately and without delay. This may mean through CPOMS or email to a DSL/DDSL to ensure the concern is captured.
- 6.3 Where staff are concerned about an adult working with learners in the academy, they should report the concern to the Principal. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Principal whilst away from the site, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email.
- 6.4 Concerns around the Principal should be directed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The academy will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

7. Safeguarding training and induction

- 7.1 For any period that lockdown 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.
- 7.2 All existing staff at the academy have completed level 1 safeguarding online training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a learner. This will include contact numbers and emails for DSLs/DDSLs if not on site.
- 7.3 Where new staff are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction and will complete the level 1 safeguarding online training.

8. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

- 8.1 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, the academy will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for its setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of KCSIE.



- 8.2 If the academy utilises volunteers, it 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.
- 8.3 The academy 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.
- 8.4 The academy will also 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.
- 8.5 It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the academy is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the building and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the academy will continue to keep the Single Central Record up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.
- 8.6 There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason the academy has concerns about the individual, a new check will be obtained in the usual way.

9. **Online safety**

- 9.1 The academy will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where learners are using laptops appropriate supervision will be in place.

10. **Learners and online safety away from the academy**

- 10.1 It is important that all staff who interact with learners, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as set out in the academy's Safeguarding 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 academy's Code of Conduct for Staff.
- 10.2 The academy will ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.



11. Supporting learners not in the academy

- 11.1 The academy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its learners.
- 11.2 Where a learner has been identified as on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral type support in the academy, a robust communication plan will be put in place for that child or young person. Details of this plan must be recorded as should a record of contact have made. The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, doorstep visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.
- 11.3 The DSLs 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 DSLs will consider any referrals as appropriate. The academy will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.
- 11.4 The academy recognises that it is a protective factor for its learners and that the current circumstances can affect the mental health of learners and their parents. All academy staff will take account of this in setting expectations of learners' work where they are at home.

12. Supporting learners in the academy

- 12.1 The academy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its learners. The governors and Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to learner ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety.
- 12.2 The academy will ensure that when caring for vulnerable learners and learners whose parents are critical workers appropriate support is in place for them.
- 12.3 If the academy has concerns about the impact of staff absence (such as the DSLs or first aiders), this will be discussed immediately with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.



13. Mental health

- 13.1 The academy is aware of the impact of the negative experiences and distressing life events on the mental health of learners, parents and staff. It will ensure there continues to be appropriate support and signposting to relevant support agencies in place, including for those learners who work from home.

14. Peer on peer abuse

- 14.1 It is recognised that during any closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where the academy receives a report of peer on peer abuse, it will follow the principles as set out in Part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The academy will listen and work with the learner, parents and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of the learner. Concerns and actions will be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

15. Useful contact numbers/emails and links

First Response: 0800 131 3126

Duty LADO: contact First Response, 0800 131 3126

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

virtual.school@staffordshire.gov.uk

ESAS: 01785 895836

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>



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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Related academy policies/procedures:
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
COVID-19: Contingency Plan September 2020

Signatures:

Principal:

Chair of Trustees:

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 11 September 2020

