

## **ADDENDUM**

# **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**



*In the Light of Jesus  
we Learn to Shine*

## 1. Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum does not replace the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and should be read in conjunction with the main policy.

Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole school approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

From 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, the government announced the re-opening of schools for reception, Year 1 and Year 6 – the re-opening guidance highlights the process of opening and this entails in further detail.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

### Key safeguarding contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Head teacher	Mrs Maureen Murphy	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	head@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk
Deputy Head	Mrs Carmel Mc Nerney	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	cmnerney@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk
Acting Deputy Head	Mrs Sinead Killian	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	skillian@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk

### Contingency safeguarding contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Assistant Head	Miss Paula Crummey	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	pcrummey@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk
Family Worker	Mrs M Stevenson	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	mstevenson@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk
Family Worker	Mrs Clair Griffin	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	cgriffin@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk
Family Worker	Mrs Maria Naughton	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	mnaughton@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk
Family Worker	Mrs Teresa Naughton	Personal contact numbers held by SLT	tnaughton@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk

**Safeguarding partners**

With effect from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service within Luton will be convening **Virtual** Initial and Review Child Protection case conferences. All professionals must submit reports to the SQAS inbox and, wherever possible, be available for conference calls or any other telecommunication application that specialises in providing video calls. Where it is not possible to convene a virtual conference meeting the Child Protection Chair will determine whether a child should be subject to a Child Protection plan based on all of the information provided. This approach will enable Initial and Review case conferences to take place in line with the Council guidance regarding Covid-19.

**Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

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.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college 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.

Those who may be receiving support from external agencies, or are open to interventions such as Domestic Abuse Services, Channel Intervention/supports and Multi Agency Gang Panel service (this list is not exhaustive). In such circumstances, interim arrangements may be in place, and risk assessments will be undertaken as appropriate. Where a place is offered and the family do not wish to take this up, the circumstances for this will be explored by the most appropriate person involved with the family.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

The Senior leaders, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies know who the most vulnerable children are. The school will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

The school 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 staff member responsible for this is Mrs Carmel Mc Nerney.

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 risk. In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the school will discuss the reasons for this directly with the parent. The school will share the names of those attending with allocated social workers to discuss their views on attendance/non-attendance. The school will put in place measures to ensure there is regular contact with non-attending children, this contact should be recorded and information shared as appropriate.

Where parents/carers 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.

Children/families, who are shielding due to being extremely vulnerable because of specified underlying health conditions (as per Government guidance), will not be in a position to attend school even if identified as vulnerable. Where this is the case, regular contact will be made to ensure the children/family receive appropriate educational support. This information will be shared with the assigned social worker if the family have one.

The school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Staff should resume taking their attendance registers from 01 June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which give the Department of Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

The school and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. The school will follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. All children, with an allocated social worker, will be contacted by a member of the safeguarding team. DSL will update social workers of any changes.

All staff understand that vulnerable children attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending.

- for vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- for vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school, college or local authority discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable).

To support the above, the school 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, the school will notify their social worker.

Staff and DSL's should continue to notify social workers where children with a social worker do not attend. They should also continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

## COVID-19 Safeguarding & Child Protection

Ideally, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be on the school site. Where this is not possible, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video. Where a trained DSL is not on site a senior leader will be responsible for coordinating safeguarding on site, which will include accessing child protection files.

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of who is responsible for safeguarding and how to speak to them.

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

Whilst schools must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR, this does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. However, schools must be mindful of how this information is shared. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children, they should continue to follow the school policy.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy).

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). 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. This may be conducted remotely.

### **Online working practices**

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place DSL's and teaching staff will take due caution when conducting any form of virtual contact to the child, which may involve calling or video calling into the child's home.

DSL's and teaching staff will:

- Where possible, protect the identity and use of personal mobile numbers being used to contact children or families
- Ensure there is someone present within the room during the video call
- Any computers/devices used should be in appropriate areas for both child and staff, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.

## COVID-19 Safeguarding & Child Protection

- DSL's/teachers should log details/content of the contact and what type of device was used regarding contact made to the child. If the school are using personal devices to contact students for virtual contact a review of the user existing IT/user agreement should be explored.
- DSL's/teachers must not audio or video record the video call or share any content over social media.
- DSL's/teachers and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Should the child make a disclosure of any kind the same processes should be followed in regards to referral – please see **Reporting of Concern** for further information.

### **HUB SCHOOL**

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to a hub school, the school 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, DBS number, date the check was undertaken and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing safeguarding disciplinary investigations relating to that individual

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the school's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### **HOME SCHOOL**

The school will ensure that any change of school for looked-after children will be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The school will ensure that they provide relevant information to the hub school such as the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the hub school should, as appropriate, have access to a child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). The school should ensure that this ideally happens before a child is transferred to the hub school and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs coordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, senior leaders should take responsibility.

### **Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the school 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 (2019) (KCSIE).

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.

Where the school are using 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.

The school 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.

The school 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.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, 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, the school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online safety in schools and colleges**

The school 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.

### **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.

### **Keeping children safe online**

Measures taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 mean most children will be at home and spending increasing amounts of time online. There is a risk that extremists may exploit this situation by sharing harmful misinformation and conspiracy theories and targeting vulnerable children and young people directly.

Counter-Terrorism Police have produced guidance for parents on some of these risks and how to seek further support, which can be found on the Let's Talk About It website. If you come across online material promoting terrorism or extremism this can still be reported using the online tool.

The Department for Education's safeguarding guidance also includes advice and guidance on online harms that we encourage settings to share with parents. In addition, guidance for parents has been published which includes resources to help keep children safe online:

- NSPCC
- London Grid for Learning (LGFL)
- Parentzone
- Internet Matters
- Shout Out UK
- National Education Union

### **Extremist Narratives in Communities**

The impact of COVID-19 on communities may give individuals and extremist organisations opportunities to promote hateful or harmful narratives. In some cases, education leaders or designated safeguarding leads may be aware of graffiti, leafleting and stickering that is of an extremist nature that children and young people may be exposed to. Education settings should consider the impact this material may have and encourage pupils to share any concerns if they feel worried, upset or anxious.

You can report hate crime here

### **Further support**

If you are experiencing any difficulties obtaining advice and guidance or have concerns about the management of any children and young people receiving Channel support, please email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk).

The Department has also set up a helpline for queries about coronavirus in any education setting: 0800 046 8687 (Monday to Friday from 8am – 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm) – email [dfe.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:dfe.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

### **Mental health**

Staff will take due regard to mental health and the impact of negative experiences such as distressing life events when more children begin returning to school from 1<sup>st</sup> June onwards. Staff and DSL's will ensure that the appropriate support is in place for pupils in the current circumstances in school (virtually for those pupils that are not attending). Staff and DSL's should be aware of the impact the current circumstances may have on the mental health of those pupils (and parents) who are continuing to work from home. .

Staff and DSL's have an awareness of disclosures and information that may be shared once children begin attending from 1<sup>st</sup> June onwards and the appropriate referral routes/support will be actioned as necessary.

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

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive support in school, they should ensure that a plan is in place for that child or young person.



**Supporting children in school**

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The school 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.

**Peer on Peer Abuse**

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

Where the 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.

**PEER ON PEER ABUSE - HUB SCHOOLS (where appropriate)**

The school will ensure that pupils are socialising with appropriate age ranged children whilst on the school site.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.