

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Background

This addendum has been developed following advice from [Department of Education: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance for Schools and Other Educational Settings](#) 27th March 2020 and will be updated as and when instructed by the DfE.

Safeguarding Clusters

Where St Columba's Catholic Primary School collaborates with other schools which results in clusters of children and staff from multiple settings in one place, we will ensure the principles of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSiE\)](#) continue to apply. The school acting as the 'hub' will continue to have regard to KCSiE as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements. Provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required.

The way our school is currently operating in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to our 'usual' safeguarding arrangements as reflected in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

However, a number of safeguarding principles remain the same:

- The best interests of children must always continue to come first
- A DSL/DDSL is available when pupils are on site
- Unsuitable people will not be allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- Anyone in school who has a safeguarding concern about any child should continue to act and act immediately
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

We will, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole school approach to safeguarding. We will satisfy ourselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining our safeguarding policies and procedures.

Amended Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

We have reviewed and revised our policy and will keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve and in accordance with:

- Any updated advice received from Bradford Safeguarding Partnership
- Any updated advice received from Bradford Local Authority regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the LADO and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need
- What staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
- Continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns
- DSL / DDSL arrangements
- Continued importance for school staff to work with and support children's social workers and the LA virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked after children
- The principles for peer on peer abuse as set out in part 5 KCSiE
- The principles of what staff and volunteers should do if they have a concern about an adult who may pose a risk to children as set out in part 4 KCSiE
- DSL and safeguarding team will agree safeguarding arrangements to support identified vulnerable children who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition
- DSL and safeguarding team will agree and communicate to parents, safeguarding arrangements for children not physically attending school, especially how to keep safe online and how concerns should be progressed

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This updated policy will be disseminated to all staff, governors and volunteers and made available on the school website.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

St Columba's Catholic Primary School will ensure where possible that if we are providing care for children we have a trained DSL/DDSL available on site. If this is not possible and in extreme circumstances, a DSL/DDSL from our school or another school, will be available to be contacted via phone or online video. Where a trained DSL/DDSL is not available on site, in addition to one of the above options, a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating all safeguarding arrangements on site. Staff and volunteers will be made aware daily of the safeguarding lead and child protection reporting procedures.

Vulnerable Children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is our top priority. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plan – see Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance of vulnerable Children and Young People for further information. There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend school, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. The school exercises flexibility to offer a place to those identified vulnerable children on the edges of receiving children's social care support. School will make regular (weekly contact) with all families identified by school.

Attendance

We adhere to DfE Attendance Guidance which states we do not need to complete our usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. We will work with a child's social worker and family to agree whether children in need should be attending school.

We will:

- follow up on any child that we were expecting to attend, who does not
- follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend
- take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to 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, notify the child's social worker

The school will comply with DfE Daily Online Attendance Form requirements guidance and keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff have already attended safeguarding training and have read part 1 and part 5 of KCSiE. We will make all staff and volunteers aware of the updated 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 be provided with a safeguarding induction, which is in line with KCSiE guidance.

If existing school staff are required to move between schools on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school will judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing staff will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

will require is a copy of the receiving school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, confirmation of school's child protection reporting procedures and names and contact details of the DSL/DDSL's.

Children moving schools

If St Columba's Catholic Primary School's children attend another setting, we will do whatever we reasonably can to provide the receiving school with any relevant welfare and child protection information. For looked-after children, any change in school will be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving school will be made aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving school will, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable 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). This will ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will be managed by the DSL/DDSL/SENCO/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 will take responsibility. Any exchange of information will have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to gain access to children. If we are recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of 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. It is important to note, when utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSiE and under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

If a member of the school staff already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. If we are a receiving school we will risk assess as we would for a volunteer. Whilst the onus remains on schools to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSiE, in the above scenario this can be achieved. If we so choose we can also seek assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

We understand our legal duty continues to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. We will also continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and the TRA's Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral. During the COVID-19 period all referrals will be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

We understand that it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, we acknowledge that we must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date. This means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in school on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from another school. We will log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. We ensure teachers are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

DfE 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. Support for pupils 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.

Online safety in schools

We understand that it will be more important than ever that schools provide a safe environment, including online. St Columba's Catholic Primary School will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources. We will identify who in school has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements and consider contingency arrangements if IT staff become unavailable.

The UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline also provides support with any online safety issues they face.

Children and online safety away from school

We understand our duty to do what we reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. Because the majority of pupils will be away from school, we acknowledge the importance 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

We await the publication of the DfE separate guidance on providing education remotely, this will include the use of technology. Recently published guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and from the London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming will be referred to help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.

We consider the safety of our pupils when they are asked to work online a priority. The starting point for online teaching has the same principles as set out in the school's Staff Behaviour policy. The Staff Behaviour policy is currently under review and will apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced. We follow the principles set out in the guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium.

Any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

reporting routes back to the school. School will signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Our regular contact with parents and carers will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. We will ensure that parents and carers are 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 school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In our communications with parents and carers, we will emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe
- [Online Thinkuknow](#) – advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre \(https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers\)](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers) - advice for parents and carers

Bereavement Support:

Senior Leaders will have a structured approach to bereavement. This will include gaining support from the Diocese, the CSP, Bradford LA and a strong staff support network. This will be in place for both parents, staff and children.