



APPENDIX

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child

[Covid19 guidance for schools 27/03/20](#)

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following [advice from government](#).

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 in the care of 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. School may also want to support other children who are vulnerable, where they are able to do so.

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.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the 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.

St Mary's 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 headteachers (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

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 does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and St Mary's will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, St Mary's 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 all vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed.

- Looked After Children – access to school Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, access welfare calls x3 per week, daily assigned work for the children, borrowing materials as required
- Previously Looked After Children – as above
- Children subject to a child protection plan – as above
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker – as above. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Children with an EHCP – access to school Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, access welfare calls x3 per week, daily assigned work for the children, borrowing materials as required. Liason with all outside agencies and L.A as required.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker – as above. Where required these children will be offered a place at school (or another school by arrangement).
- Other children the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required.

Each of these children has an individual plan which has been shared with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Looked After and previously Looked After Children.

In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school.

- Children of key workers who may attend school – school access 8am-5pm Monday-Friday. Access to school support which includes a welfare call weekly, daily assigned work, correspondence via DB Primary from staff.
- Children at home – Access to school support which includes a welfare call weekly, daily assigned work, correspondence via DB Primary from staff.

Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs E Robertson

The Deputy DSL is: Ms A Saunderson-Darkes

In the event of an emergency the following colleague from the DDMAT can be contacted:

[Paul Rikeard, Chief Executive Officer, 07469 257525](#)

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is unable to be the case (for example, when working from home) a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, and is ill, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site, seeking guidance from the DDMAT CEO and/ or LA Chief Adviser where appropriate. This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system (CPOMS – or alternative) and liaising with the offsite DSL or deputy and/or, 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 or college. It is important that all St Mary's staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

On each day, staff on site including any temporary staff or volunteers will be made aware of the identity of the DSL and how to communicate with them.

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

Reporting Any Concern

Where staff have any concern about a child, either those attending school or those staying at home, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, which includes making a report via emailing the DSL or DDSL.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the DSL or headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and immediately followed up with an email.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Academy council:

Mr Keith Hissitt

The LADO will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations against staff in line with the school policy.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. **COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.**

Holiday arrangements

We are continuing to provide places for children over the Easter break, not including Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Attendance

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by the government](#). Where a child is expected and does not arrive, the school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, through a relative etc.) but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider and manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

The school will also follow the attendance procedure if contact proves impossible with children at home. The DSL or DDSL will complete a drive-by the home. They will report it to the necessary outside agencies.

On a daily basis DSLs should:

- Make sure they know which children on their school roll/AP register have a social work and/or and EHCP

- Know who to expect at school/provision each day
- If an expected child doesn't arrive then contact home - parent/carer
- If you can't make contact then contact the social worker

If you have significant concerns about a child who is either expected to attend or who is currently at home, then you should contact Mrs E Robertson immediately.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer on peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other online risks and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure [appropriate filters and monitors are in place](#)
- The academy council will [review arrangements](#) to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on safe remote learning and guidance for [safer working practice](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. **We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly**
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
 - Tuition must be in groups only: no 1 to 1 conferencing;
 - Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household;
 - Any computers used should be in family areas, for example, not in bedrooms, and the background should be blurred.
 - Any live classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, footage

- 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 provided by school to communicate with pupils
 - Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#).
 - Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
 - [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](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
 - [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers
 - Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

Supporting children in school

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our learners.

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 that the staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate and enable effective social distancing to maximise safety.

We will refer to the government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and will continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19.

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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS (or alternative).

Where St Mary's has concerns about the impact of staff absence on maintaining safe provision – such as the Designated Safeguarding Leads, senior leaders or first aiders – we will discuss this with the CEO / LA

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a [written risk assessment](#) to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers **may not be left** unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- The school will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list

information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with [DBS guidance](#).

- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by Mrs Joanne Chalmers of who is working in the school each day.

New children at the school

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstances this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

Keith Hissitt- Chair of Governors: 1.5.2020