

# Annex to Safeguarding Policy

## COVID-19 changes to our Safeguarding Policy

### Updated Jan 2021

#### Response to COVID-19

To support public health efforts to arrest the rising cases of Covid-19 (Coronavirus), on 4th January 2020, The Prime Minister announced a new national lockdown for England, with people instructed to "stay at home" as they did during March's first lockdown. 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 Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: **children always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact a member of the Safeguarding team in line with our established safeguarding policy and 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 and local agencies.

#### The current school position and local advice

The School will follow all updated advice received from the local 3 safeguarding partners, including advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, referral thresholds and children in need.

#### 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 providers discretion including pupils who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) 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, as required.

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 the School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, we 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 and young people to attend a 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 outlined in the guidance [Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/children-of-critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings) - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

### **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, all children deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

Where a child is expected in school during this period and does not arrive the school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 11am the DSL ( or in his absence the DDSL) must be informed. The Safeguarding team will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent and if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, we will notify their social worker.

### **Reporting arrangements**

The school arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding Policy e.g. any member of teaching staff who has a concern should immediately complete a Child Protection – Record of Initial Concerns, this must be passed on to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Daniel Hood (Head Teacher) and Deputy DSLs are Jo Brown, and Emma Gerrard (Joes Club). The schools approach ensures that a member of the safeguarding team is always on site while the school is open. A member of the safeguarding team is also available during the holiday, this is Daniel Hood.

Staff will continue to follow the Safeguarding 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.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting children's services are:

### **Contact Details for Referrals Stoke-on Trent**

The Advice and Referral Team Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Tel: 01782 235100

Emergency Duty Team (out of Hours) - Tel: 01782 234234

### **Contact Details for Referrals Staffordshire**

First Response Team - Tel: 0800 13 13 126 Email: [firstr@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:firstr@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Central Referral Unit - Tel: 0300 123 44 55

Emergency Duty Service - Tel: 0845 604 2886 Out of hours- Tel: 0845 604 2889

### **Pupils' Welfare Issues**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via MASH 01782 235100

Staffordshire County Council Educational Safeguarding Advice Tel: 01785 895836

Email [esas@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:esas@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Website [Staffordshire Education Safeguarding Advice](#)

Staffordshire Vulnerable Adults referral contact details (for schools where pupils may be over the age of 18 years and have a physical or sensory impairment; drug or alcohol problems; mental health problem; or learning disability and may not be able to protect themselves from harm or abuse)

Tel: 0845 604 2719 or Emergency Duty Service number above.

### **The online tool which directs to the relevant local children's social care contact number**

[www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council)

### **Concerns about an individual in relation to extremism or radicalisation**

Local Police Tel: 10!

Prevent Co-ordinator Calum Forsyth

Email: [Calum.Forsyth@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Calum.Forsyth@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

Prevent Co-ordinator Calum Forsyth Tel: 01785 232054

Local Prevent Team Tel: 01785 238239 or 01785 233109

Email: [prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

DfE dedicated helpline for non-emergency advice for Staff & Governors Tel: 020 7340 7264

Email: [counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Whistleblowing**

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

Tel: [08000280285](tel:08000280285) Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

And advice is available at [www.gov.uk/whistleblowing](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing)

## **Forced Marriage Unit**

Tel: 020 7008 0151 Email [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk).

## **Arrangements put in place to support pupils**

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups while working remotely:

- Looked After Children – [None currently at the School ]
- Previously Looked After Children – [None Currently at the School ]
- Children subject to a child protection plan – [None Currently at the School ]
- Children who have a social worker – [Currently none at the School ]. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** 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.
- Children with an EHCP – [Currently Two Children and a third who has an EHCP application in process – all Pupils with EHCP have Risk Assessments in place which have been shared with the local authority. These will be reviewed weekly.]
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker – [None at the School at present].
- Other children the School considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. Initial contact will be via form teachers and in addition by the safeguarding team as appropriate.

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

- Children of key workers who may attend school – [These pupils are able to attend school, will be registered and form teachers will dock in with these pupils daily, during registration and will report any concerns to the DSL]
- Children at home – [Teacher will dock in with their pupils on a daily basis via Microsoft teams and follow up any children not present at least weekly by email or phone call]

## **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, informing the Safeguarding team 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. We also address the issue of peer-on-peer abuse in our remote learning curriculum. If there are any concerns, please refer to a member of the safeguarding team who will address the issue.

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The School is using Microsoft Teams to deliver remote lessons and support. Staff will be aware of the signs and of cyberbullying and other risks online 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.
- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- Staff have been reminded of the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and have been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families. Staff have all been issued with Guidance on remote learning.
- 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 have previously received information about keeping children safe online with peers and are aware of the platform that the School is using (Microsoft Teams).
- 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 careers 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](#).

### **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 regarding staff, no matter how small, to the Headteacher (if the concern is about the Headteacher, this should be reported to the Chair of Governors).

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.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged [Via MASH Tel:01782 235100]

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to the 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 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 using the address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 and Annex A 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 and volunteers are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. 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.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead training**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. 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) even if they miss their refresher training.

### **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 and Annex A (2020) (KCSIE).

Where we use 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.

St Joseph's Prep 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.

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 current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or School, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, St Joseph's Prep School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs in KCSIE (2020).

### **Volunteers**

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, the school will follow safer recruitment processes.