

Child protection during COVID-19 measures

Annex to Child Protection policy - version 1.0

Adapted by : N Hirst 04.04.2020

Shared with SLT: 04.04.2020

Shared with Governors:

Share with Staff:

To be reviewed weekly and amended as required

Amendment Dates:

Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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Version control and dissemination

This is version 1.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website here <http://www.highfield-school.co.uk/> and is made available to staff by email and also by putting in on one drive and shared drive.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can to speak to them.

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school - whether they are currently at home or in attendance - continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Current school position

Set out here your current position, including whether you have children on site or whether only part of the school is open.

All staff and volunteers attending on site from outside our school will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership

We continue to work closely with our local safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need. For the most up to date information it can be found at <https://www.wakefieldsop.org.uk/>

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Child Protection Policy.

If possible, 2 DSL's will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a one trained DSL on-site and a further available by phone and/or online video; or
- ensure we have access to a trained DSL or deputy DSL from another school or college by phone and/or online video.

Where our DSL or a deputy DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

Key personnel

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection (member of senior management) is :

Rebecca Thompson.

Contact details: email: rthompson@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk tel: 01924 264240

The Lead Safeguarding office for child protection is:

Mrs Tracy Marsh

Contact details: Email: tmarsh@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk Tel: 01924 264240

The deputy DSL's are :

Amanda Sheppard (Assistant Head KS5) asheppard@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk

Jude Hickey (Assistant Head KS4)

jhickey@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk

Nicola Hirst (Assistant Head KS3) nhirst@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk

Kirsty Barr (Parent Support Advisor KS3) kbarr@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk

Lynn Catchpole (Parent Support Advisor KS4) lcatchpole@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk

Chair of Governors/Nominated Governor is Jayne Cross

The Acting Headteacher is Rebecca Thompson

Contact details: email: : rthompson@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk tel: 01924 264240

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 or health 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school if it is in their best interests, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

All our students have an EHC plan. Therefore they will be risk-assessed on a case by case basis in consultation with the parents 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.

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and 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 children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be 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.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

Attendance

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, FaceTime, Skype or by contact a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff the family are not put at risk.

Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, we will notify their social worker.

Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures <http://www.highfield-school.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safeguarding-policy-2019-20.pdf> and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Allegations Against Staff Policy.

Staff training and induction

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSL and deputy DSLs are unlikely to receive their refresher training. In line with government guidance, our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern

- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

Highfield are not intending on any outside or new members of staff joining the school at this time.

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 our Safer Recruitment policy .

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.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness [insert link].

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Child Protection Policy, which can be accessed here <http://www.highfield-school.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safeguarding-policy-2019-20.pdf>.

Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Child Protection Policy <http://www.highfield-school.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safeguarding-policy-2019-20.pdf>.

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

New children at the school

Highfield School are not currently planning on pupils from other schools accessing our provision as we feel it would be detrimental to our pupils attending school and it has not been requested. Below is outlined what would be in place if this was to happen:

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that 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).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/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 our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff needs to know the information.

Communicating and Supporting all Pupils and Families in school

Highfield have created a communication plan that takes into account all pupils.

This has been shared with the Complex Care Needs Team, Social Workers and the Local Authority.

Students who have a social worker or are on the edge of care have been RAG rated by the DSL team.

Those who have rated Red and at greatest risk have been offered a place in school. If this is not possible due to medical concerns (underlying health concerns, self-isolation or illness) daily contact will be maintained and regular contact with the social worker linked to the pupil / family.

Those who have been rated as Amber will be individually assessed and contacted every other day or twice weekly.

Those who have been rated as Green will join the rest of the school population for weekly contact. Note: pupils may have been placed on green if their social care involvement is linked to respite care and not ongoing welfare concerns.

These calls are being logged in paper logs and will be uploaded to opoms when completed.

DSL's are maintaining daily contact to ensure any relevant updates or concerns are shared.

Students may move onto this list as DSL's feel appropriate. Those on the RAG rated list will be contacted by a DSL.

Students with underlying health Needs:

Pupils who have underlying medical conditions which will make them more vulnerable at this time were initially identified for weekly calls and will be contacted as part of this.

General School Population:

From after the Easter bank holiday all families in school will be receiving a weekly phone call to support well-being and monitor where support may be needed. This will be conducted by allocated school staff as outlined in the relevant rota and log.