

COVID-19 Addendum to Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

During the Autumn Term 2020 pupils will return to Trust schools on a full-time basis. All Trust schools will continue to follow DfE guidance closely and will implement the prevention and response system of controls i.e. the set of actions all schools **must** take. Schools will also ensure full compliance with ***Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020*** and associated Trust safeguarding policies.

Safeguarding Principles

The way our Trust schools are continuing to operate in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) remains fundamentally different to business as usual. At this time and in line with KCSiE 2020, it is important to reinforce the Trust's key safeguarding principles:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children will always continue to come first
- if anyone in a Trust school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or senior leader should be available in school at all times
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are working online.

The Trust will, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole organisational approach to secure effective safeguarding practices throughout the period of the pandemic. This will allow the Trust to satisfy itself that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening its approach to safeguarding or undermining its child protection procedures.

Trust safeguarding and child protection arrangements

The Trust will continue to ensure that any specific and ongoing safeguarding and/or child protection arrangements required to respond to the COVID-19 situation will reflect:

- advice received from Birmingham/Dudley local safeguarding partners
- advice from local public health teams
- updated government guidance for schools
- advice received from Birmingham/ Dudley local authorities in relation to children with SEND and education, health and care (EHC) plans
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child in school or self-isolating at home
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting on any safeguarding concerns and acting immediately in line with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy updated September 2020
- additional time for DSLs to fulfil their role and associated responsibilities
- the continued importance for school staff to work with and support children's social workers and local authority virtual school heads (as appropriate) for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils
- the very different circumstances schools are operating in. Processes will be reviewed more regularly for managing any report of a safeguarding concern.

- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a trustee, school leader, staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children
- arrangements to support children who schools are concerned about and who may not meet the established definition of what constitutes *vulnerable*
- the arrangements in place to keep children not physically attending school safe, especially online and how any concerns about these children should be progressed

As part of staff Safeguarding training, the Trust will ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of this addendum to the Trust's main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. The Addendum will continue to be updated as required when revised COVID-19 guidance is issued and will be made available on the Trust and individual school websites.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

All Trust schools providing care for children will continue to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site at all times. In the rare cases where this is not possible because of COVID:

- a trained DSL or deputy from the school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools will be considered if the ongoing situation requires it

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, the headteacher will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding responsibilities. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with external services.

Vulnerable children

As the pandemic continues and future self-isolation and lockdown is likely for pupils and families, ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected remains a top priority for the Trust and its schools.

The Trust will follow the DfE guidance:

Supporting vulnerable children and young people during COVID-19 outbreak

All Trust schools will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children and recognise that this continues to be especially important during the COVID-19 period.

Attendance

The Trust is committed to working with parents to encourage full attendance in line with government expectations. From the start of the Autumn Term 2020 the Trust will apply the usual rules on school attendance. These are:

- parents have a duty to send their child to school regularly where they are of compulsory school age
- schools have a responsibility to record attendance and follow up any absence
- local authorities have availability to use legal sanctions, including penalty notices and prosecution in court if a child is persistently absent.

The Trust will ensure that all schools complete attendance forms to keep a record of attendance and absence due to COVID restrictions.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All school staff have received safeguarding KCSiE 2020 update training as part of the full return to school in September 2020. The important thing for all staff going forwards will be awareness of 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 Trust schools they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Where school staff are required to move between schools on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, staff will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and will be aware of the Trust's Policy, local processes and DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

The Trust recognises that it remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. If Trust schools need to recruit new staff to manage over the COVID period, they will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSiE 2020. The Trust notes the changes the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made to its [guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#) to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

Where Trust schools are utilising volunteers, they will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out KCSiE 2020. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work with children.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the Trust is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in its schools and that appropriate checks have been carried out. As such, the Trust will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date.

Mental health

The Trust is aware that negative experiences and the continuing unpredictability of the COVID situation can affect the mental health of staff, pupils and families. Schools will remain conscious of this when communicating with parents and carers and in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home due to self-isolation. Staff have been made aware of a number of mental health support helplines for both themselves and children they may be concerned about.

Online safety in Trust schools

The Trust recognises that it will be more important than ever that its schools provide a safe environment including online learning environments. Schools will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what "appropriate" looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the schools IT systems or recommended resources. The Trust and its schools will ensure technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements is available. The Trust will also monitor its contingency arrangements if IT staff become unavailable due to illness or self-isolation.

Children and online safety away from school

The Trust and its schools will continue to act reasonably to keep children safe when working from home. In some cases where children are self-isolating they will not be able to physically attend school for fourteen days. Therefore, it is important that all staff who interact with absent children, including through online interactions, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care.

All Trust schools will review the safety of pupils when they are required to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct. This includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media.

Schools will also ensure any use of new online learning tools and systems are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

An essential part of any new online learning provision will be ensuring pupils who are required to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to school, schools will ensure children are also signposted to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

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

As schools will be in regular contact with parents and carers, communications will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. The Trust considers it to be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are doing online, including the sites they access.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents and carers, schools will continue to 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 will include:

- [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](#)

All Trust schools are advised to share this support with parents and carers.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review	Trust Board	
Links	Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Anti-Bullying Policy Behaviour Policy Staff Code of Conduct	
Staff responsible	Headteachers	
Committee responsible	Trust Board	
Date approved	September 2020	
Reviewed	Ongoing	
Sign off by Chair of Trust		
David Sheldon		Date: September 2020

*Please note that should there be any changes/further national guidance issued relevant to this Addendum, it will be updated immediately.

Change Management

Issue No.:	Change date:	Change description:
1.0	March 2020	Initial release
2.0	Sept 2020	Review following KCSiE 2020 and DFE Covid-19 Guidance