



Dame Alice Owen's School
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(COVID-19 addendum)

Addendum reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead
Addendum agreed by the Chair of Governors

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1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during any period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and Hertfordshire County Council. It sets out changes to our normal safeguarding and child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Restricting attendance during the national lockdown January 2021](#), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal safeguarding and child protection policy continues to apply.

- The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 (including looked after children and those with a child in need or child protection plan)
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Have been identified as otherwise vulnerable including:
 - Those in the process of being referred to children's social care services
 - Those adopted or on a special guardianship order
 - care leavers
 - those facing difficulty engaging with remote learning
 - students in need of mental health support
 - young carers
 - students living in temporary accommodation
 - Risk becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online.

3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

- To contact Pam Perrett, DSL, call 07716 642305
- To contact Sian Jays, Deputy DSL, call 07720 633523

All staff have been given these numbers.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

The DSL and Deputy DSL can be contacted by any member of staff or volunteer using the numbers above.

If a professional from another agency contacts the school, the front office staff must share the contact numbers of the DSL and Deputy DSL with the caller. The school answerphone message also includes the contact numbers for the DSL and deputy DSL so that they can be contacted out of hours.

If a parent or carer contacts the school, the front office staff must share the numbers of the DSL and deputy DSL with the caller. They should also be advised that if they believe a child is at immediate risk of significant harm they should first call the police on 999.

In the event that neither the DSL nor Deputy DSL can be contacted, the member of the SLT on site that day will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding. This would include managing access to and updating child protection files where necessary, liaising with children's social workers or making a child protection contact by calling 0300 123 4043 for Hertfordshire students or the contact centre for the appropriate Borough for students who do not live in Hertfordshire.

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our local safeguarding partners
- The relevant local authority about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need
- The local authority designated officer.

6. Monitoring attendance

We will follow guidance from the Department for Education on how to record attendance (including for students working remotely) and what data to submit. During the national lockdown only vulnerable students and children of critical workers will attend school in person. Where any child we expect to attend school doesn't attend or stops attending we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, as directed by the member of SLT on duty that day, calling the parent/carers by 9.30 am

- › Notify their social worker, where they have one

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately by informing the DSL or deputy DSL.

8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately by informing the DSL or deputy DSL who will inform the Headteacher.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Safeguarding for children not attending school

9.1. Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- › They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or
- › They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

These plans set out:

- › How often the school will make contact
- › Which staff member(s) will make contact
- › How they will make contact

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them every 4 weeks

If we can't make contact, we will contact the child's social worker if they have one. If the child does not have a social worker and a regular contact is not responded to, the DSL will make the decision about a child protection contact or welfare check.

9.2. Children at home

The school will maintain contact with children who are at home. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns, prioritising students according to existing needs and those students not completing work or logging on to access remote learning.

9.3. Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately. In particular, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

10. Online safety

10.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

If IT network staff are unavailable, our contingency plan is for the member of SLT on duty to contact the Head of IT and Computing for advice

10.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff code of conduct policy and IT acceptable use policy. Staff should be setting work through google classroom and providing feedback on the same platform.

Staff must ensure they are familiar with the protocols for interacting with students online and they must share student protocols before any interaction with students online

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

10.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online by signposting them to the following routes to support e.g.

[Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)

[Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)

[Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)

[LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)

[Net-aware](#) (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC)

11. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for student mental health for all students. Students have been told how they can contact the pastoral team and safeguarding leads.

We will also signpost all students, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for students learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

12. Staff recruitment, training and induction

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

When carrying out DBS checks and right to work checks we will follow the latest guidance from the DBS, Home office and immigration enforcement as appropriate (e.g. with regards to the process for verifying documents). We will inform candidates about the intended process as soon as reasonably practicable.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 183 - 188 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

13. Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive safeguarding induction in line with the expectations of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every four weeks by Pam Perrett, Assistant Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

15. Links with other policies

This policy addendum links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Information Technology and e-Safety
- Health and Safety
- Safer Recruitment
- Safe Use of Images
- Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying