

COVID-19 Addendum to Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

Scope

During the period of school closure and the re-designation of Trust schools to provide a childcare service for the parents of keyworkers and vulnerable children, all Trust schools will continue to follow DfE statutory guidance as set out in ***Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019*** and associated Trust policies. This Addendum applies during the period of school closure and reflects updated advice from our local safeguarding partners and local authorities (Birmingham and Dudley).

The Addendum sets out changes to the Trust's normal child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, the Trust's normal child protection policy continues to apply.

Core Safeguarding Principles

The way our Trust schools are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- 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 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 online

The Trust will, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole organisational approach to safeguarding. 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 policy.

Safeguarding and clusters

Where Trust schools are required to collaborate and children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) 2019](#) and this guidance continue to apply. In particular, the school that is acting as the hub in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required.

Revised Trust child protection arrangements

The Trust will ensure that any revised child protection arrangements required to respond to the COVID-19 emergency will reflect:

- any updated advice received from the local safeguarding partners

- any updated advice received from Birmingham and/or Dudley local authorities regarding 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
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns
- DSL (and deputy) arrangements
- the continued importance for school staff to work with and support children's social workers and local authority virtual school heads (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools are operating, processes will be reviewed for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE will continue to inform any revised approach)
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how Trust schools respond to any such concerns)
- any arrangements to support children Trust schools are concerned about who may not meet the 'vulnerable' definition
- what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending school safe, especially online and how any concerns about these children should be progressed

The Trust will ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of this addendum to the Trust's main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Procedures. The Addendum will be updated as new guidance is available and will be made available on the Trust and individual school websites.

Designated safeguarding leads and deputy arrangements

All Trust schools providing care for children will aim to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. Where this is not possible:

- 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

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, the senior leader on duty will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, identifying the most vulnerable children in school, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and 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.

Whatever the scenario, the Trust recognises that it is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them. To this end, all schools will ensure staff are informed by email as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on duty on any given day and how to contact them.

Vulnerable children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected remains a top priority for the Trust and its schools. The Trust will follow the DfE [guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#).

The Trust recognises the Government expectation that children with a social worker will attend provision, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.

Senior leaders, especially DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.

Working with other agencies

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

The Trust will continue to update this Addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- our local safeguarding partners
- our local authorities (Birmingham and Dudley) about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, local authority designated officers and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, Trust schools will not be completing the usual attendance registers or following usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance

Trust schools and social workers will work together to agree with families whether children in need should be attending childcare provision at school. Schools will then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend. Schools will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker.

The Trust will ensure that all schools complete the require daily attendance forms to keep a record of children of key workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and also allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the DfE/LA on the number of children taking up places.

Peer-on peer abuse

Trust schools will continue to follow the principles set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on peer abuse. Staff will continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

The Trust will continue to follow the principles set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

The Trust and its schools will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

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

Support for children who aren't vulnerable but where the Trust has concerns

The Trust and its schools have the option to offer places in schools to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who the Trust/school may have a safeguarding concern about. Trust schools will work with parents/carers to do this. This may include, children who have previously had a social worker, or who haven't met the threshold for a referral but where staff have raised concerns.

If such children will not be attending school, schools will put a contact plan in place as explained below.

Safeguarding for children not attending school

Contact Plans – Trust schools will have contact plans for children with a social worker and children for whom there are safeguarding concerns, for circumstances where:

- they won't be attending school (e.g. 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

The Trust will agree these plans with social care colleagues where relevant and the Trust will review contact arrangements on a fortnightly basis.

Safeguarding all children – All Trust staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at 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.

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. 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 consider who has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. The Trust will also monitor its contingency arrangements if IT staff become unavailable.

Children and online safety away from school

The Trust and its schools will continue to act reasonably to keep all children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending school. It is important that all staff who interact with

children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Trust's child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

All Trust schools will consider the safety of their children when they are asked 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.

The Code will apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

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

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked 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 this also signpost children 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 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 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](#)

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

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The important thing for these staff 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 existing 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 child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Children attending other settings

It is important for any Trust school whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This is especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable 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). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible 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. Where this is not possible senior leaders will take responsibility.

Whilst the Trust recognises the need to continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR these will not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe as outlined in paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

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, they will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. 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 in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE 2019. 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, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the Trust will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE 2019.

Staff on loan from other schools or nurseries

All Trust schools will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in their school and seek assurance from the loaning school that staff have the appropriate checks. Schools will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

Mental health

The Trust is aware that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work when they are at home. A designated Trust helpline has been set up to support teachers and provide advice on how best to support children.

Where Trust schools are providing for children of key workers and vulnerable children on site, they will ensure appropriate mental health and emotional support is in place for them.

The Trust and its schools will also signpost pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

Monitoring and review

This Addendum will be reviewed as guidance from local safeguarding partners, LAs or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks by the Trust Safeguarding Lead. At every review it will be approved by the Chair of the Trust

Monitoring and review	Trust Board
Links:	Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Anti-Bullying Policy Behaviour Policy Staff Code of Conduct IT Acceptable Use Policy Online Safety Policy
Staff responsible:	Headteachers
Committee responsible:	Trust Board
Date approved	April 2020
Reviewed:	Monthly
Sign off by Chair of Trust:	 Date: April 2020

Change Management

Issue No:	Change date:	Change description:
1.0	March 2020	Initial release
2.0	April 2020	Updated
3.0		