

# Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum



Approved by: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]

## Important contacts

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### 1. Scope and definitions

- 1.1. This addendum applies during the period of phased return following academy closure due to COVID-19.
- 1.2. It reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners: Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership; Devon and Cornwall Police and NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and Plymouth City Council.
- 1.3. It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.
- 1.4. Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.
- 1.5. The Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:
  - 1.5.1. Are assessed as being in need, including children:
    - 1.5.1.1. With a child protection plan
    - 1.5.1.2. With a child in need plan
    - 1.5.1.3. Looked after by the local authority
  - 1.5.2. Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- 1.6. Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or LAs, for example those who are:
  - 1.6.1. On the edge of receiving support from children's social care services
  - 1.6.2. Adopted
  - 1.6.3. At risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - 1.6.4. Living in temporary accommodation
  - 1.6.5. Young carers
  - 1.6.6. Considered vulnerable at the provider and LA's discretion

### 2. Core safeguarding principles

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

- 2.2. Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:
  - 2.2.1. The best interests of children must come first
  - 2.2.2. If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
  - 2.2.3. A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
  - 2.2.4. It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
  - 2.2.5. Children should continue to be protected when they are online

### **3. Reporting concerns**

- 3.1. 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, both for children continuing to attend or returning to the academy and those at home.
- 3.2. There are no changes to the Academy's standard reporting procedures.
- 3.3. As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

### **4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements**

- 4.1. We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible.
- 4.2. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important Contacts' section at the start of this addendum.
- 4.3. If our DSL (or deputy) can't be on site, they can be contacted remotely by email or phone as detailed in the 'Important Contacts' section above or via the member of Senior Leadership Team on site
- 4.4. We will keep all academy staff and volunteers informed by email as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.
- 4.5. We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our academy are.
- 4.6. On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding. This member of staff will be identified to all staff on site in advance of each day and their contact details are available in the 'Important Contacts' section above.
- 4.7. The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:
  - 4.7.1. Identify the most vulnerable children in the academy
  - 4.7.2. Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
  - 4.7.3. Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

### **5. Working with other agencies**

- 5.1. We will continue to work with children's social care and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.
- 5.2. We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:
  - 5.2.1. Our 3 local safeguarding partners
  - 5.2.2. The local authority about 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
- 5.3. The following guidance is currently in place:
  - 5.3.1. [COVID 19 Update: Plymouth Arrangements](#)

## **6. Monitoring attendance**

- 6.1. We will resume taking our attendance register.
- 6.2. We will also continue to submit the Department for Education's daily online attendance form, until no longer asked to do so.
- 6.3. Where any child we expect to attend the academy doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:
  - 6.3.1. Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by calling all held contacts
  - 6.3.2. Notify their social worker, where they have one
- 6.4. 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 via regular reminders through our communication channels.

## **7. Peer-on-peer abuse**

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about both children attending the academy and those at home.
- 7.3. The Academy recognises that it may not be possible to conduct investigations and support victims in the same manner due to current restrictions - where this is the case, a suitably risk assessed procedure will be developed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer**

- 8.1. We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 8.2. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.
- 8.3. The Academy recognises that it may not be possible to conduct investigations in the same manner due to current restrictions - where this is the case, a suitably risk assessed procedure will be developed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in conjunction with the principal.
- 8.4. 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).
- 8.5. 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

## **9. Contact plans**

- 9.1. We have contact plans for children with a social worker, and other children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:
  - 9.1.1. They won't be attending the academy (for example where the academy, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or
  - 9.1.2. They would usually attend but have to self-isolate
- 9.2. Each child has an individual plan, which sets out:
  - 9.2.1. How often the academy will make contact – this will be at least once a week
  - 9.2.2. Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
  - 9.2.3. How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone, doorstep visits, or a combination of both
- 9.3. We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them in line with any updated guidance.
- 9.4. If we can't make contact, we will:
  - 9.4.1. for a child with a social worker, contact the named social worker or team manager

- 9.4.2. for a child without a social worker, make a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare team

## **10. Safeguarding all children**

- 10.1. Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.
- 10.2. Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on students' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line with the procedures set out in section 3 above.
- 10.3. Children returning to the academy
  - 10.3.1. The DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before the child returns.
  - 10.3.2. The DSL (and deputy) will be given more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more children return to the academy.
  - 10.3.3. Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see students in person.
- 10.4. Children at home
  - 10.4.1. The Academy will maintain contact with children who are not yet returning to the academy.
  - 10.4.2. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns.
  - 10.4.3. They will use academy phones and devices to make calls home.
  - 10.4.4. If necessary, they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.
- 10.5. Staff and volunteers will look out for signs like:
  - 10.5.1. Not completing assigned work or logging on to academy systems
  - 10.5.2. No contact from children or families
  - 10.5.3. Seeming more withdrawn during any check-ins

## **11. Online safety**

- 11.1. On Site
  - 11.1.1. We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in the academy.
  - 11.1.2. If IT staff are unavailable, our contingency plan is for the Data Manager to discharge the required functions.
- 11.2. Off Site
  - 11.2.1. Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff behaviour policy, code of conduct and IT acceptable use policy
  - 11.2.2. Additional guidance on safe use of technology has been provided to all staff to cover the period of closure as follows:
    - 11.2.2.1. All Meets must be recorded using the inbuilt function.
    - 11.2.2.2. Never hold a Meet 1:1 - groups only
    - 11.2.2.3. Staff must wear suitable clothing
    - 11.2.2.4. Students must wear suitable clothing
    - 11.2.2.5. Other household members who may become visible in the background must wear suitable clothing.
    - 11.2.2.6. Any devices used should be in appropriate areas (for example, not in bedrooms or public spaces) and where possible be against a neutral background.
    - 11.2.2.7. Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day
    - 11.2.2.8. Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.

- 11.2.3. 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.
- 11.2.4. We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our academy, and signpost them to other sources of support too.
- 11.3. Working with parents and carers
  - 11.3.1. We will make sure parents and carers:
    - 11.3.1.1. Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
    - 11.3.1.2. Know what our academy is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from the academy
    - 11.3.1.3. Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources the academy provides
    - 11.3.1.4. Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online
  - 11.3.2. This will be achieved by weekly communication home to all parents and carers providing safeguarding advice.

## **12. Mental health**

- 12.1. Students returning to the academy
  - 12.1.1. Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on students' mental health.
  - 12.1.2. They will look out for behavioural signs, including students being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed.
  - 12.1.3. Pastoral support will be available on site where such a need is identified
  - 12.1.4. The academy will continue to work with Young Devon to provide remote counselling for those most in need.
- 12.2. Children at home
  - 12.2.1. Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for student mental health for all students.
  - 12.2.2. Pastoral support will be provided over the phone where such a need is identified.
  - 12.2.3. The academy will continue to work with Young Devon to provide remote counselling for those most in need.
  - 12.2.4. When setting expectations for students learning remotely and not attending the academy, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.
- 12.3. We will also signpost all students, parents/carers and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

## **13. Staff recruitment**

- 13.1. Recruiting new staff and volunteers
  - 13.1.1. We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our academy are safe to work with children.
  - 13.1.2. We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
  - 13.1.3. In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the [DBS](#). New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our academy.
  - 13.1.4. Similarly, temporary measures allow right to work checks to be carried out by verifying scanned documents on a video call. If we need to take this approach, we will follow [Home Office and Immigration Enforcement guidance](#).

- 13.1.5. 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 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 13.2. Staff 'on loan' from other settings
  - 13.2.1. We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our academy, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' institution that staff have had the appropriate checks. These checks will be completed by Human Resources staff at the Academy in liaison with the DSL.
  - 13.2.2. We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

#### **14. Safeguarding induction and training**

- 14.1. We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.
- 14.2. New and 'on loan' staff induction
  - 14.2.1. New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:
    - 14.2.1.1. A safeguarding induction
    - 14.2.1.2. A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
    - 14.2.1.3. Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1
  - 14.2.2. We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:
    - 14.2.2.1. A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
    - 14.2.2.2. Confirmation of local processes
    - 14.2.2.3. Confirmation of DSL arrangements
- 14.3. DSL training
  - 14.3.1. The DSL (and deputy) may not be able to take part in training during this period. If this is the case, the DSL (and deputy) will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.
  - 14.3.2. The DSL (and deputy) will do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.

#### **15. Keeping records of who's on site**

- 15.1. We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.
- 15.2. We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.
- 15.3. We will use the single central record to log:
  - 15.3.1. Everyone working or volunteering in our academy each day, including staff 'on loan'
  - 15.3.2. Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

#### **16. Children attending other settings**

- 16.1. Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving institution is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.
- 16.2. Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:
  - 16.2.1. The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
  - 16.2.2. The child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
  - 16.2.3. Details of the child's social worker
  - 16.2.4. Details of the virtual school head

- 16.3. Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO can't share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.
- 16.4. We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

**17. Monitoring arrangements**

- 17.1. This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum, every working calendar month. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

**18. Links with other policies**

- 18.1. This policy links to the following policies and procedures (some of these are combined documents for ease of reference):
  - 18.1.1. Admissions arrangements
  - 18.1.2. Data protection
  - 18.1.3. Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges
  - 18.1.4. School complaints
  - 18.1.5. Staff discipline, conduct and grievance
  - 18.1.6. Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff
  - 18.1.7. Accessibility plan
  - 18.1.8. Child protection policy and procedures
  - 18.1.9. Children with health needs who cannot attend school
  - 18.1.10. Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
  - 18.1.11. Special educational needs and disability
  - 18.1.12. Supporting pupils with medical conditions
  - 18.1.13. Behaviour in schools
  - 18.1.14. School exclusion
  - 18.1.15. Health and safety
  - 18.1.16. First aid in schools
  - 18.1.17. Premises management documents
  - 18.1.18. Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication