Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum Nov 2020

St Cuthbert's C.E Primary School

Approved by:	[Jenny Hawkins]	Date: [4/11/2020]
Last reviewed on:	[Nov 2020]	
Next review due by:	Jan 2021	

1. Scope and definitions

During the arrangements put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Child Protection/Safeguarding policy will continue to apply unless superseded by the provisions set out here. This addendum will be reviewed and revised to take account of ongoing changes to COVID-19 guidance and arrangements.

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.

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

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

> Have a social worker, including children:

- With a child protection plan
- Assessed as being in need
- Looked after by the local authority

> Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Although we may be operating in a different way to normal at times, 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.

There is no change to reporting procedures with staff alerting DSLs to concerns using CPOMs. If this is not possible a telephone call can be made to a DSL who will log, assess and act on the concern as required.

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

We will have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site during the school day and while children are in school.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

If the DSL and all other trained Deputy DSLs are isolating away from school, where possible, they will continue to be available to support and advise staff with safeguarding concerns. In this scenario, or where a DSL or Deputy is not available, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be designated to respond on site to safeguarding concerns.

Staff will continue to report all safeguarding concerns in the usual way (including allegations and safeguarding concerns about adults working in school) and be thoroughly briefed about any changes that are required – eg where the DSL or headteacher may be isolating at home.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

> Identify the most vulnerable children in school

> Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary

> 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

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 3 local safeguarding partners

> 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

The following guidance is currently in place:

• Where a child known to social care is required to isolate at home, the DSL will immediately inform the social care worker allocated to the case.

6. Monitoring attendance

Attendance recording and monitoring is taking place with the Department for Education's daily online attendance form being completed each day. Children will be expected to attend school unless a special arrangement is agreed. The school's standard procedures will be applied in the case of absence.

We have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible for all children.

Home- schooling

Where a parent or carer indicates that they intend to electively home educate because of concerns related to COVID-19, before removing the child from the school roll, a meeting will be arranged involving the parent / carer, the local authority Inclusion Service and any other key professional eg social worker.

All the options will be explored in order that the parents fully understand what is involved and so that the best interests of each individual child can be carefully considered before making a final decision.

This is particularly important where vulnerable children, children with a social worker, and those at greatest risk of harm are involved. Where an EHCP is in place for the child the local authority will be asked to give consent to Elective Home Education before removing the child from the school roll.

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.

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.

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.

10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

10.1 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 weekly based on current information and consultations.

Self isolating children

> Parents/carers of vulnerable children who are asked to isolate at home will be regularly contacted by school staff. A phone call home will be made on the following day on notification and work set home to be completed. The class teacher will call twice during the 14 day isolation period.

> Where parents or carers do not respond to calls or visits, a risk assessment will be completed and a referral to Children's Services considered.

10.2 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).

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

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

If IT staff are unavailable, our contingency plan is to request IT support from the Local Authority.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff behaviour policy/code of conduct/IT acceptable use policy. Staff engaged in remote teaching and learning will follow the code of conduct guidance set out in the "Safer Working Practice Addendum" April 2020 (Safer Recruitment Consortium) which form part of our Remote learning policy.

Social media interaction will only be made through the school Twitter account. Staff are able to prerecord videos/messages but these should only be shared following a request to the Headteacher or for educational purposes only.

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.

The online safety of children who may be learning remotely at home will be considered and any necessary adjustments made to networks and school devices used for this purpose. Children will be taught how to stay safe online when they are learning remotely. This is done through our computing teaching and our online safety policy and acceptable use documentation.

11.3 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

Updates on staying safe online will be sent through Parent mail and using the school Twitter feed.

12. Mental health

There may be a greater prevalence of mental health concerns when children return to school following a period of isolating at home. Staff will be briefed about this and time will be made available to the DSL or other relevant staff to support children as required.

We will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. Resources can be provided via email to pupils from our ELSA support assistant.

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

When setting expectations for pupils 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.

13. Staff recruitment, training and induction

13.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

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.

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 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 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13.3 Safeguarding induction and training

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

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

> A safeguarding induction
> A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
> Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

13.4 Keeping records

The Single Central Record will be continuously updated and include the details of any staff who may be engaged in teaching and learning from home and any catch-up tutors employed by the school, for example.

We will use the single central record to log:

> Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'
> Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks by Mrs Jenny Hawkins (Headteacher). At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

> Child protection policy
> Staff [behaviour policy/code of conduct]
> IT acceptable use policy
> Health and safety policy
> Online safety policy
> Whistle-blowing policy
> Anti-Bullying