



Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19

addendum

This addendum reflects the planned return of more children from 1st June following school closure caused by COVID-19. It reflects guidance from the DfE and updated advice from our local safeguarding partners (Nottinghamshire Police & the Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group) alongside Nottinghamshire County Council and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

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.

Principles

Advice for the education sector is being updated with great regularity. Therefore, the school's position on Safeguarding will undoubtedly evolve in line with latest guidelines. However, statutory guidance provided by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (KCSIE) continues to apply and we continue to be guided by the following principles:

- *Safeguarding for all*
- *Everyone's responsibility*
- *Child First*
- *It could happen here*

Approach

The school is working closely with the local authority to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children attend school. We are adhering to the DfE's definition of vulnerable pupils, which is those pupils with:

- EHC Plan;
- High-Level Needs (HLN) funding and/or Additional Family Needs (AFN) funding;
- An allocated Social Worker.
- Vulnerability to significant safeguarding risk.
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We also recognise some pupils may not be exposed to significant safeguarding risk, but may have a degree of vulnerability and benefit from a) attendance at school and/or b) additional monitoring, support and intervention. This includes children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers.

As pupils return to school, new safeguarding concerns about individual children may be identified as they are seen in person following school closure. We also recognise that during this period of uncertainty, children not previously identified may become 'vulnerable' due to changes brought about by circumstances and negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents.

School also has a duty and responsibility to safeguard all its pupils, including those not identified as belonging to a 'key worker family', identified as 'vulnerable' or not in the first year groups chosen for phased return.

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

- With regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- If anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- A trained DSL or deputy from the school will be available on site.
- 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.

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Our processes in response to COVID-19 will not weaken our approach to safeguarding or undermine this policy.

What to do if you have a concern

If you have a safeguarding concern about a child or family who are attending school or learning at home, then this should be logged on MyConcern following our normal policy and procedures. Throughout our response to COVID-19, a DSL or Deputy DSL has always been on site. This will continue as more children return. However, in the exceptional circumstance that this is not possible, two school full-time trained safeguarding leads can be contacted via mobile on the numbers below:

Peter Fowlie – 07834237890.

Liz Burke - 07805122651

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child. Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- The situation is an emergency and the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy or a senior leader is not available to do so.
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline is available to answer questions:

Email: DFE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Telephone: 0800 046 8687

Reviewing children and young people who are at risk of harm

The school is working closely with the local authority to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend school.

A summary of our expectations, taken from DfE guidance is that:

- for vulnerable children who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable)
- for vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- for vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school or local authority discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable)

In each child's case, school safeguarding staff will:

2. Review **with** the child's parent/carer, social worker, and other professionals actively involved with the child, the balance of risk and protective factors of the child remaining at home, with those of them attending school and make school's expectation clear in regards to attendance.

3. If it is agreed that the child will attend school, arrangements will be made for this. If it is not agreed for the child to attend school, and based on the level of need/concern, a plan will be determined for 'checking in'. This will be in the form of a phone call, with agreed days of the week and time. The frequency of this checking in will vary from 1-3 days, but contact will be no longer than every 3 days, depending on the level of concern/risk, in line with local

authority guidance. Risk assessments will be completed for all those pupils with CPP, CHiN Plan, EHCP or with significant safeguarding risk being at home.

3. Make and maintain a record of this decision and of any ongoing contact on MyConcern, and ensure that contact details of parents and carers, social worker and any multi-agency professional working with the child are up-to-date and recorded on MyConcern.

Checking-in conversations will ascertain: a) by speaking to the parent/carer that the child is happy and well, to ascertain if the parent has any concerns or worries, and to clarify who if any in the household is showing symptoms of COVID-19, and b) by speaking to the child, that they appear to be well and that they say that they are well. Ask specifically if they are eating and sleeping and maintaining social distance, and if they have any concerns or worries.

Where a Head Teacher/Senior DSL is concerned about a child's safety and wellbeing at home, and where the child is not accessing provision in school, consideration will be given to reviewing this decision. Where concerns for the safety of a child at home escalate, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care or if at immediate risk to the Police. Similarly, if we are not able to make contact with the child and their parent/carer, we will try again, review the risk, carry out a home visit, if deemed safe, and if appropriate call Children's Social Care and the Police.

Only visits considered as necessary will be undertaken. Staff will be advised to wear gloves, carry hand sanitiser to use following any visit, knock on the door and retreat to at least two metres distance. They will aim to talk to parents and establish children's safety through a visual check - view through a window or from afar (e.g. end of driveway) is appropriate. Staff should not enter any premises, be with a second member of staff and ensure another staff member knows where they are at all times.

Reviewing risk for all

School have set the expectation with parents/carers and pupils not at school that they should interact on Class Dojo – by submitting work, commenting on posts or messaging – at least once a week, to ensure they are safe and remaining active.

Those parents/carers and pupils who do not do so, will be contacted directly by their class teacher on Class Dojo. If there is still no contact, then a senior leader will text and call the parent over the phone and carry out a check-in conversation. If we are not able to make contact with the child and their parent/carer, we will try again, review the risk, carry out a home visit if deemed safe, and if appropriate call Children's Social Care and the Police. A record of all communication where concerns are raised will be logged on MyConcern as necessary.

If a class teacher becomes unwell and is unable to maintain their work commitments due to illness, their line manager will arrange for their responsibilities to be undertaken by another member of staff.

Staff should remain alert to signs of abuse and changes in family circumstances, as well as the potential impact of ongoing situation, on families and the potential increase in risk for pupils.

As far as is reasonably practicable parents will be supported and signposted to services which may be beneficial to their individual circumstance, including from third-sector organisations.

Before any pupils return to school, staff will ensure that all steps are taken to ensure our safeguarding and welfare information remains accurate. This includes asking if there have been any changes regarding emergency contact details, changes in a child's home life, welfare, health or wellbeing. This will be done through parent surveys and communication over the phone and ClassDojo.

Hubs and clusters

In instances where the school may need to collaborate with other settings locally and children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in KCSIE and this guidance continue to apply.

If the school is not being used as the 'hub' school by others then leaders from the school will ensure that necessary pre-checks are in place and that continued liaison is undertaken with the hub school to ensure a safe environment is maintained for all pupils attending. This will include

- Liaison with the Local Authority
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers present at the hub school have been appropriately checked and risk assessed
- That additional risk assessments have been carried out as required
- That parents and pupils attending the hub school are kept well-informed
- That familiar members of staff will be in attendance at the hub school during this period.

If the school is being used as 'hub' school. The school will ensure that any staff from another setting attending the school site, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- The individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any cause for concern
- There are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- The individual remains suitable to work with children.

The Trust DSL and Deputy DSL along with school DSL teams will monitor government guidance and ensure headteachers and DSLs are informed of any information which will enable them to keep children and staff safe. Current guidance can be found [here](#).

Safer Recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

All staff present within school will have undergone rigorous recruitment processes, including required pre-employment checking and Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks. *Note: In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.*

Schools will not be utilising volunteers whilst it can maintain optimum staffing levels through those in employment. If the need arises to seek support from volunteers the checking and risk assessment processes set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education will be followed. No volunteer who has not been checked will be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

In instances where new staff are recruited the Trust's safer recruitment processes and policy will apply, this included the necessary safeguarding training

Staff training and induction

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSL and deputy DSLs are unlikely to receive their refresher training. In line with government guidance, our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training, for the next three months.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All current school staff will be provided with an electronic copy of this policy and paper copies will be made available in our main office and within our emergency childcare provision. A record will be kept of staff who have received and read this addendum.

Online Safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Child Protection Policy. 1:1 contact with children, unless via their ClassDojo portfolio, is not permitted for child protection reasons. For example 1:1 phone or video calls.

Should a parent/carer request that you call/video call them, then you should consult a senior leader before doing so and this is not encouraged or promoted.

Children cannot post any content on ClassDojo without teacher approval.

If any content or a message from a child concerns you, or you have a concern regarding online safety and a child, follow our safeguarding procedure set out in this appendix.

Note: Remember to be mindful that if the screen is visible in non-secure areas, for example, at home, that there can be a data breach, if other members of your family can see it.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Child Protection Policy.

New children at the school

Please note: Nottinghamshire County Council (our school admission authority) will only be processing new applications for in-year school places if:

- A family has recently moved to Nottinghamshire and their child is without a school place
- The parent/carer is a key worker and their child needs to move schools as a result of the current national emergency.
- Children of key workers and vulnerable children are being offered continued provision although this may not be at their local/ordinary school during these unprecedented times.

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that 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). Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen 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. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff needs to know the information.

Appendix

What support is in place for pupils with mental health issues, or those with negative experiences and distressing life events, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?

All school staff need to be aware of and look for signs which may indicate that a child has poor mental and/or emotional health, low self-esteem or poor well-being. We recognise that mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess.

Concerns should be recorded and reported following our safeguarding procedures. Our school curriculum is being tailored to ensure it provides high-quality PHSE for pupils and we are using a SWAN framework to the return to school and following nurture principles. Individual pupils will have access to support for their mental health, but this may look different and be done over the phone or following social distancing guidelines.

Staff training has been provided on bereavement, adverse life experiences and the SWAN framework.

Staff will also direct pupils and families to services and resources which can support pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health online, over the phone and through health services.

What safeguarding issues do I need to consider when sending videos of myself teaching or interacting with pupils online?

No staff will use live webcams messages to children or their families.

If sending children teaching videos, please ensure:

- staff wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household,
- any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background,
- the video should be saved, so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed,
- videos should be kept short,
- language is professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.

1:1 contact with children, unless via their ClassDojo portfolio, is not permitted for child protection reasons. For example 1:1 phone or video calls.

Should a parent/carer request that you call/video call them, then you should consult a senior leader before doing so and this is not encouraged or promoted.

Children cannot post any content on ClassDojo without teacher approval. If any content or a message from a child concerns you, follow our safeguarding procedures.

Teaching from home is different to teaching in the classroom. Teachers should try to find a quiet or private room or area to talk to pupils, parents or carers. When broadcasting a lesson or making a recording, also consider what will be in the background.

Note: Remember to be mindful that if the screen is visible in non-secure areas, for example, at home, that there can be a data breach, if other members of your family can see it.

What arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed?

The school is doing all it can to keep all children safe online. Staff will continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk, including peer on peer abuse. These will be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

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 child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should continue to be made to children's social care and as required the police.

Online e-safety links are available via our school website both for parents and children. E-safety messages and resources are also communicated through whole school story on dojo and in newsletters on a weekly basis. E-safety activities are also sent home regularly to pupils

Parents will be made aware of the following support materials:

- How to get in touch with school staff.
- [Keeping children happy and safe online during COVID-19](#)
- [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 - advice for parents and carers](#)

Pupils will be made aware of:

- How to get in touch with school staff.
- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse