

Hardwick Primary School

Coronavirus (COVIV-19) Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy addendum

The way in which our school is currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to how we usually operate, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in either school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- 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

This annex has been written as a result of reviewing and revising the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in light of the arrangements that are currently in place in response to COVID-19. This annex will continue to be revised as appropriate to reflect any updated guidance provided by the government.

What staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child during COVID-19 School closures.

Staff and volunteers should inform the DSL of any concern in a timely manner. If the staff member needs to communicate a concern about a child when they themselves are not in the school building this should be done via a phone call. (DSL and ADSL phone numbers are available in the staff handbook) You will also be asked to make a written record of your concern to keep in the school's child protection file. Record of concern (ROC) forms are available outside the staffroom. These forms should be stored securely at home to ensure GDPR regulations are adhered to. If the staff member is due to be in the school building in the coming fortnight the ROC form should be retained until the member of staff comes into the school building. If the member of staff is not due to be in the school building for the foreseeable future this form should be emailed to the DSL.

It continues to be essential that all staff and volunteers act with immediacy when reporting safeguarding concerns.

DSL (and alternate) arrangements

Staff are working their contracted hours which ensures that either the DSL or an ADSL is in the school building each day. Should this cease to be the case contact with the DSL/ADSL should be via phone call or online video. They will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

Working with other agencies to support pupils.

It continues to be essential that as school staff, we work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously

looked-after children. This will be done via the DSL who has online contact with these agencies whether in the school building or not.

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 a school responds to any such concerns.

Any staff member who has concerns about a staff member or volunteer posing a safeguarding risk should follow the school's Whistleblowing procedures (available in the Policy folder or on the staffroom wall)

Arrangements in place to keep children not physically attending the school safe, including those who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition.

In school a list of children have been identified (those who do not meet the government's criteria of 'vulnerable' but are still considered to be at risk) and members of staff have been allocated to make a weekly phone call to check on the child and their family if they are not attending school.

Brief notes from these phone conversations will be made on the record document uploaded to SharePoint. The DSL will create a new record sheet for each week. These records will be added to the school's Child Protection records by the DSL.

If at any point these phone discussions include a disclosure or are a cause for concern, the allocated member of staff will make the DSL aware immediately so that necessary action can be taken.

All families are required to email the school each week so that we have had a point of contact with each child's family. Failure to do so will result in the school calling the household to check on their welfare.

Attendance

The Department for Education has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes.

Children moving Schools

It is important for the school to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving school with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be 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 happen by the DSL, and likewise between SENCo for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders should take responsibility.

Safer recruitment

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable, are not allowed to enter the school or gain access to children. If recruiting new staff, the school should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. 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.

Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current COVID-19 circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this when setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where they are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, staff should ensure appropriate support is in place for them. (The DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state). Support for children in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services, e.g. OM Health and Wellbeing Consultancy

Online Safety

The school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online in the school. Parents who are loaned a school laptop or iPad sign to say they will activate appropriate filtering on their home internet routers.

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 online safety concerns should be reported to Nick Wells (Online Safety lead). Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Online Safety Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's staff code of conduct. This includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media. This will apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

Staff will ensure children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online.

Staff will be in regular contact with parents and carers via email. These communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access.

(With effect from 5th January 2021)