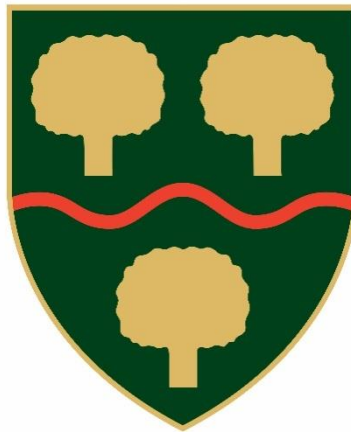


# THE ORCHARD SCHOOL



## **Whole School Child Protection Procedures and Safeguarding Policy (To safeguard and promote the welfare of children) COVID-19 Appendix**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mrs N. Stokes  
Deputy DSL: Mrs E. Hutson**

Updated 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – approved by S. Fox

**All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' where safeguarding is concerned.**

The Orchard School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

## Update due to the Coronavirus Pandemic

### Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mrs Nancy Stokes	<a href="mailto:nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk">nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk</a> DSL mobile contact number during Pandemic 07922 850155
Deputy DSL	Mrs Elizabeth Hutson	<a href="mailto:ehutson@theorchardschool.co.uk">ehutson@theorchardschool.co.uk</a>
Designated member of senior leadership team	Mrs Sandra Fox Or Mrs Karen Paxman	<a href="mailto:sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk">sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk</a> School emergency out of hours contact number 07973 348640 <a href="mailto:kpaxman@theorchardschool.co.uk">kpaxman@theorchardschool.co.uk</a>
Head Teacher	Mrs Sandra Fox	<a href="mailto:sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk">sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk</a>
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Eva Callaghan	0115 804 1272

### 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our three local safeguarding partners, Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) and local authority Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC).

It sets out changes to the school's Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures 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, the school's Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures continue 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 are operating in a different way to normal, 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 (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It is essential that unsuitable people do not 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 immediately on any concerns they have about a child. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children attending school and those at home.**

Concerns about a child should still be reported to Mrs Stokes by phone (07922 850155) or email (nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk). If Mrs Stokes is not available the report should be made to the Deputy DSL Mrs Hutson (ehutson@theorchardschool.co.uk). If neither of these are available the concern should be reported to the Head Teacher, Mrs Fox (sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk), school emergency out of hours contact number 07973 348640). Staff must ensure they have an acknowledgement from one of these members of staff that they have received the information. If no acknowledgment is made the member of staff should report the concern to MASH on 0300 500 80 90 or 0300 456 4546 (out of hours).

**If the concern is about a member of staff (including supply staff, other staff, volunteers and contractors):**

Firstly Mrs Fox (Head Teacher) should be informed. (If the concern is about the Head Teacher, Mr Atkinson (co-proprietor of the school) should be informed).

If the person raising the concern is not happy with how the issue has been dealt with by Mrs Fox then Mr Atkinson (co-proprietor of the school) should be informed of the concerns.

**If the person raising the concern is not happy with the measures taken by Mr Atkinson and is still concerned about the member of staff the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Eva Callaghan must be contacted.**

If there is a situation where there is a conflict in interest in reporting the matter to the Head Teacher then it should be reported directly to the LADO.

Contact details:

Mrs Fox 01427 880395 [sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk)

Mr Atkinson 07973 348640 [patkinson@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:patkinson@theorchardschool.co.uk)

LADO – Eva Callaghan (education), LADO Allegations Officers, tel: 0115 8041272.

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

Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum. There will be an on-call Designated Safeguarding Lead in the event that the school cannot provide an on-site Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL.

If the DSL (or deputy) cannot be in school, they can be contacted remotely by phone or email.

DSL: Mrs Nancy Stokes, [nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk), 07922 850155, 01427 880395

Deputy DSL: Mrs Elizabeth Hutson, [ehutson@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:ehutson@theorchardschool.co.uk), 01427 880395

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Mrs Fox or Mrs Paxman. You can contact them by:

Mrs Fox, [sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:sfox@theorchardschool.co.uk), 01427 880395, 07973 348640

Mrs Paxman, [kpaxman@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:kpaxman@theorchardschool.co.uk), staff have been given Mrs Paxman's home landline number.

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

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

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school
- Liaise with the DSL to update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with and direct children's social workers to the DSL's mobile contact number where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments.

Parents or pupils with a safeguarding concern should call or email Mrs Stokes (07922 850155, [nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk)), who will respond to any concerns or forward the concern to the Deputy DSL or designated member of the Senior Leadership team.

Parents or pupils with a pastoral concern should contact the relevant Form Tutor by email. If this is an emergency the DSL can be reached on [nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:nstokes@theorchardschool.co.uk), 07922 850155).

## 5. Working with other agencies

We will, and all staff should, continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads.

**All staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.**

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our three 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

Please see the two updates from the NSCP at the end of this appendix.

All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex B of KCSiE 2021. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will communicate with staff any new local arrangements.

## 6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of partial school closure, we will not be following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by making contact by telephone or email.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

There is an 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.

We are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows us to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

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. Parents are requested to contact the School Office by email if they make any changes to their contact details and emergency contacts.

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

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the *Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy* and the school's *Child Protection Procedures and Safeguarding Policy* when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about both children attending school and those at home. The school's procedures will continue to operate, however, with the current self-isolation measures phone calls and video calls might need to be used instead of face to face interviews.

## **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 – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

The school's procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff will continue to be followed.

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](mailto:misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

## **9. Support for children who are not 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns**

Following contact with the DSL we have the option to offer places in school to children who do not meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

## **10. Contact plans**

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- They will not be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this would not be in the child's best interests); or
- They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

**Current child protection concerns (children who have an allocated social worker):**

- Phone contact at least twice a week with the child being spoken to and/or the child attending school. If contact cannot be made with the child e.g. the child refuses to answer the phone, then the parent/carer will be contacted. If no contact can be made with the parent/carer the child's social worker will be contacted.
- Liaising with all necessary professionals as usual
- Attending any planned review meetings, unless advised otherwise, either virtually or by telephone.
- Records kept of concerns and outcomes of meetings in the usual way
- SLT to brief DSL and Deputy DSL of any safeguarding actions or work carried out by them if DSL or Deputy DSL not on site.

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant. These plans will be reviewed regularly and the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

If we cannot make contact, we will contact children's social care or the police.

**Vulnerable pupils:**

- Regular phone contact with the child being spoken to and/or the child attending school.
- Records kept of concerns and referrals to MASH if necessary
- SLT to brief DSL and Deputy DSL of any safeguarding actions or work carried out by them if DSL or Deputy DSL not on site.

**When speaking to a pupil this should be either on the school phone or the DSL mobile phone. However, in the current circumstances if a non-school phone is used the number must be withheld. A written record of the conversation should be kept on the DSL issued template and subsequently a copy emailed to the DSL. If the member of staff has concerns after speaking to a pupil they must report this immediately (see above for method in reporting concerns).**

**All other pupils**

- Contact to be made by the Form Tutor every three weeks. If pupils make contact in the interim to highlight an issue this should be recorded on the Pastoral Contact form and sent to the DSL.
- The Pastoral Contact Form will be emailed to the DSL to indicate if contact has been made with the pupil by phone or online. Any concerns should be reported immediately to the DSL.

## **11. 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 line with the procedures set out in section three above.

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to the online classrooms
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any communication

Form tutors should contact the pupils in their form every three weeks. If pupils make contact during the three weeks to highlight an issue this should be recorded on the Pastoral Contact form and sent to the DSL. If it is not possible to make contact with individual pupils the DSL must be informed. If staff have a concern about an individual pupil this must be reported to the DSL immediately. Where possible learning should continue at home through work provided by the teaching staff.

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support pupils' mental health. For children in school we are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students. The Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher/DSL will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. We will refer to the government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of covid-19.

## **12. Online safety**

### **12.1 In school**

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

### **12.2 Outside school**

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing Child Protection Procedures and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct, E-Safety/ Online Safety Policy and Staff Information Systems Code of Conduct.

Staff should be communicating with pupils via their official school email and Gmail accounts and through Google Classroom. However, some staff may be asked by the Senior Leadership Team to contact some pupils by telephone; staff must keep a log of any phone conversations on the pastoral template with the pupils and make sure personal phone



numbers are withheld. A copy of the record of the conversation must be emailed to the DSL.  
**Staff should not contact pupils via social media as stated in the Code of Conduct.**

Staff must 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 three 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. For example Childline, UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP.

Online teaching should follow the same principles set out in the Code of Conduct.

### **12.3 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.

## **13. Mental health**

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. The school can arrange for a private counsellor to speak to a pupil but this will be by a phone call.

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.

Staff will be in contact with the children through their online classrooms and will continue to be vigilant for signs of safeguarding risk or emotional distress. For pupils who do not have a Google account a member of staff will make contact with the family.

Any safeguarding risks concerning a pupil's mental health must be reported to the DSL immediately.

The school's Mental Health Lead Mrs Hutson can be contacted by email at [ehutson@theorchardschool.co.uk](mailto:ehutson@theorchardschool.co.uk).

## **14. Staff recruitment, training and induction**

### **14.1 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 three 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 are not in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Where the school is utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSiE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

### **14.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools**

The school will take into account the Department for Education supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the covid-19 pandemic. We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks. These risk assessments will be carried out by Mrs Stokes and Mrs Fox. This will include the current employer confirming in writing that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

### **14.3 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 complete the school's usual induction process which includes the following:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our *Child Protection Procedures and Safeguarding Policy* (and this addendum)
- Part One, Part Five and Annex B of KCSiE 2021

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our Child Protection Procedures and Safeguarding Policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

#### **14.4 Keeping records of who is on site**

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.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

We will keep a log of:

- 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. Children attending other settings**

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information. Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENDCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the child's social worker
- Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO can't share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section four will do this.

We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

#### **16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed regularly by Mrs Stokes and Mrs Fox and as guidance from the three local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated.

## **17. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- The Child Protection Procedures and Safeguarding Policy (this includes the role and identity of the DSL and Deputy DSL).
- The Behaviour Policy
- The Code of Conduct and Staff Information Systems Code of Conduct
- The Children Missing Education Policy (including the Safeguarding response to children who go missing in education)
- Part One and Annex B of KCSiE 2021
- E-Safety/ Online Safety Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Allegations of Abuse against Staff Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Sexual Exploitation Policy
- Complaints' Policy
- Cyber-Bullying Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Extremist Behaviour and Radicalisation Policy
- FGM Policy
- Forced Marriage Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Homophobic Bullying Policy
- Looked After Child Policy fpol
- Safer Recruitment in Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy



## Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – Coronavirus update

I'm sure that everyone has been working hard to adapt to the new circumstances that we find ourselves in and to ensure that services continue to be delivered in the most appropriate and effective way. The protection of vulnerable children during this time remains a shared responsibility and clearly the additional challenges brought about through social isolation mean that it is even more important for there to be pro-active communication between professionals. Our strong partnership work will help us to continue to support and protect children #PullingTogetherNotts

The **Strategic Leadership Group (SLG)** of the NSCP have held a Skype meeting and agreed that the focus for the partnership should be on those children with the highest needs and those most vulnerable. The meeting was used to provide updates on the response to the coronavirus and consider the implications for partnership work. The SLG agreed to increase the frequency of their meetings to every 4 weeks and asked that the **Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement Group (SAIG)** provide a mechanism for 'sense checking' revised operational arrangements for delivering safeguarding and ensure that multi-agency work is as effective as it can be. Skype meetings will be arranged for the SAIG every two weeks and will be used to; check how well safeguarding children practice is working in the current situation, consider any new working practices, their impact on children and for partnership working and identify emerging challenges. Dr Mark Peel, NSCP Independent Scrutineer, will be providing assistance and support.

**Key operational meetings** that address the risk of harm to children and young people will continue to take place using Skype facilities wherever possible, these include strategy discussions, child protection conferences and arrangements to address specific areas of safeguarding such as the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Panel, Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel, Serious Youth Violence & Criminal Exploitation Panel and Missing Hotspots Meeting. Local Authority staff all have access to Skype for Business, and it is also possible to download the app by following a link in meeting invites or alternatively just dial in and use the meeting code.

The requirement to submit **Serious Incident Notifications** will remain in place, in line with national guidance, and **Rapid Reviews** will be undertaken with some flexibility around timescales and consideration of capacity. The decision around whether to undertake a more in-depth review (**Child Safeguarding Practice review**) and the timing of such a review will take account of resource implications.

The **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)** will continue to review cases using Skype meetings and with the assistance of the E-CDOP system. There are also specific responsibilities in relation to the notification of child deaths during this time.

**Multi-agency NSCP training courses** have been suspended and this decision will be reviewed on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Those who have booked on courses or were assisting with presenting are being notified of course cancellations directly via the contact details provided at time of booking. Partners are reminded that a suite of E learning is available and can be accessed online through the NSCP learning management system <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp/training/e-learning> and we will be working to ensure all options to continue disseminating learning are used, including briefings, newsletters and new E learning modules.

**Multi-agency audit activity** has been suspended and those involved in any ongoing work have been notified (this includes the current HSB audit and the forthcoming s.11 audit).

We will continue to take forward other non-case related partnership work, where possible, in a way that takes into account the availability of partnership resources and priorities so as to ensure that we continue to make progress in safeguarding children. The situation is changing each day, and we will need to be flexible in our approach, so further updates will be provided to keep you informed as we work through this together.

Finally, as move forward through this situation, should you identify gaps appearing in yours or other services please raise them through the SAIG either via your representative or directly with Steve Baumber [steve.baumber@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:steve.baumber@nottsc.gov.uk)

Thanks for your continued commitment to safeguarding partnership work.

**Colin Pettigrew**

(Colin @yourdcsnotts)

**Corporate Director for Children & Families**

**Chair of the NSCP Strategic Leadership Group**

**31/03/20**



## COVID-19: Safeguarding in schools update

### **Introduction**

The government has made the decision to close schools for the provision of education, and further to direct people not to leave their home except for limited reasons. This is a key aspect of the government's social distancing policy aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19. Schools and settings have been asked to make childcare provision for a limited number of children and young people, identified as being either the children of keyworkers, thereby enabling these keyworkers to continue with their vital work, or children with significant additional needs whereby the risks associated with them not accessing provision during the day outweigh the risks associated with them mixing with others outside of the home. For some children and young people, receiving provision during the day is a protective factor from harm.

The changes to the operation of schools brought about by the government's response to COVID-19 has created the need for all schools and settings to review their Child Protection policy and practices in the light of these changes. The government's most recent guidance on safeguarding in schools can be found at:

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

This updated Local Authority guidance has been prepared by myself as Safeguarding Children in Education Officer, alongside colleagues in Children's Social Care, and in the wider Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. It is not a comprehensive summary of the government's updated guidance, which should be read in full, nor is it a replacement for previously issued national or local guidance on safeguarding in schools. Notwithstanding this additional guidance, the requirements on all schools and partners as laid out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) remain in force. This guidance will help you to write a tailored addendum to your own Child Protection Policy for 2019-20.

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to 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 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 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.

### **Revised schooling arrangements**

Educational settings (not including childcare) are being required to complete a short form to notify the Department for Education about their status regarding coronavirus (COVID-19). This form asks those running institutions to confirm whether their setting is open and, if so, provide information about numbers of pupils and staff attending. The completed form is submitted by noon of each weekday, thereby allowing for a record of attendance to be maintained.

The DfE is asking local authorities to maintain an overview of the provision being made available and accessed within its jurisdiction, and to coordinate access to this provision where a school or setting is not able to staff provision for the number of children and young people who are required to access it. The local authority's safeguarding responsibilities have not been

altered by these changes, in fact, the changes require that the local authority and the wider Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is more vigilant to the potential for children to come to harm as a result of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Reviewing children and young people who are at risk of harm**

The government's latest guidance on identifying those children and young people identified as vulnerable can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Review your school's Vulnerable Children's list to identify:

- i. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan,
- ii. Children subject to a Child in Need Plan,
- iii. Children for whom an extended period of time at home will present an additional risk to the child,
- iv. Children who are Young Carers

In each child's case:

1. Clarify where the children deemed to be vulnerable will be living during the period of the school's partial closure and discuss with parents the need to respond to calls.
2. Review **with** the child's parent/carer, social worker, and other professionals actively involved with the child:
  - a) the balance of risk and protective factors of the child remaining at home, with those of them accessing childcare on the school site, and
  - b) based on the level of need/concern, determine a plan for 'checking in', and this checking in should include at least a phone call, and preferably a video call. The frequency of this checking in will vary from 1-3 days, but contact will be no longer than every 3 days.
3. Make and maintain a record of this decision and of any ongoing contact on the school's usual recording system, 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 the school's recording system
4. The checking-in conversation 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.
5. Where a Head Teacher/Senior DSL is concerned about a child's safety and wellbeing, and where the child is not accessing provision in school, consideration should be given to extending an invitation to the child to access provision at school.
6. Where concerns for the safety of a child at home escalate, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care or if at immediate risk to the Police. Similarly, if you are not able to make contact with the child and their parent/carer, try again, review the risk assessment and if appropriate call Children's Social Care and the Police.

#### **Safeguarding implications for a school making childcare provision on its site**

The school or setting making provision should apply the setting's usual safeguarding protocols, or where these have to be varied, the revised protocol should be published on the school's website. All staff and volunteers need to be made aware of any amendments to the safeguarding policy, and these amendments need to be made publicly available.



As and when 'hubs' are established to make childcare provision for children and young people from a number of schools, the host school must clarify who is the Senior DSL to whom any and all safeguarding concerns should be reported. This Senior DSL for the setting, or their deputy, will be available for consultation to any of the members of staff delivering the provision, including staff who may be accompanying a child from a different school or setting. This consultation need not be face-to-face, but it does need to be readily available.

Schools and settings acting as 'hubs' will need to be able to demonstrate that those with Senior DSL and DSL responsibilities have accessed an appropriate level of safeguarding training in accordance with KCSiE (2019), and our own Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures.

In making provision for children and young people on your school site, where possible make arrangements to keep primary and secondary pupils apart.

Where children are accessing provision on a school site other than the school where they are a registered pupil, their current Head Teacher/Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (Senior DSL) need to ensure that any necessary safeguarding information is shared with the Senior DSL for the provision which the child is accessing, in order to ensure they are fully conversant with the child's safeguarding needs, potential risks and any child protection or CiN plans in place. This is particularly important if the child is not accompanied by a member of their own school's staff.

#### **Other general safeguarding advice**

The Senior DSL must ensure that remote access (working from home) to the school's safeguarding recording system is possible and that a laptop/iPad is available for each member of the DSL team.

Discuss with neighbouring schools about DSL cover in the case of sickness.

Remind Teachers to only use approved contacts methods – no social media groups etc

Where a school receives Operation Encompass/Domestic Violence notification emails the in-box should be checked on a daily basis and appropriate actions taken.

The DSL team must meet weekly, via Skype Business, to discuss the status of each child they are working with, and where necessary seek advice.

We advise in accordance with statutory guidance that you always act in the 'best interest of the child'

#### **Key documents and links**

Since the publishing of the government's updated advice on safeguarding in schools, a number of organisations including schools have created policy templates and other resource tools to support them in their work. The best of these will be uploaded onto the two main sites used by Nottinghamshire's schools to access recommended safeguarding materials, namely:

- The safeguarding section of Schools' Portal
- The NSCP website, in section *resources/schools*

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### Managing safeguarding risk: Additional guidance for Nottinghamshire Schools during COVID-19 Crisis

#### Revised Risk Assessments

The Covid-19 Crisis has impacted upon the ability of schools to carry out their duty to safeguard all pupils on roll through the usual daily contact. This will have required Headteachers, DSLs and SENCOs to reflect upon where the present situation may create additional risks for vulnerable children including those with CPP, CIN, EHAfs, EHCPs and those pupils deemed to be vulnerable by the school.

Whilst pupils in these groups are currently allowed to access care in school many families have chosen to keep their children at home, which has necessitated the development of remote monitoring and revised risk assessments. The following simple RAG system may help to clarify which pupils are most at risk.

RAG Rating	Threshold
<b>RED</b>	Pupil should be attending school or agreed provision daily: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding concerns increased due to lack of attendance or agreed provision</li> <li>Welfare of the child/ young person and family is likely to be severely negatively impacted upon without support of the school or agreed provision</li> </ul>
<b>AMBER</b>	Through the use of 'reasonable endeavours' the pupil is able to be supported within the home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding concerns can be monitored using an appropriate format where necessary, e.g digitally, online, by drive by visits, telephone, to enable the child to access learning and remain safe and healthy (including mental health and personal wellbeing). Social Care have agreed, if involved.</li> </ul>
<b>GREEN</b>	Pupil is able to be supported within the home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupil can be cared for safely in the home setting at the present time with telephone contact only. Social Care have agreed, if involved.</li> </ul>

#### Continuation of usual safeguarding processes

The local processes for responding to safeguarding concerns are detailed in The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's *Pathway to Provision (Version 8)*. Whilst the measures put in place to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the level and nature of contact which schools are having with their pupils, the thresholds for reporting serious safeguarding concerns have not changed.

Colleagues in Children's Social Care continue to visit and stay in contact with families where there are known safeguarding risks, including where Child Protection plans are in place, and where children have been designated as 'Children in Need'. In these open cases the school will be expected to continue to work closely in partnership with the Social Worker as part of the multi-agency team supporting the child.

When the government made its decision to close schools for the provision of education, schools were required to make childcare provision for the children of keyworkers, as well as for those pupils deemed to be 'vulnerable' where the risks of infection from being in school were outweighed by the risks to the child's wellbeing by remaining at home. (See *Safeguarding in schools update 31.03.20*). The determination of this balance of risk is not an exact science; it takes into account a range of risk and protective factors, both historical and current, and recognises that these change over time. So, any decisions need to be kept under review. Where a decision is made to allow a child to remain at home, the risks inherent in that decision may be mitigated by the school maintaining frequent contact with the child and their parent or carer.

Since the partial closure of schools, many Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) have worried about the impact that being at home may be having on some pupils who they deem to be vulnerable. These worries may be about the child's emotional wellbeing, their susceptibility to online abuse, or to other forms of harm. In the past, when such a child had been attending school on a daily basis, the school was able to reassure itself of the child's ongoing safety and wellbeing, including when there has been a history of domestic violence, substance misuse, or challenging behaviour within the family. Now, with most children not attending school on a daily basis, how should a school respond to such worries?

- As before, where a school has good reason to believe that a child has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, the school should make a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Headteachers and DSLs will already be aware of the evidence that is required to support a referral to the MASH.

"If a practitioner has a new safeguarding concern regarding a child, or considers that a child is in need of specialist support from the children's social care in line with the threshold criteria outlined on page 12 (of *Pathway to Provision*), they should contact the MASH. If a practitioner working with a child, young person or family has immediate concerns about child protection, they should contact the MASH urgently, without delay. If you believe that a child is in immediate danger, call the police immediately on 999." *Pathway to Provision*

- Where a school recognises that a referral to the MASH is not appropriate, but where the child's family has agreed that they might benefit from support, a referral to the Early Help Unit (EHU) is appropriate.

### Concerns arising during the current crisis that do not meet usual thresholds

However, where a school has concerns about a child's possible wellbeing, but insufficient evidence to justify a referral to the MASH, and no consent from parents for an EHAF, there are several actions which a school can take:

- Seek to clarify the basis on which the concerns about the child's wellbeing are held. This might include discussing these concerns with the child's parents or carers, and/or use the *Carrying out a contextual safeguarding structured conversation* framework to discuss the concerns with a colleague. This framework has been designed to help Headteachers, DSLs and others to think carefully about the concerns they have about a child's wellbeing, and thereby consider whether these concerns are likely to meet the threshold for a referral to the MASH, to the EHU, to another support service, or whether it is appropriate for the school itself to take further actions and 'hold' the concerns. The guidance behind this contextual safeguarding framework recommends careful consideration through a 'structured conversation' with a colleague either within the school, or with peer support from another Headteacher or DSL.

"There is no substitute for sound professional judgement, effective inter and intra-agency communication and good communication and good evidence-based practice..." *Pathway to Provision*



- Put in place arrangements to increase the protective factors around the child. Whilst partial school closures have been in place, many schools have maintained regular contact with children deemed vulnerable, with the level of this contact being proportionate to the level of concern which the school has about the child's wellbeing.

Since the partial closure of schools, some Headteachers and DSLs have contacted the MASH to discuss concerns about a child's potential wellbeing in the absence of being able to make regular contact with the child or their parent/carer. In the most extreme cases, the parent/carer has refused to answer phone calls, respond to texts and emails, and not appeared at the door. In such circumstances a referral to the MASH without evidence of significant risk of harm would not be appropriate, and nor would referral to the Family Service, unless the school had reason to believe that the parent/carer would be more likely to respond to contact from them. It is a common misconception that social workers or members of the Family Service have any more right of access to someone's home than, for example, a teacher.

'Holding' concerns about a child's wellbeing is difficult when the parent/carer is not responding to contact. The Local Authority is aware that this can be emotionally challenging and frustrating. Do work together with local colleagues, perhaps other Headteachers or DSLs in your hub, to share scenarios of concern. During the Covid Crisis we have arranged for the SEMH team to work with you on this issue in your localities, to allow you to discuss your concerns about the well-being of pupils. Their contact details can be found at the end of this guidance document.

School leaders have developed a range of measures to encourage the parent/carer to maintain contact with the school:

- Make phone calls and leave positive phone messages at different times of the day
- Text or email daily
- Try to make contact using the second emergency contact number provided by the family, via a known relative, or via another service who you know are also involved with the family
- Message that someone, ideally someone familiar to the child, will be driving past the front gate at a given time, and ask that the child and their parent can come to the door. This could be to drop off learning resources, certificates, positive messages, rewards etc
- If the child is eligible for Free School Meals, use the 'drive by' as the means by which the voucher can be delivered
- Write formally, explaining the duty of care which the school has towards all children on the school roll, making clear what 'next steps' the school will make if the parent/carer does not make contact with the school.
- If you have information that leads you to believe that any child may be at heightened risk of harm e.g. knowledge about mental health needs, substance misuse or domestic violence, and you have made unsuccessful stringent and concerted efforts to communicate with the family, it is likely that the threshold for referral to the MASH will have been met. In these circumstances please inform the family that unless they respond to you immediately, you will need to contact the MASH to request Social Care/Police involvement.

Do keep copies of all amended risk assessments, records of contacts, and attempted contacts.

#### References

- *Contextual safeguarding: Reflective practice & structured conversations*. Guidance for schools. (14.01.20)
- *Carrying out a contextual safeguarding structured conversation*. Proforma to use to support the structured conversation. (undated)
- *Contextual safeguarding: Risk & protective factors*. Grid to support the structured conversation. (10.09.19)
- *Covid-19: Safeguarding in schools update*. Updated local guidance to schools following the issuing of central government safeguarding guidance. (31.03.20)
- *Pathway to Provision (Version 8)*. Multi-agency Thresholds Guidance for Nottinghamshire Children's Services. December 2018.

- *Safeguarding Children: Indicators of possible abuse or neglect.* NSCP. [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp)
- *Helpline statement.* Guidance to professionals in responding to concerns about domestic violence. (09.04.20)

### SEMH Team Contact details

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## Orchard School Pastoral Contact/Support During Covid 19 School Closure

Pupil Name:

Year Group:

Completed by:

[illegible]