

COVID-19 School closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection and COVID arrangements for students who are self isolating

(Addendum to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

Date: 1st September 2020

To be reviewed as necessary

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Context

From 20th March 2020 until June/September 2020 (dependent upon year group and school circumstances) parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact Number	Email
Duty School Safeguarding Lead	Dan East Sally Jenkins	0117 959 7200	d.east@bristolfreeschool.org.uk s.jenkins@bristolfreeschool.org.uk
Local Authority Safeguarding Advice Contact	James Gregory School safeguarding Advisor	0117 922 2710 07876131135	James.gregory@bristol.gov.uk
Local Authority MASH referral details	Bristol City Council - First response	0117 903 6444	https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/make-a-referral-to-first-response

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Those with an EHC plan have been and will be risk-assessed if there are further lockdowns in consultation with the Trust, the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home in the event of a lockdown.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself will not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support where necessary.

In case of a further lockdown, or for students whose families are self-isolating the school will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) for children looked-after and previously looked-after. The lead person for this will be Sally Jenkins.

There is an expectation that certain categories of vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting during a lockdown, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put

them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where it is not possible for the child to attend their own school, an alternative placement will be explored in consultation with the social worker and the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the school or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Attendance monitoring

In September 2020, all children are expected to return to school. The school will resume attendance monitoring as normal and in line with government guidance, schools will undertake usual attendance processes but when doing so take into account the addendum-recording attendance in relation to coronavirus-covid-19 during the 2020 to 2021 academic year (link below):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

The school will also challenge any unauthorised absences.

Where a family is self-isolating awaiting a COVID test or having tested positive, the school will stay in close contact with parents/carers.

If there is another national lockdown or a local lockdown, in line with previous practice, the school and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – the school will then follow up on any student that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The school will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, the school will, when communicating with parents/carers confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker where relevant.

The school will complete any Government's [online attendance form](#) and supply any information regarding attendance requested by the Trust and the Local Authority.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL detailed in our main policy. Contact details are reproduced above.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site during a lockdown. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home. The DSL/DDSL will consult the Headteacher and Lead Adviser where issues arise related to safeguarding to ensure a consistent and proactive response.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and, as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

It is important that all school name staff and volunteers have at least remote access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day of a lockdown staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, this will be done remotely and not in person.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they will continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Verbal disclosures will be by telephone if there is a lockdown. If the DSL/DDSL is uncomfortable giving staff their own mobile telephone number, arrangements should be made for the DSL/DDSL to take home a school mobile phone. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns regarding the Headteacher should be directed to the Russell Education Trust, which can be contacted on admin@russelleducationtrust.org.uk

Safeguarding training and induction

DSL face to face training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID19 virus.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their face to face refresher training.

All Leadership Team members will ensure they have 'in date' (updated every 2 years) Lead online training. This is available from SafeCIC. See link below.

<https://www.safecic.co.uk/41-online-training/safeguarding-courses/97-leading-on-child-safeguarding-course>

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This can be done remotely via Microsoft Teams if necessary (the RET training powerpoint can be emailed in advance of this meeting).

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, the school will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the school will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

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. From September 2020 (as ever), schools must ensure they see appropriate documents for checks first hand.

Where the school is utilising volunteers, it will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. The Trust advises that new volunteers should not be taken on during a lockdown unless absolutely necessary. In case of the latter, the Lead Adviser should be informed.

The school will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

The school will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral. During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the school will continue to ensure that all staff, volunteers and essential visitors sign in and out of the premises and will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

The school will follow the separate RET guidance for safer recruitment encompassing all of these points and more. This is available on the Headteacher Microsoft Teams shared area.

Online safety

The school's Online Safety Lead is the Duty DSL.

The school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect students when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources.

All staff who interact with children, including online/remotely, will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection

Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

The Trust and the school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Teachers will read and comply with RET advice for online learning which is separate to this document and has been sent out in a newsletter to all RET staff in all RET schools on Monday 30th March 2020.

Supporting children not in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Where the DSL/DDSL has identified a student to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that student. All contacts with the student will be recorded on CPOMs.

Contact with children that the DSL/DDSL consider vulnerable (not limited to the government definition) will be made at least once weekly and will be by telephone wherever possible during a lockdown or self isolation. The responsibility for this contact can be split across the Inclusion Team but all employees must keep the DSL/DDSL up to date. If a family are not contactable, the DSL/DDSL should in the first instance contact the Education Welfare Service and explain concerns. Where the EWS is not working or is also unable to make contact, the DSL should call 111 and ask for a police welfare check. Where concerns related to contact or other aspects of safeguarding arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate and where unsure will discuss with the Headteacher, The Lead Adviser and/or the Trust Safeguarding Lead.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and any communications to families.

The school recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers at the school will take this into consideration when setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. Teachers and support staff will also consider this during the academic year 20.21 when planning for and interacting with students.

Supporting children in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. The school will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend where necessary and flourish.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The school will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement appropriate distancing and continue to follow the advice from the government on handwashing, sanitising and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

The school will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site during a lockdown, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each student.

Where the school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with our RET Lead Adviser.

Where staff are self isolating awaiting a test result or having tested positive, appropriate measures will be taken to inform those who need this information and to cover lessons and provision appropriately.

Children moving schools

If any students are temporarily attending other schools or transfer to another school, the school will ensure that they provide the receiving school with all relevant welfare and child protection information.

Any change of school for children looked after will be led and managed by the Virtual School Headteacher with responsibility for the child.

The school continues to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR and are aware that they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Mental health

The school is aware that negative experiences and distressing life events such as the current circumstances can affect the mental health of students and their parents.

The school will ensure that appropriate support is in place for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children whilst on site during a lockdown.

The school will continue to offer support to students who are not on site during a lockdown, this will be done remotely or by phone.

The school will ensure that all students have contact details for appropriate support services. www.kooth.com is a good example of online mental health support for young people.

Peer on peer or child on child abuse

The school recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

The school will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded using the school's procedure and appropriate referrals made