

**This is an annex to our current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.**

**Annex to Safeguarding and Child Protection policy – *version 1.0***

**(NB the words school and academy are interchangeable)**

**Child protection during the COVID-19 measures**

**After schools close for the week on Friday (20 March 2020), they will remain closed until further notice, except to children of key workers and vulnerable pupils, as part of the UK's national response to the coronavirus outbreak.**

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home during the COVID 19 outbreak.

This Annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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### **1. Context**

From 20th March 2020 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.

This addendum is provided for academies within South Pennine Academies Safeguarding.

## 2. Version control and dissemination

This is version 1.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our Trust DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the academy website here <https://huddersfieldhorizon.com> is made available to staff via shared point/email.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can to speak to them.

## 3. Safeguarding priorities

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to our school or children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

## 4. Current school position

*The SCITT Centre is currently closed for training and trainees have been asked not to attend their host school. Trainees are currently working from home and completing training virtually.*

All staff and volunteers attending on site from outside South Pennine Academies will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

## 5. Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need. The current advice is below.

### **Kirklees Schools:**

Covid 19 – Information for Practitioners Taken from The Kirklees Children's Safeguarding Partnership. The Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Partnership recognise that the COVID-19 virus is putting increasing pressure on all services providing support to children, young people and families. In this changing landscape safeguarding continues to be a priority, however we recognise that we will all have to consider ways of doing things differently. Government guidance may change over the coming days and weeks so please make sure you are kept informed and up to date with any new advice or guidance being produced, and adjust your ways of

working as appropriate. We will update this page as more information is made available.

As practitioners we need to consider how to maintain appropriate contact with the children, young people and families you work with, provide support at this difficult time as well as maintain business as usual as much as possible. We would remind practitioners to:

- Speak to families regarding any difficulties they may be experiencing due to spending more time together than usual, and signpost to where they can receive additional support.
- Remain vigilant for the signs and indicators of abuse, including neglect and domestic violence, and raise any safeguarding concerns in line with your agency's procedures.
- If you suspect that a child or young person is being, or is at risk of being significantly harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, you must report this immediately in line with your agency's procedures see our worried about a child page for contact information.
- People rarely live in complete isolation and therefore you need to understand the needs of the wider family when you are working with a child, parent or adult, talking more, continuing to effectively work together and making sure that all the people working with children, young people and adults in a family, plan and coordinate their work.
- If you are using alternative methods such as social media and technology to keep in contact with children, young people and families, remember to do this in line with your agency's policies and in a safe and appropriate manner.
- Consider help through Early Support
- West Yorkshire Procedures Manual has been updated to include Covid 19 resource.
- You may also want to consider undertaking FREE E-learning Training on Infection Prevention and Control and promoting to your colleagues, family and friends.

<https://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/home/coronavirus-covid-19/>

### **Oldham Schools:**

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need. The current advice is below.

Rationale In order to be able to fulfil our statutory duties we need to ensure that schools and the local authority (LA) have a live record of who and where our vulnerable children are each day. The LA therefore must have the intelligence on who is attending schools & settings on a daily basis, and if a vulnerable child/young person is at home, maintain a regular link with the allocated social worker.

Statutory duties relate to:

- Children subject of Child in Need or Child Protection Plans
- Children who are Looked After by Oldham Council
- Children subject of EHCP

The latest DfE Guidance states: 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.

The aim is to make the process as straightforward as possible, whilst ensuring it is highly effective and efficient. We have therefore agreed to apply a multi-agency approach across Education & Early Years; Children's Social Care (CSC); SEND; and Post-16 in order that there is one single point of collection from, and communication to, schools and settings. We will then ensure there is a coordinated approach towards responding to the data collected in order to flag any issues and address these with the appropriate service in a timely and appropriate manner.

Pupil list With the help and co-operation of schools and settings, the LA has collated a comprehensive list of vulnerable pupils (EHCP; CIN; CP; CLA) and cross referenced it with the information held centrally.

We have information on whether these pupils have taken up the offer of a school place during the enforced closure period. This information will need to be updated daily using the information gathered from schools in order to ensure implementation of a co-ordinated response to protecting our most vulnerable children, young people and families.

Please be aware that we expect these numbers to fluctuate in terms of those accessing education provision as a result of families coming out of self-isolation, people volunteering and workers being re-deployed. We advise that schools continue to remind parents on a weekly basis that there is provision available should they require it.

Daily data return Each school and setting is being asked to submit information as part of the daily data return indicating which vulnerable pupils are in attendance. Each child should be RAG rated according to the guidance below.

RAG rating guidance for schools and settings The responsibility for the safeguarding of vulnerable pupils remains, in the first instance, with schools. We are suggesting a "triaged" approach to this.

- If a vulnerable child is attending daily – NFA (NB these children will still need to be included in the data return each day by number only). GREEN  If a vulnerable pupil has been attending daily and does not show – implement the usual attendance response to provide assurance around safeguarding (e.g. a phone call home) and include on daily return as GREEN / AMBER / RED depending on the outcome of the follow up. Named social workers should be

the first port of call for AMBER / RED children, however, if there is any difficulty in contacting a named social worker, then the duty team should be contacted immediately in order that this can be logged and followed up. (See contact information below.)

- If a vulnerable pupil has been offered a place and has declined – ensure the reason has been recorded in the information already returned to the LA. NB A risk assessment should be undertaken for each of these children. This must be reviewed on a case by case basis with consideration given to placement stability, context of placement and any associated risks to the child or young person. Schools and settings should be contacting the parents and carers of identified children and young people to ascertain whether they require provision. This should be agreed with the child's social worker. These children should be rated as GREEN. If a reason has not been given and / or a risk assessment has not been undertaken, then the child should be rated as RED.

Named officers Alison Bearn is our named LA officer and she will correspond by telephone daily to pick up any issues arising once returns have been collated. Alison will contact either the DSL or DDSL in order to offer support and advice in line with DfE Guidance.

Children's Social Care arrangements MASH: MASH contact number continues and same expectations for new safeguarding concerns to use the following number: 0161 770 7777 Emergency Duty Team: Continued function for crisis response required out of hours, same number remains: 0161 770 6936 Children's Assessment Team initial response duty rota: To continue on a weekly basis – with rota of staff from the assessment team responding to new referrals to CSC. Duty number for this team is: 0161 770 5216 "Core Service Rota" – open case duty rota: For all children who have an allocated social worker, but where the school have increasing concerns regarding risk that requires a same day response, duty numbers for this team are: 0161 770 2428 / 1192 / 2430 / 5216

All other social workers will be working from home and completing key contact, statutory visits, chairing virtual meetings and all other case management function. They are contactable via email or work mobile phone regarding ongoing support to children allocated to them. Where they are off sick, their team manager will ensure appropriate response.

All children have been reviewed and social workers prioritised level of response based on risk. Social workers will liaise with schools from next week about sharing responsibility for key keeping in contact with families, particularly where children are not in school as per the above protocol.

- Strategy meetings, CiN meetings, Core Groups and Care Planning meetings will take place virtually or via round robin.
- Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Child Reviews will continue virtually.
- LADO process will continue virtually.

Children Looked After (CLA) Attendance data will be collected for all Oldham's CLA attending regardless of in which authority they are attending school. However, for

schools where they have a child or children looked after to other authorities, they may be asked to provide specific data and information directly to that authority in relation to attendance and monitoring arrangements.

### **Calderdale Schools**

<https://safeguarding.calderdale.gov.uk/>

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Child Protection Policy.

A DSL from South Pennine Academies will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video.

## **7. Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the local authority and parents to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school 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.

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

We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Senior leaders in our academies, including the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

## **8. Increased vulnerability or risk**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

## **9. Attendance Monitoring**

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or SLT will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, FaceTime, Skype or by contact a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL deems it necessary a referral to an alternate agency will be made.

Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, we will notify their social worker and make a record on CPOMs.

## **10. Reporting concerns about children or staff**

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff December 2019.

## **11. Staff training and induction**

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our 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.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, 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 caused for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.



## **12. 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, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy.

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.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process 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 engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

## **13. 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.

## **14. 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.

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

## **15. New children at the school**

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 need to know the information.

### **16. Supporting children not in school**

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

Details of this plan must be recorded, and a record of contact will be made. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSLs will consider any referrals as appropriate.