

Appendix - Coronavirus (COVID - 19) - Safeguarding in a Pandemic

This appendix has been written in March 2020 in line with the document from the Government -

Coronavirus (COVID - 19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other provisions Published 27 March 2020

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

Email DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk Telephone 0800 046 8687

Role of the local authority

The department is working very closely with all local authorities to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend a school or college. The department will, via regional school commissioners, continue to support local authorities' crucial responsibilities in maintaining effective safeguarding and child protection services in this challenging time to ensure schools and colleges can access the support they need - for **Hatfeild Primary School** this is **MASH** and the **Social Care Sector** via a named social worker when relevant.

Safeguarding and clusters

If our school and other schools collaborate and children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#) and this appendix continues to apply. In particular, the school or college that is acting as the hub in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required. Additional advice on clusters and safeguarding will be provided in due course by the department of education.

Keeping children safe in schools and colleges

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools should continue to have regard to as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements.

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that our school is under, it remains essential that as far as possible we continue to be a safe place for children. Hatfeild Primary school has considered that our policy and process is now slightly different when compared to business as usual.

The way our school currently operating in response to coronavirus (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 Hatfeild Primary school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to speak directly to a DSL.
- a DSL or deputy should be available either onsite or contactable straight away at home if working from home.
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the school and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Hatfeild Primary school, as far as is reasonably possible, takes a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

Safeguarding Policy

Hatfeild Primary school has this effective safeguarding policy in place reflecting business as usual. This appendix has been written to reflect new arrangements in response to **COVID-19**. This appendix will be kept under review as circumstances continue to evolve.

This **COVID-19** addendum summarises any key **COVID-19** related changes which is more effective than re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy.

As a school we are adhering to;

- any updated advice from the local 3 safeguarding partners.
- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding 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.

Merton LA responsibilities - we have daily updates from Elizabeth Fitzpatrick regarding advice for schools. These are disseminated to Senior leads, DSL/ DDSL and other staff as needed. Our MEP, Nick Flesher is in contact most days with new guidance and advice.

The continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. If a member of staff is concerned they must follow the normal school protocols of reporting to a **DSL/DDSL IMMEDIATELY** if they have a concern. If you are working in the school building with critical workers children, speak to the **DSL immediately**. If a **DSL/DDSL** is not onsite a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be, they will have the contact information for the DSL/DDSL
YOU MUST ACT TO SAFEGUARD the child/children immediately.

Hatfeild Primary School list of DSL/DDSLs

Frieda Perry DSL HT

Kate Chaloner-Doyle DDSL DHT

Viki Tucker DDSL AHT Inclusion Lead

School staff all understand the importance of their duty for our staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances school is operating in, a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. All staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

If staff are aware or have a concern that any of the above is happening with a child in a family at our school whether they are attending or home learning it **MUST** be reported in the same way as normal by speaking **IMMEDIATELY** to a **DSL/DDSL**.

Staff must follow the normal procedures of speaking to a **DSL/DDSL** 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 Hatfeild Primary School responds to any such concerns)

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- this should be referred to the Headteacher or in her absence a DDSL;
- where there are concerns/allegations about the Headteacher, this should be referred to the co-chairs of governors;

The **DSL/DDSL** have a list of children who do and do not meet the vulnerable definition and are not accessing the provision. Each member of this team and a few class teachers will be contacting the families - the arrangements and time between the contact depend on the individual. If it is felt that there is cause for concern then the **DSL/DDSL/DHT** will act in accordance with our normal reporting procedures.

Schools will inform parents to keep their children safe online and when accessing the Google Classrooms.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)

The optimal scenario for our school when we are providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or DDSL on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case there are two options available to us:

1. a trained DSL or deputy from the school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home, this will be stated on the staff rota.
2. sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video) if all four DSLs are no longer available.

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, the department recommends a senior leader takes responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site. In this case it would be a phase leader.

They will then have access to 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.

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained **DSL or DDSL** deputy and will know on any given day via the rota who that person is and how to speak to them.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored if all four DSL/DDSLS become unavailable). For the period **COVID-19** measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy DSL) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy DDSL) even if they miss their refresher training.

Every school will face unique challenges at this time.

Vulnerable children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. Vulnerable children include those who have a **social worker** and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with **EHC plans**, read more in the [guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) for further information.

Local authorities (Merton) have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. 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.

The Social Worker Manager **MUST** agree to the child/children not accessing the provision not just the Social Worker working with the family (*Merton MEP guidance 27.3.20*).

Hatfeild Primary senior leaders, especially **DSLs (and deputies - DDSL)** know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support. We will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the **COVID-19** period.

Attendance

Local authorities (Merton) and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. School and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, on the first day the children access the school provision or when communicating with parents and carers whose child hasn't accessed the onsite school provision to 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, school should notify their social worker.

The department 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 and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places. SLT with the support of the office **MUST** submit this to the by noon each day - even if the school has no children attending that day.

Merton LA has also asked our school to submit an Excel spreadsheet via USOfx each day regarding the attendance of the critical workers, vulnerable and/or EHCP children.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read **part 1 of KCSIE 2019**. The important thing for these staff will be awareness that our reporting of disclosures is the same as normal either face to face/telephone conversation immediately with a **DSL/DDSL**.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school or college, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This **child protection policy** will support this process as will **Part 1 of KCSIE**.

The existing Hatfeild Primary school workforce may move between schools on a temporary basis in response to **COVID-19** if the LA needs to introduce a Hub school approach. The receiving school should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Children moving schools

It will be important for any school or college whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution 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 ideally happen at DSL or deputy DSL level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individuals 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 senior leaders should take responsibility.

Whilst schools must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at **paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE 2019**.

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. If schools and colleges are recruiting new staff, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in **Part 3 of KCSIE 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.

Hatfeild Primary School is not utilising volunteers at present. If this were to change we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in **paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE 2019**. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Regarding members of the school or workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school to support the care of children e.g. into a Hub school.

The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on the school to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in **Part 3 of KCSIE**, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

School must continue to follow their 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 KCSIE 2019**.

School should continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per **paragraph 166 of KCSIE 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. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, school must continue to keep the **single central record (SCR) up to date** as outlined in **paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE 2019**. The SCR can, if school chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely.

Where they are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, school should ensure appropriate support is in place for them. The department's 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 which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways) or from specialist staff or support services. See [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

Online safety in schools and colleges

It will be more important than ever that schools and colleges provide a safe environment, including online. School have consulted Izzytea in regards to continuing to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school or college's IT systems or recommended resources. School has Izzytea in place with the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. School has also considered what their contingency arrangements are if their Izzytea IT staff become unavailable - we would work - in the first instance with the LA - Mark Hovell and Derek Crabtree.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. Local authorities may also be able to provide support.

Children and online safety away from school and college

All schools and colleges should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the school or college. It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per this child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. It will set out 4 key areas that leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. This includes the use of technology. Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) could help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely. School should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct). This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

As with this child protection policy, in some cases an annex/addendum summarising key **COVID-19** related changes may be more effective than re-writing/re-issuing the whole policy.

School should ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

School is in regular contact with parents and carers. Those 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 and be clear who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies. In their communications with parents and carers, schools and colleges should emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carer

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of this addendum to our policy and are kept up to date as it is revised.

The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.