

# North Ridge High School Safeguarding Policy



## Appendix G(i) COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection from January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021

### 1. Context

To support public health efforts to arrest the rising cases of Covid-19 (Coronavirus), on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2020, The Prime Minister announced a new national lockdown for England, with people instructed to "stay at home" as they did during the first lockdown in March 2020.

All primary schools, secondary schools and colleges were instructed to move to online learning and remain open for vulnerable children and critical workers. As there has been fluidity in government guidance including regarding eligibility criteria, the following arrangements may be subject to change and will be updated accordingly. Local Authority guidance prioritises vulnerable children attendance where staff availability limits the number of places in school. Therefore we will prioritise places for children of parents who are front line Health and Care workers followed by other critical roles as defined.

This appendix summarises our individual safeguarding arrangements in response

### 2. Key contacts

These remain as in the School's Safeguarding Policy

### 3. Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should 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.

We 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 head for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We will encourage all vulnerable children to attend school and there is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will liaise with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where the parents/carer continue to not want their child to attend school a leave of absence letter will be sent to enable the Headteacher/principal to authorise the absence. This is particularly important for children with EHCPs as if they are not in school, the provisions in their plan may not be being met. Template letter at end of document.

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

#### **4. Critical workers**

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in further sections of guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

As stated in the opening context for this appendix, Local Authority guidance prioritises vulnerable children attendance where staff availability limits the number of places in school. Therefore, we will prioritise places for children of parents who are front line Health and Care workers followed by other critical roles as defined.

#### **5. Attendance Monitoring**

In mainstream schools, all pupils who are not expected to be in school, should be recorded as 'code X'.

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

Children invited to school but not attending – leave of absence form to be completed to gain authorised absence coding

Shielding advice is currently in place, all children deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

Phone calls home will be made when children expected to attend do not arrive at school.

To support the above, we 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, we will notify their social worker, if allocated.

## **6. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The optimal scenario is to have our trained DSL available on site. Where this is not possible, they or trained deputy will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

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 online management system, CPOMS (or equivalent) and 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 or college.

It is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

To access virtual ICPC/RCPC from Manchester Safeguarding and Improvement Unit, a report will be sent to [qualityassurance@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:qualityassurance@manchester.gov.uk) with the phone number of the person attending the conference. Core groups and Child in Need meetings will also be attended virtually. Strategy meetings will be attended as requested.

## **7. Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS or equivalent), which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS (or equivalent) from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher and the Trust Safeguarding Manager. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors should follow the usual practice, contact the LADO and make a referral if the concern meets the threshold.

## **8. Safeguarding Training and induction**

All 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 are working with us, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction and all relevant information.

## **9. DSL Training**

Updated or refresher training will take place as required. DSL Training provided by the local authority is taking place virtually and can be booked through Eventbrite – search Safeguarding in Education.

## **10. 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 the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE) (and the December 2020 updates).

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we 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

Where we are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

We 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 KCSIE.

We will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral'.

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, we will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE (Sept 2020 and December 2020 updates regarding retention of DBS)

### **11. Volunteers on site for testing purposes**

All testing is completed by school staff. We do not use volunteers.

### **12. Online safety in schools and colleges**

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering/monitoring system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **13. Children and online safety away from school and 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 the Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the school's code of conduct.

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

Below are some things we consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- 1:1 sessions will always have an adult present in the home and 2 members of staff in school.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

An Acceptable User Policy will be agreed by school and parents/carers with regard to sending and receiving of lessons, which includes the statement that lessons will not be recorded at home or stills captured from the lessons. Lessons must not be re-broadcast by parents/carers including to social media platforms.

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

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child and that their key adult's contact details are shared (including the name of a substitute adult if the key worker becomes unavailable).

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS (or equivalent), as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

We and our DSL Team will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least every 2 weeks) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

We recognise that school is a protective factor for children, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Our staff need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

## **15. Home visits**

Home visits may be required when no contact can be established for a particular pupil or family or where there are deep concerns.

The necessity for these home visits will be established by the DSL/leadership by through monitoring the vulnerable pupils calls, CPOMS and non-engagement.

The DSL or person conducting the visit will carry a work identification badge/lanyard and letter of authorisation to validate essential travel. This letter should be carried for colleagues to produce if they are stopped by police etc, enforcing travel control.

Leaders will continue to dynamically risk assess any home visit and concerns will be raised if issues arise around the safety of staff making the visit.

## **16. Supporting children in school**

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher 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 and LA 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 COVID19.

We will ensure appropriate numbers of First Aiders/staff with Paediatric First Aid training are available across or premises.

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

### **17. Peer on Peer Abuse**

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

Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE 2020 and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy.

We will listen and work with the child, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that child.

Concerns and actions will be recorded on CPOMS (or equivalent) and appropriate referrals made.

### **18. Advice, Guidance & Support from the LA**

Our headteacher shares all LA updates with relevant staff and all staff are aware of how to access support from our SSQA, the Safeguarding in Education Team, Virtual School and One Education as advised through the daily circulars.

To understand the safeguarding needs and challenges faced by schools, the local authority may request information from settings, including, for example, the numbers of children from different cohorts identified above who are attending school. We will respond to all reasonable requests as required.

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF SCHOOL ABSENCE**

**DURING A PERIOD OF RESTRICTED OPENING DUE TO COVID-19 AND FOLLOWING PHE (PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND) AND/OR THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (DHSC) ADVICE**

**Important Information for Parents/Carers**

- During the period of national lockdown, primary, secondary, alternative provision and special schools will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers only
- Parent(s)/carer(s) of vulnerable children who have been invited to attend school are able to request permission for their child not attend.
- Requests for Leave of School Absence should be made, one for each child, by the child’s parent(s)/carer(s).
- Parents should specify the measures they will take to minimise the impact of the absence.
- It is expected that parents do not take their child on holiday during this time.
- No parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session.

**I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:**

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

(For brothers/sisters at other schools) I have also applied to  
.....School/Academy for leave of absence for  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Reason for Proposed Absence** – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence

.....  
.....  
.....

.....Please say how you will ensure your child accesses the remote education provided by school

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.....  
.....



**For children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP):**

I understand that it may not be possible for all the provisions in the EHCP to be delivered if my child takes a leave of absence.

Yes / No

Signature of Parent/Carer: .....Print Name:

.....

Date:.....

Please return to: (INSERT DETAILS)

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