

Child protection and Safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Bedford High School

Approved by:	Helen Phillips	Date: [02/04/2020]
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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Rebecca Ramsden	r.ramsden@bedford.wigan.sch.uk 01942 909009 (1211)
Deputy DSL	Bridget Moss Paul McCaffery	b.moss@bedford.wigan.sch.uk p.mccaffery@bedford.wigan.sch.uk
Other contactable safeguarding staff	Sue Critchley Emma Darbyshire	s.critchley@bedford.wigan.sch.uk e.darbyshire@bedford.wigan.sch.uk
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Rebecca Ramsden	r.ramsden@bedford.wigan.sch.uk 01942 909009 (1211) 07547154708 (Mobile number only available to staff and key agencies)
Headteacher	Helen Phillips	h.phillips@bedford.wigan.sch.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Dianne Kitcher	LADO@wigan.gov.uk
Chair of governors	David Whitehead	

1. Scope and definitions

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.

This addendum applies during the period of **partial** school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners (GM Police, WCSB, Wigan & Leigh NHS) and Wigan local authority (LA).

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy 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, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker or Start Well worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying or complex 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 school name will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who are assessed or being assessed as in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including:

- Have a social worker, including children:
 - With a child protection plan (CPCP)
 - Assessed as being in need (CIN)
 - Looked after by the local authority (CLA)
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

In addition to the DfE's definition on 'vulnerable', we also consider students who are 'otherwise vulnerable' and could therefore benefit from continued attendance to school. This may include students who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training), students on the edge of receiving social care support, young carers and other students experiencing difficult circumstances.

Bedford High School will continue to work with and support children's social workers and other connected professionals to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) Rachel Clemow for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be (Rebecca Ramsden)

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, The designated safeguarding lead (Rebecca Ramsden) or the child's social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. Our school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

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 at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't 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 on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

All concerns must be reported on CPOMS as soon as possible and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) notified. The DSL/DDSL will respond via email to acknowledge receipt of the concern. If the concern requires immediate attention, the DSL/DDSL must be notified in person using the contact details available. This must be followed up on CPOMS.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be in school, they can be contacted remotely using the contact details provided in this addendum.

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed by email as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

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

On occasions where there is no DSL/DDSL on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be the senior leader who is timetabled to be on site on any given day. This is shown on the staff rota, which is shared with all staff via email.

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
- › Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
- › Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments
- › Ensure communication with vulnerable students/families takes place and is shared with the DSL on CPOMS

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

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

- › Our 3 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
- › The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and Start Well Workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

6. Monitoring attendance

Where appropriate, school attendance for students who are considered vulnerable is expected and encouraged. The school will continue to liaise closely with social care and other key professionals with regards to vulnerable families who choose to keep their children at home.

During the period of partial school closure and the transition to wider opening, we will continue to follow the most up to date guidance from the DfE and the LA on the reporting of attendance.

Where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn't attend, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by phone/email/door step visits.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

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 have responsibility to update their contact details and notify school of any changes. Families who have arranged for their child/children to attend school are required to complete a home school agreement, stating up-to-date contact details.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately and report on CPOMS. The DSL will acknowledge receipt of the notification via email. The DSL/DDSL or PGO will investigate the concerns and take appropriate action. This may include notifying external agencies/safeguarding partners.

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. Staff must continue to follow our usual safeguarding policies, including whistle blowing. Our procedures have not changed during this period.

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 for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Safeguarding for children attending school

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

Where there are concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – the Headteacher will discuss them immediately with the Chair of Governors and / or the Local Authority.

As we prepare for the wider opening of the school site, safeguarding students remains central to all planning and all relevant risk assessments are appropriately linked to the safeguarding policy and addendum.

As student attendance increases, staff may identify new safeguarding concerns about students, as they see them in person following the partial school closure. Staff must continue to follow the safeguarding procedures in place by reporting all concerns on CPOMS and informing the DSL/DDSL immediately.

Any changes to a student's circumstances, for example increased social care involvement or different living arrangements, will be updated accurately and securely on CPOMS and/or SIMS and relevant key staff will be informed on a need to know basis.

10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

10.1 Contact plans

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

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

These plans set out:

- › How often the school will make contact
- › Which staff member(s) will make contact
- › How they will make contact

Plans will be reviewed regularly and amended to reflect the most up-to-date DfE guidance.

If we can't make contact with vulnerable students we will contact named social workers where applicable or the central duty team at the LA. When necessary, police welfare checks may also be requested.

10.2 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 particular, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school. All online safety concerns must be reported on CPOMS. The DSL/DDSL will acknowledge receipt of the alert and take appropriate action.

If IT staff are unavailable on site, key staff do have the necessary remote access.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing code of conduct and other safeguarding related policies.

Online communication with students must only take place using school email addresses for both staff and students. Communication with students must remain professional and appropriate at all times.

All social media communication must be conducted on an open platform and remain transparent. Staff and students are not permitted to message directly/privately.

Whilst staff are working remotely, they may choose to make phone calls to student homes. All phone calls must be of a professional nature to discuss teaching and learning and/or student welfare. All welfare calls must be logged on CPOMS, detailing the nature of the call and any concerns raised.

Staff must not share their personal numbers with students or families. Remote phone calls should be made using the 3CX app.

Staff will 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 3 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.

11.3 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
- Key Information for parents and carers will be shared on our website, Frog, school social media and via text. This information will include updated DfE guidance on the school closure, online learning updates and key safeguarding guidance for parents.

12. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils.

Welfare checks will be made by the pastoral team to students. These checks will predominantly be made via phone calls, but at times may include door step visits.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. Information and support will be added to the school website and there will be regular welfare posts on the school social media.

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.

It is recognised that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their families. Provision for additional onsite support will therefore be available for students returning to school following the partial closure.

13. Staff recruitment, training and induction

13.1 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 3 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 aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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' During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge posed by the necessities of COVID-19 response, Bedford High School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

13.2 Safeguarding induction and training

For the period that 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 refresher training.

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to Bedford High 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.

Upon arrival, any new staff will be given a copy of the safeguarding policy and code of conduct.

13.3 Keeping records of who's 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. All staff must continue to sign in/sign out at the main reception. This is recorded on the school Inventory system.

There will be a staff rota for teaching and support staff who are expected on the school site each day. Only named staff on the rota are permitted on site on any given day, unless prior permission has been given by a member of the senior leadership team.

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

14. 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 (SENCO) 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 4 will do this.

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

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks by Rebecca Ramsden (designated safeguarding lead). At every review, it will be approved by Helen Phillips (Headteacher) and David Whitehead (Chair of Governors). It will also be shared with the full governing board.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- IT acceptable use policy
- Health and safety policy
- Online safety policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Anti-bullying policy