

## **COVID-19 Addendum to: Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Phase Six – Response Strategy September 2021**

### **Scope**

Following the move to Step 4 of the government's roadmap for the removal of covid-19 restrictions from 19 July 2021, the Trust and its schools have reviewed all child protection and safeguarding arrangements in preparation for the Autumn Term 2021. This is to ensure that, as pupils return to school for the Autumn Term, the Trust's policy and protocols for both safeguarding in school and continued remote learning for those required to self-isolate, are robust and effective.

All Trust schools will continue to fully comply with DfE statutory guidance as set out in ***Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*** and associated Trust policies. This Addendum applies for the immediate future from September 2021 and will be kept under regular review as the dynamic nature of the pandemic continues to impact. The Addendum will be formally reviewed in March 2022 or earlier if circumstances require. It reflects advice from our local safeguarding partners and local authorities (Birmingham and Dudley). It also recognises the important safeguarding issues related to on-line learning (**KCSIE Annex D**).

Unless covered here, the Trust's normal child protection and safeguarding policy continues to apply.

### **Core Safeguarding Principles**

The way our Trust schools are operating in response to the continuing coronavirus remains different to *business as usual*. A number of important safeguarding principles remain critical to ensuring the Trust sustains its strong culture of safeguarding throughout the pandemic period:

- the best interests of children will always continue to come first
- if anyone in a Trust school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or senior leader will be available in Trust schools at all times
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the Trust workforce and/or gain access to children
- children will be protected when they are online, especially when accessing remote education from home due to self-isolation
- the needs of vulnerable pupils will be prioritised

The Trust will, as far as is reasonably possible, continue to take a whole organisational approach to child protection and safeguarding over the period of the pandemic. This will ensure best practice and allow the Trust Board to satisfy itself that over the period of the pandemic, the Trust's culture of safeguarding remains strong and the pressures of the pandemic are not weakening approaches to safeguarding or undermining child protection policy and procedures.

### **Revised Trust Child Protection arrangements**

The Trust will continue to ensure that any revised child protection arrangements required to respond to the step 4 of the government's roadmap will reflect:

- any updated government guidance and advice received from the local safeguarding partners

- any updated advice received from Birmingham and/or Dudley local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care about reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need
- what staff should do if they have any concerns about a child whether the child is attending school or at home due to illness or self-isolation
- the continued importance of all staff acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns whether the child is attending school or at home
- DSL (and deputy) arrangements in all Trust schools
- the continued importance for school staff working with and supporting children's social workers and local authority virtual school heads (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence- processes will be reviewed for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE 2021 will continue to be adopted by the Trust and its schools)
- what staff should do if they have concerns about a staff member who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE 2021 will continue to support how Trust schools respond to any such concerns)
- any additional arrangements to support children that schools are concerned about who may not immediately meet the *vulnerable* definition but have been negatively impacted by the pandemic e.g. through parental loss of employment
- what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending school safe, especially online and how any concerns about these children should be progressed
- the additional support required by parents/carers to engage with remote education when children are required to self-isolate and the pressures this may place on families
- additional support provision for the wellbeing and mental health pupils, parents and staff e.g. access to resources from *Anna Freud Centre* and *PAUSE* service in Birmingham.

The Trust will ensure all staff are aware of this *Phase 6 Response Addendum* to the Trust's main Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. The Addendum will be updated in line with any new government guidance and will be made available on the Trust and individual school websites.

Local Health Protection Team advice is available to all Trust schools:

#### **Birmingham Schools**

PHE West Midlands East Health Protection Team,  
5 St Philip's Place,  
Birmingham, B3 2PW  
Phone: [0344 225 3560](tel:0344 225 3560)

Out of hours for health professionals only: please phone 01384 679 031

#### **Dudley Schools**

PHE West Midlands West Health Protection Team,  
2nd Floor, Kidderminster Library, Market Street,  
Kidderminster, DY10 1AB  
Phone: [0344 225 3560](tel:0344 225 3560)

Out of hours for health professionals only: please phone 01384 679 031

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads and deputising arrangements**

All Trust schools will continue to ensure a trained DSL or deputy is available on site at all times. In the rare exception where staff absence due to the virus/self-isolation makes this not possible, the arrangements set out in the Trust's *Outbreak Management Plan* will be followed:

- a trained DSL or deputy from the school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video – e.g. when working from home
- sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools will be considered in the event that a school has no available DSLs
- where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, a member of the senior leadership team will be deployed to take responsibility for the coordination of safeguarding. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, monitoring the most vulnerable children in school, 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.

Whatever the situation, the Trust requires that all school staff have access to a trained DSL or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them. Headteachers will be responsible for maintaining and keeping this under constant review in line with the requirements set out in Annex C of KCSIE 2021.

## **Mental health and wellbeing**

The Trust is aware that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils, parents and staff. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work when they are at school and also when learning from home. A designated Trust helpline is available to support teachers and provide advice on how best to support children. The Trust and its schools will also continue to signpost pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health and wellbeing throughout the period of the pandemic e.g. Anna Freud Centre resources

## **Safe behaviours in school**

As schools are required to remove certain restrictions e.g. the placing of pupils in discrete bubble arrangements and more peer to peer mixing takes place, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) 2021](#) are critically important to ensure effective vigilance and oversight of all pupils. In particular, reintegration will be monitored to ensure a safe environment is maintained and that children are safeguarded, staff have been appropriately checked and all risk assessments carried out with clear mitigation measures as required.

## **Part 5 Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

At the start of the Autumn Term all staff will be required to ensure they are fully aware of Part 5 of KCSIE 2021 which outlines government expectations about how schools identify, manage and respond to child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment. This is also highlighted in the new *Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2021* (sections 306-311).

Therefore, the Trust and headteachers will ensure:

- appropriate policies and procedures are in place, clear and easy to read
- the curriculum reflects awareness
- all pupils are supported to raise concerns and/or report incidents
- pupil reporting is taken seriously by all staff
- appropriate records are maintained

## Vulnerable children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected, whether attending school or learning at home, remains a top priority for the Trust and its schools. The Trust will continue to follow the latest DfE guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

The Trust and its schools will also continue to work closely with all external services and social workers to ensure the best interests of vulnerable children remain an absolute priority.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child is not able to take up their place at school, attends sporadically or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker immediately and work with them to find an effective solution for the child and family.

## Online safety in school and when learning at home

The Trust recognises that it will be more important than ever that schools provide a safe online environment whether pupils are learning at school or from home. Schools will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what “appropriate” looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the schools IT systems or recommended resources. The Trust and its schools will consider who has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. The Trust will also monitor its contingency arrangements if IT staff become unavailable.

All Trust schools will consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching will be that the same principles set out in the Trust's *Staff Code of Conduct* apply. This includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media.

The *Staff Code of Conduct* will apply equally to any existing or new online and remote education arrangements which are introduced for pupils required to self-isolate for whatever reason.

## Delivering remote education safely

All Trust staff understand that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility whether children are attending school or learning at home. Keeping children safe on line is essential to the success of the Trust's *Remote Education* provision. Children have a right to feel safe and secure on line and cannot learn effectively unless they do so.

To support remote learning the Trust and its schools will work together to ensure:

- KCSIE 2021 statutory guidance is followed – (Annex D)
- provision of clear guidance and direction for teachers and support staff about the digital platforms that can, and more importantly, cannot be used.
- that online services, functionality and configurations are made in full recognition of data protection, information security, safeguarding and child protection.

The Trust procedures and protocols in place for on-line learning will ensure a safe and welcoming remote education experience and should be read alongside the Trust's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures*. Good safeguarding practice will be promoted as follows:

- School reporting routes for concerns are provided to all children, teachers, parents and carers in line with the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- E-Safety resources and practical support are shared with parents/carers in order to respond to harmful or upsetting content and bullying or abuse online.
- Communications and interactions take place only within the school teaching hours.
- Communications and interactions take place through the school office email address, an organised Teams meeting or telephone conversation.
- Staff use the account set up with their school E-Mail address. They do not use a personal E-mail address at any time.
- Staff use school devices over personal devices where possible.
- Staff are mindful when sharing personal information.
- Telephone calls to pupils/parents/families needing extra support use the 141 Caller ID hiding mechanism or use a school mobile phone where available.
- GDPR will continue to be a consideration. Parents have provided consent for the use of Teams and have been made aware of how data is stored on the platform.
- Schools will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems are in line with the Trust's privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. Any concerns should be passed to the Trust's DPO.
- Schools will carry out, in addition to other communication, a weekly well-being check for pupils self-isolating at home. Staff are expected to speak to individual pupils.
- Where appropriate, schools will inform relevant child protection agencies immediately in the event of specific pupils having to self-isolate.

### **Online safety – clear reporting routes**

An essential part of the *Remote Learning Programme* will be ensuring pupils 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 school, schools will also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from such agencies as:

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

As schools will continue to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Communications will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online whether at school or at home. The Trust considers it to be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are doing online, including the sites they access.

If children are required to self-isolate, parents and carers may choose to supplement the remote education offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents and carers, schools will 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 will include:

- [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 carers 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](#)

**For note: All Trust schools are advised to share this support with parents and carers.**

## Working with safeguarding partners

The Trust will continue to update this Addendum where necessary, to reflect any revised guidance from local partners:

- our local safeguarding partners
- our local authorities (Birmingham and Dudley) with regard to e.g. children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, local authority designated officers and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

Whilst the Trust recognises the need to continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR, these will not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe as outlined in KCSIE 2020.

## Monitoring attendance

Throughout the implementation of the Trust's *Phase 6 Response Strategy*, schools will continue to be vigilant in monitoring and overseeing pupil attendance and absence. Attendance registers will be completed and the usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance implemented for all pupils.

Schools will follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools will also work with parents/carers to support and promote the importance of regular attendance.

Schools will take the opportunity, when communicating with parents and carers, to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Attendance data across all Trust schools will be reported regularly to the Trust's leadership team and Trustees.

For pupils learning from home, staff will also closely monitor and report, engagement with the Trust's Remote Education offer. Concerns about engagement will be reported immediately in line with Trust procedures.

## Concerns about a staff member

The Trust will continue to follow the principles set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

The Trust and its schools will refer any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The Trust and its schools will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. The Trust will do this using the email address for the duration of the COVID-19 period in line with government guidance: [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

## Support for children where the Trust has concerns

All Trust staff are aware that the covid-19 pandemic continues to potentially put all children at enhanced risk as pressures on families increase. Staff will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that may indicate safeguarding concerns, and act on any such concerns immediately.

As the pandemic progresses, children who have not previously been considered as *vulnerable* may become a concern. This could result from such situations as loss of parental employment, domestic abuse, adult mental health concerns, housing eviction etc. Staff will be vigilant in monitoring children where there may be a concern and will report this concern to senior staff without delay. The Trust will also monitor this information closely at school and Trust levels and act accordingly.

## Welfare Checks - safeguarding children not attending school

**Contact Plans** – Trust schools will continue to have contact plans for children who may be poorly, self-isolating, shielding or absent from school for any other reason.

These plans set out:

- how often the school will make contact
- which staff member(s) will make contact
- how they will make contact
- expectations around engagement with remote learning

The Trust will monitor these plans as part of its on-going **Phase 6 Response Strategy** Assessment process.

## Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff will receive refreshed safeguarding training in the Autumn Term 2021 and be fully briefed on the revised KCSIE 2021, particularly in relation to **Part 5 Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**. The important thing for all staff will also be awareness of the Trust's revised **Phase 6 Response Strategy** arrangements, continuing **PHE System of Controls** and **Trust Outbreak Management Plan** so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

This will include awareness of KCSIE 2021 (Annex B) which provides guidance and support around a range of issues. Where new staff are recruited and join Trust schools they will continue to be provided with a thorough child protection and safeguarding induction.

### For note:

Where existing school staff are required to move between schools on a temporary basis in response to staffing shortages, the receiving school should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, staff will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and

will be aware of the Trust’s child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### Safer recruitment of staff

The Trust recognises that it remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce or gain access to children. If Trust schools need to recruit new staff over the period of the pandemic, they will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of KCSIE 2021. The Trust notes the changes the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made to its [guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#) to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the Trust remains aware, on any given day, which staff will be in its schools and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the Trust will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in KCSIE 2021.

### Use of supply staff

Staff shortages due to self-isolation may continue to necessitate the increased use of supply teachers and support staff. All Trust schools will assess the risks associated with supply staff and seek assurance from the supplying agency that staff have the appropriate checks. All supply staff will be made aware of Trust and school safeguarding procedures and the PHE System of Controls that must be followed by all staff.

### Monitoring and review

This Addendum will be reviewed as guidance from local safeguarding partners, LAs or DfE is updated, and in March 2022 by the Trust Safeguarding Lead. At every review it will be approved by the Chair of the Trust

<b>Monitoring and review</b>	<b>Trust Board</b>
<b>Links</b>	Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Anti-Bullying Policy Behaviour Policy + Covid-19 Addendum Staff Code of Conduct IT Acceptable Use Policy Online Safety Policy Remote Education Policy
<b>Staff responsible</b>	Executive Leaders + Headteachers
<b>Committee responsible</b>	Trust Board
<b>Date approved</b>	<b>July 2021</b>
<b>Next Review</b>	March 2022
<b>Sign off by Safeguarding Trustee</b>	 <p style="text-align: right;">Date: July 2021</p>

## Change Management

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Change date:</b>	<b>Change description:</b>
<b>1.0</b>	March 2020	Initial release
<b>2.0</b>	April 2020	Updated
<b>3.0</b>	Sept 2020	Updated with Local Health Protection Information/KCSIE 20
<b>4.0</b>	Nov 2020	Review and update (Phase 3 Sustain Strategy)
<b>5.0</b>	Jan 2021	Review and update (Phase 4 National Lockdown/Remote Learning)
<b>6.0</b>	Mar 2021	Review and update (Phase 5 School Opening Strategy)
<b>7.0</b>	July 2021	Review and update (Phase 6 Response Strategy)