

Addendum to Safeguarding Policy 30th March 2020

The current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy does not accurately reflect new arrangements in light of the response to Covid-19. This addendum intends to summarise any key changes to procedures. This will be subject to frequent review as circumstances continue to evolve and updated information and guidance is published by the Department for Education.

Current guidance from the DfE, published 27th March 2020 states:

‘The way schools and colleges are 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 a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online’

As most children are not currently attending school, these principles present unique challenges at this time. School staff still have a responsibility towards all pupils, not just those accessing the childcare provision. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to how we can continue to safeguard all children, whilst ensuring that guidance and legislation is followed with regard to social distancing and minimising numbers of children and staff on the school site.

Safeguarding children accessing school childcare provision

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy remains unchanged with regard to general safeguarding duties for those children accessing school for the childcare provision. Staff should continue to report concerns to DSL and record on CPOMS. However, these additional considerations will apply:

- promoting messages regarding social distancing and frequent, thorough hand-washing for children and staff
- promoting messages regarding social distancing for parents/carers when dropping off/collecting children from school
- reducing access to whole school buildings, to ensure appropriate levels of supervision at all times, and minimising the need for extensive cleaning
- risk-assessments regarding children with an EHCP or those whose behaviour presents a challenge, to ensure their needs can be safely met within school.
- visitors to the school to be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, eg a social worker completing a statutory visit to a child on a CP plan

Safeguarding children who remain at home

School staff continue to have a duty of care to those children who remain at home, however, monitoring children's welfare when they are not at school will be more challenging. Although children classed as vulnerable are entitled to access the childcare provision, this should only be used when it is not safe for them to be cared for at home. As a result, very few vulnerable children are currently accessing school and this requires more consideration with regards to safeguarding. The following is a minimum expectation regarding vulnerable children:

- All children on CP or CiN plans to be called by DSL/DDSL *at least* twice per week to check on safety and wellbeing. DSL/DDSL to speak to parents and children. Record discussion on CPOMS and notify social worker.
- If no response to calls, Social Worker to be informed for further welfare checks to be made.
- Other vulnerable children to be called *at least* once weekly (more often if you feel there is a more significant need). Speak to parents and children. Record discussion on CPOMS
- If no response to calls, and if there is a worker involved, eg Early Help or Key Worker, then inform the worker for further welfare checks to be made. If no worker involved, consider door knock for welfare check, police 101 for welfare check, or referral to Children's Services if threshold is met.

For all other children, where staffing allows, teachers or teaching assistants should call once weekly to check on general welfare. Any concerns raised should be reported to DSL and recorded on CPOMS. Staff should also record any issues they may have witnessed where families live in their local community, not just when they have made direct contact.

Online safety

Schools have been proactive in producing work-packs and identifying opportunities for online learning, to enable children to continue to access education whilst remaining at home. The school's Online Safety Policy will still apply with regard to any online learning taking place. The school will ensure that systems are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. An addendum will also be added to the Online Safety Policy to ensure any additional considerations are appropriately addressed.

Communication with parents should reinforce messages about online safety, identify which sites children are being asked to access to complete work, and be clear about who from the school (if anyone) their child will be interacting with online.

Availability of Designated Safeguarding Lead

Where possible, a DSL or DDSL should be on the school site when the childcare provision is operating. However, this may not be possible due to staff sickness, or DSL/DDSLs needing to self-isolate at home. If this is the case, then:

- A DSL or deputy should be available to be contacted by phone. The DSL/DDSL will need to have access to CPOMS when working from home.
- The Trust Safeguarding Lead can also be contacted by phone.
- If the school has no DSL or deputies available at all, then the Head Teacher or childcare Operations Coordinator should make arrangements to link with another AAT school and share

DSL support. In the first instance, it makes sense for our two Bexhill schools to link together, our two Eastbourne schools to do likewise and TGS to link with CAW.

- All staff should be kept aware of any changes to the DSL and should know who to contact on any given day.
- If staff are unable to contact a DSL and there are immediate safeguarding concerns, they should report directly to Children's Social Care

Referrals to Children's Social Care

Local Authorities are continuing to operate essential services, therefore referral routes into Children's Social Care remain unchanged. Safeguarding concerns should be reported in the usual way.