

Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Knowle CE Primary Academy



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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Jenny Godsall	07976 437681 s74jgodsall@knowle.solihull.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Emma Clarke Lisa Griffiths	07735 353450 s74eclarke@knowle.solihull.sch.uk 07725 736310 s74lgriffiths@knowle.solihull.sch.uk
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Matthew Stonehill	07967 800478 S74mstonehill@knowle.solihull.sch.uk
Headteacher	Jenny Godsall	07976 437681
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Team responsibility	0121 788 4310
Chair of governors	Lynda Mackay	01564 776082 g74lmackay@knowle.solihull.sch.uk

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners and Solihull Local Authority.

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.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

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

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, both for children still attending school and those at home.

If staff become concerned about any child whilst either working on site or as part of their regular contact with their 'home' pupils and families, they should immediately report it to the DSL.

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 by telephone or email.

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 or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Matthew Stonehill, Vice Principal.

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

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 following guidance is currently in place:

SOLIHULL LA EMERGENCY SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES GUIDANCE DURING EARLY YEARS SETTING, SCHOOL AND POST 16 PROVISION CLOSURE FOR ALL DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS, HEADTEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, PROPRIETORS AND MANAGERS GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS.

Preparation for closure :

1. Review the provisions Vulnerable Children's list to identify:

- Children on a Section 47 Child Protection Plan,
- Children on a Section 17 Child in Need Plan,
- Children who are looked after,
- Children for whom an extended period of time at home will present an additional risk to the child,
- Children who are acting as Young Carers
- Children with a health care plan
- Children engaged with the Youth Offending Service

(Spreadsheet: Appendix A)

2. Review each case and decide, based on the level of need/concern, considering how the following approaches could be used:

- telephone call(s) should be undertaken whilst the school is closed. (This will vary from 1-3 days, but contact will be no longer than every 3 days. Record this risk assessment in line with the school child protection policy.)

3. Divide the children between the DSL team and ensure that each member of the team knows which child they are allocated to.

4. Record this decision on the child's child protection records file of the child.

5. Liaise with specialist health teams for any child with a chronic long term health/respiratory needs e.g. Brittle Asthma, Cardiac issues, Cystic Fibrosis and inform them of a possible school closure.

6. Any child where staying at home for a prolonged period raises concerns for the DSL a referral should be made to Children's Social Services outlining the risks as a child protection referral, and record this in line with school policy

7. The DSL must ensure that remote access (working from home) to any e-recording system is possible and that a laptop/iPad is available for each member of the DSL team.

8. Establish where the children will be living in the event of a closure and discuss with parents the need to respond to calls.
9. Contact details of parents, social worker and any multi-agency professional working with the child are recorded on child protection records
10. Any child where staying at home for a prolonged period raises concerns for the DSL a referral should be made to Children's Social Services outlining the risks as a child protection referral, and recorded using the school's child protection record systems.

Process when school is closed

1. Inform the allocated social worker for all children on a CP/CiN/LAC that the child will be at home for the period of closure.
2. Current child protection concerns (child protection plan, child in need plan):
 - By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
 - By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
 - Summarising the situation as reported
 - Noting any actions that need to be undertaken

Undertake a contact phone call every 1-3 days, depending on the risk assessment, noting the following points in the child protection record:

- By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
- By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
- Summarising the situation as reported
- Noting any actions that need to be undertaken
- Offer of food support through school.
- Liaising with all necessary professionals as usual.
- Attending any planned review meetings, unless advised otherwise.
- Continue to follow school child protection procedures to record and report concerns.

3. Vulnerable families:

- By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
- By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
- Summarising the situation as reported
- Noting any actions that need to be undertaken
- Phone call once per week
- Offer of food support through school.
- Use of child protection procedures to record and report

4. Escalation of concerns/Unable to make contact with family

Where concerns for a child at home escalate a referral should be made to Children's Social Care or if at immediate risk to the Police.

If not able to make contact – try again, review risk assessment & call Social Worker or Police (local school policing links such as PCSOs have now ceased to operate)

- Operation Encompass will no longer be operating. Any concerns about domestic abuse should be reported in line with school policy and DVRIM/DASH tools used. Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid continue to provide a service (Appendix C)
- The DSL team must meet weekly (this can be a virtual meeting), to discuss the status of each child they are working with, through a group supervision meeting which should be recorded.

Remind Teachers to only use approved contacts methods – no social media groups etc

5. Catering for Children who are entitled to free school meals:

Where Solihull Catering are contracted by the school to provide school meals, two central catering hubs to prepare cold packed lunches for children entitled to free school meals. Please contact the business support team on 0121 704 6602 to organise this if you have a contract arrangement with Solihull Catering.

Those schools who do not contract Solihull Catering will need to make their own arrangements. Emerging arrangements nationally about vouchers for FSM pupils.

6. Financial Support Signposting for families in crisis

Families requiring information around financial support and assistance to the following website link <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/benefits>

This website covers financial support and assistance with housing benefit, council tax support, information regarding welfare reforms including how to make a claim for universal credit. The website also has 'support to success' information which signposts to organisations who can help with various issues including debt management and budgeting.

6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is 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 telephone and email
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We have made arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

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 – about both children attending school and those at home.

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 – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

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. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns

We have the option to offer places in school to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this. If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

10. 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

Each child has an individual plan which sets out:

- How often the school will make contact – this will be at least once a week
- Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
- How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone and by email

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them as appropriate. If we can't make contact, we will alert the appropriate contact within Children's Services or the police.

11. 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 line with the procedures set out in section 3 above.

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any phone calls

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support pupils' mental health.

12. Online safety

12.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

If IT staff are unavailable, our contingency plan is to contact EICTS for support.

12.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff behaviour policy/code of conduct/IT acceptable use policy.

During the period of school closure staff are only making contact with pupils via their parents' designated email address and their s74 staff email account. Telephone calls are being made to parents and any conversations with pupils are completed whilst children are directly supervised by their parents.

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.

13.3 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

13. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

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.

14. Staff recruitment, training and induction

14.1 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.

14.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks.

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

14.3 Safeguarding induction and 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

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

14.4 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.

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

We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

15. 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.

16. 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 Jenny Godsall, DSL & Principal. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

17. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Staff [behaviour policy/code of conduct]
- IT acceptable use/online safety policy
- Health and safety policy