

The Meadow Community Primary School



COVID-19 SAFEGUARDING POLICY ANNEX

This annex to The Meadow Community Primary School's Safeguarding Policy is with immediate effect with direction from the Trust CEO. This is an annex which will remain in effect until further notice and all aspects of The Meadow Community Primary School's existing Safeguarding Policy/KCSIE 2019 will remain in place unless alterations are stated below;

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- **What staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child**

Please follow exiting arrangements and ensure you contact your DSL, or DDSL in their absence, as soon as possible.

- **DSL (and deputy) arrangements**

The optimal scenario for any school or college providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case there are 2 options to consider:

1. a trained DSL or DDSL from the school or college can be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
2. sharing trained DSLs or DDSLs with other schools or colleges (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, the department recommend a senior leader takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site . This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, 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.

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school and college staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). For the period 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.

Every school and college will face unique challenges at this time. Where reasonably possible, the DSL (or deputy) should consider these in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection policy as appropriate.

- **Vulnerable pupils and families - The continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children’s social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children**

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans, read more in the [guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) for further information.

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children’s social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend provision, unless in consultation with the child’s social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.

Senior leaders, especially DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children’s social care support.

School and college staff should continue to work with and support children’ social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the COVID-19 period. Please keep a record of contact you have with your vulnerable families during this period.

- **Arrangements to support children the school or college are concerned about who do not meet the ‘vulnerable’ definition**

DSLs should similarly identify any pupils who do not automatically fall into the ‘vulnerable pupil’ category and adopt the same approach – regular contact with the families, reporting any concerns to Social Care if appropriate.

- **Attendance**

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Schools/colleges and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school or college should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools and colleges should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend. To support the above, schools and colleges should 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. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school or college, or discontinues, the school or college should notify their social worker.

The department has introduced a [daily online attendance form](#) to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

- **Peer on peer abuse**

Please continue to follow part 5 of KCSIE 2019 to report any concerns.

- **What staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children**

The principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns.

- **Staff Training and Safeguarding Induction**

All existing school and college staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The important thing for these staff will be awareness of 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 enter the school or college, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up to date child protection policy (described above) will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE.

The existing school and college workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school or college should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

- **Children moving schools and colleges**

It will be important for any school or college whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders should take responsibility.

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

- **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. If schools and colleges are recruiting new staff, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its [guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#) to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

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

Regarding members of the school or college workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on schools and colleges to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

Schools and colleges must continue to follow their 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.

Schools and colleges should 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. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school or college 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, schools and colleges must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE. The SCR can, if a school or college chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school or college on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

- **Mental Health**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely.

Where they are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, schools and colleges should ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools (which may also be useful for colleges) sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. [mental health and behaviour in schools](#)

Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances includes existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) and from specialist staff and support services

- **Online safety in schools and colleges**

It will be more important than ever that schools and colleges provide a safe environment, including online. Schools and colleges should 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 school or college’s IT systems or recommended resources. Schools and colleges should consider who in their institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. Schools and colleges should also consider what their contingency arrangements are if their IT staff become unavailable.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre’s professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children’s workforce with any online safety issues they face. Local authorities may also be able to provide support.

- **What arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school or college safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed**

All schools will inform parents of ongoing arrangements through their electronic platforms (Ping, Weduc, etc).

All pupils have received relevant e-safety education whilst in school and have therefore been educated to a standard where online safety will have been covered.

Should a school have any concerns about any pupil’s safety, including any online safety, whilst they are not physically attending the school, the DSSL/DDSL will follow normal Safeguarding procedures.

All schools and colleges should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the school or 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.

The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. It will set out 4 key areas that leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. This includes the use of technology. Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) could help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.

All schools and colleges should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school’s or college’s staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct). This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced. Schools and colleges should, as much as is reasonably possible, consider if their existing policies adequately reflect the new reality of so many children (and in some cases staff) working remotely online. As with the child protection policy, in some cases an annex/addendum summarising key COVID-19 related changes may be more effective than re-writing/re-issuing the whole policy. The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) may help schools and colleges satisfy themselves that their staff behaviour policies are robust and effective. In some areas schools and colleges may be able to seek support from their local authority when planning online lessons/activities and considering online safety.

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

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children 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 the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

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

Schools and colleges are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school or college online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents and carers, schools and colleges should 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 includes:

- [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](#) - advice for parents and carers