

Safeguarding Policy Annex:

Arrangements in the event of a pandemic related school closure.

In the event of a school closure as a result of a pandemic such as Coronavirus (COVID-19), the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (KCSIE) continue to apply. This includes if children receive educational provision remotely and/or if children of critical workers, some boarders and vulnerable children are cared for and educated on the school premises. However, it is also necessary to consider how safeguarding policies and procedures can best be adapted under such circumstances in order to keep children safe. Although the way the school operates during the coronavirus pandemic is fundamentally different to business as usual, a number of key safeguarding principles remain the same:

- With regards to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first.
- If anyone connected with the school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act immediately.
- A member of the DSP team will always be available and on call.
- It remains essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children, either in person or online.
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current situation, can affect the mental health of children and adults. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of children's work where they are at home.

It is important to continue to take a whole school approach to safeguarding. This is the best way of ensuring that any new policies or procedures in response to COVID-19 do not weaken the approach to safeguarding or the school's child protection policy. Whilst the school continues to operate during the pandemic, it will follow these safeguarding guidelines:

Safeguarding information for All Staff and the Management of Safeguarding

- The school will follow any updated advice from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP). This includes advice regarding children with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans, the LADO and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need. HSCP has a web page about safeguarding during COVID-19 with guidance including carrying out virtual meetings for looked after children and child protection conferences. The link is: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social->

[care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/safeguarding-during-covid-19.aspx](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/safeguarding-during-covid-19.aspx)

- If staff and volunteers have any concerns about a child, including those attending school and those receiving remote provision, they should report them **immediately** to the DSP team. Staff and volunteers who interact with children, including online, should look out for any signs, as detailed in the school's Safeguarding policy, that might indicate a child is at risk. It is important to remember that some children will have a difficult home life and therefore the school, and children's links with members of staff, can be very important to them.
- There are no changes to the DSP team, who can be contacted in the normal manner. If any children are being educated on the school premises, a member of the DSP team will be available onsite. If all pupils are being educated remotely, or if for some reason it is not possible for a member of the DSP team to be onsite, one of the team will be available by phone or online. The DSP team will be available to liaise with staff, manage access to child protection files, liaise with social workers with access to children in need and/or carry out statutory assessments. Anselm Barker is the DSP and Julia Fairey, Suzanne Kennedy and Kay Wayman are the Deputy DSPs. If you have an urgent child protection concern, ring the DSP on 07926 281550. To make a report that is not urgent, use MyConcern. For correspondence that is not urgent, email dsp@tringpark.com.
- The school will continue to communicate and work with any social workers and the virtual school head of any children. This includes reporting any unexplained absence.
- Any children who do not meet the definition of a 'vulnerable' child but are a safeguarding concern must continue to be supported as previously and any concerns should still be reported to the DSP.
- The School's Attendance Officer, Karina Jones, will complete the DfE daily online attendance form for the children of any critical workers and vulnerable children attending the school. Although it is not a DfE requirement for schools to report attendance if pupils are being educated remotely, staff should continue to report attendance internally. Pastoral staff will contact any pupils who are not engaging as expected to ensure that there are no safeguarding concerns.
- Peer on peer abuse remains a risk, either between any children who are attending the school or those being educated remotely. The school community must remain vigilant to the signs of peer on peer abuse, report any concerns to the DSP and support any victims in accordance with KCSIE. The school will continue to be informed by the principles of part 5 of KCSIE in managing any reports of Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment.
- Staff should be particularly vigilant for any online safety concerns given that children will be spending more of their time online. It is important for staff to continue to follow the school's Online Safety Acceptable Use and IT policy, seek advice from Sarah Bell, the school's E-safety Officer, and report any concerns as normal. Staff should also follow the guidelines laid out in the school's Distance Learning Agreement in order to ensure that they have all of the necessary safeguards in place for online distance learning platforms. Only school approved systems and platforms should be used in order to ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place. The E-safety officer will continue to send online safety bulletins and advice to parents, pupils and staff.

- The school's team of houseparents, medical centre nurses and counsellors will continue to provide pastoral support and advice and maintain regular contact with any pupils with mental health and wellbeing concerns.
- The principles of part 4 of KCSIE continue to inform the approach staff should follow if they have concerns about a member of staff or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children as detailed in the school's Safeguarding policy. The school has a legal duty to refer anyone to the DBS who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Where appropriate, the school should also consider making a referral to the Teachers Regulation Authority (TRA) by email.
- If any new staff or volunteers are appointed during this time, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction and provided with all of the policies that are normally given to new staff at induction, including the school's Safeguarding policy and this Annex.
- The DSP will continue to request any relevant welfare and child protection information for a new child who joins the school. This includes access to any EHC plan, child in need plan and/or child protection plan. If the child is 'looked-after', the school will request the personal education plan and details of the social worker/Virtual School Head. If a child leaves the school, this information will be forwarded securely to the child's new school and the local authority informed.
- The school will continue to keep a record of any staff who are attending school each day.

Safer Recruitment

The school will continue to have regard for Part 3 of KCSIE and ensure that when recruiting staff/volunteers, the safer recruitment checks are completed as detailed in the school's Safer Recruitment policy. Appropriate checks must be completed for those engaged in regulated activity and a risk assessment process completed for any volunteers. Under no circumstance should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. If staff are temporarily moved to or from another setting, the DfE has clarified that there is no expectation for a DBS to be obtained. A current DBS for a different type of setting, e.g. one obtained for childcare, can be accepted by the school. However, the onus remains on the school to satisfy itself that the required checks have been made. This can be achieved by seeking assurance from their current employer. The receiving school should risk assess the shared member of staff in the same way as with a volunteer. The school's SCR will continue to be kept up to date.