

# **Annex to Safeguarding Policy- January update COVID – 19 changes to our Safeguarding Policy**

## **Child protection during the COVID-19 measures**

### **Response to COVID – 19 Context**

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Schools have been asked to provide on site education only for children who are vulnerable and children whose parent/carer is employed as a critical worker (according to the Government published criteria). All other students are accessing education provided by the school remotely. There has been, therefore, significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

### **Version control and dissemination**

This policy will be reviewed by our DSL or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website here <http://www.guilsborough.northants.sch.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-information> and is made available to staff via e-mail and policies on the VLE.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can speak to them.

### **Safeguarding priority**

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available on site during school hours
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

## Current school position

Guilsborough Academy and Naseby CE Primary Academy are partially open to support vulnerable students and children of critical workers as per Government Guidelines.

If a child meets the Government criteria for being eligible to attend school (ie. needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker) then on site educational provision will be available for them. A full list is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

## Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting 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 current advice is below.

- ❑ **The Local Authority must be informed about any closures, locally planned temporary mergers, and any difficulties in providing sufficient places for vulnerable children and children of keyworkers.** Contact LSE-admin@childrenfirstnorthamptonshire.co.uk in the first instance.
- ❑ The expectation is that all vulnerable children with an allocated social worker will be in school and schools must inform and work with the social worker directly if this is not the case;
- ❑ For those children with an EHC plan, it is for schools to determine, with parents, if it is best for them to be in school or not;
- ❑ Schools should use their judgement if they want to offer places to other children that they consider to be vulnerable;
- ❑ DfE require schools to complete the 'children in attendance form' and submit at the following: <http://services.signin.education.gov.uk/>.

### **Children In Care (LAC)**

Please be aware that, in addition to the monitoring attendance measures, the Northamptonshire Virtual School will continue to collect attendance marks for all Northamptonshire Children in Care through the commissioned provider Looked After Call.

### **Critical workers (Key Workers)**

1. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
2. Parents should do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing

socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus and they are following Government guidelines for National Lockdown. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

The guidance states that if you have parents and carers whose employer defines them as meeting the Government criteria of being a **critical worker** and they work in one of the critical sectors listed, their children will be prioritised for education.

### **Northamptonshire's Children's Services MASH/DAAT response to Covid-19 Pandemic**

During the current COVID-19 outbreak, Children First Northamptonshire must consider their response to the needs of children who are in need of protection and children in need of support.

Children who are deemed to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm will continue to receive the intervention of specialist and statutory services as currently provided.

Children referred into MASH who are children in need of support will be screened and a professional judgement applied regarding the level and type of intervention required.

This judgement will include two considerations specific to the period of the Covid-19 Critical Incident:

- The staffing capacity of the service and ability to respond
- The need to maximise social distancing and therefore maximise the extent to which judgements can be formed through information sharing and remote contact with families

### **Children at High Risk of Harm**

#### **Level 4**

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. These children require specialist/ statutory support.

Children at this Level would require social work assessment such as Child Protection (CP) investigations or legal interventions in order to make sure they are safe.

These children will be transferred from MASH to a qualified social worker in an operational team who will complete either a Child Protection investigation and/or a Single Assessment. These children may also need to be accommodated by the Local Authority either on a voluntary basis or by way of Court Order.

Significant harm could occur where there is a single event, such as a violent assault.

More often, significant harm is identified when there have been a number of events which have compromised the child's physical and psychological wellbeing: for example, a child whose health and development suffers through neglect. The impact on the child and child's history must always be considered.

For all children at Level 4 safeguarding procedures will be promptly implemented to ensure children are safe.

Strategy discussions with the police and other professionals will be held virtually where possible and appropriate contact details will be provided to those attending.

Children will be seen in a timely way as per national and local guidance for visits to children. Assistance from the police may be sought in circumstances whereby parents are refusing access and there is cause to believe that the children are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Safety plans will be identified to safeguard children from further harm, to consider extended family and connected persons. Social workers will need to be creative and consider the implication of limited resources and how the risks could be mitigated, including risks in relation to Covid-19 when safety planning.

These children will be flagged on the system as high risk under Children's Emergency planning and will be prioritised for visits, assessments and meetings. For some children there will be factors in relation to Covid-19 that increase risk, notably that they may not be attending school and the heightened risk of domestic abuse due to self-isolation or social distancing.

### **Children in Need of Support**

#### **Level 3**

Children with complex or multiple needs: These children require specific support, without which their health and development may be effected. Without support, the family are likely to become in need of a greater level of support and children may be unsafe. These may include children who have been assessed as 'high risk' in the recent past, or children who have been adopted and now require additional support.

Professionals wishing to refer children to children's services must gain consent to share information about a child. MASH will record any efforts made by the referrer to obtain consent as this will be part of the decision to either accept the referral or request that the referrer takes further action. If the need for consent is overruled, MASH will record this decision and the reasons why we believe safety of the child may be at risk, or why it was inappropriate to seek agreement.

Due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic direct work with families and access to professionals may be difficult to facilitate and resources will be in high demand. At the same time no vulnerable child must be left at actual or potential risk.

Therefore children's social care will screen and based on the information available apply a judgement to Level 3 referrals and determine what action will be required. These children will be flagged on the system as medium risk under Children's Emergency planning and the outcome of the screening *could be: No further action required, case to be reviewed* with telephone/ Skype assessment where appropriate, step down to Early help/ Targeted Support.

If managers determine a child is classed as medium risk, social workers *will gather information by telephone from the parent/carer, young person/ the child and any professional as appropriate. Following this, there will be a determination if the involvement could end with no further action or the case needs to be kept under review. There could also be a possibility that the child may need to be considered at risk and the classification will need to be changed to reflect that and actions as described at level 4 above will need to be implemented.*

*Some children may need a home visit to assess the level of risk/concern and determine further actions. Likely to be one visit only and complete assessment with checks.*

A clear management oversight will be recorded to ratify and rationale for the decision making.

#### **Recording information**

All involvement with children, young people and families should be recorded appropriately and in accordance with children's services procedures, in order to show that a conversation took place, what was discussed and what was agreed. Recording needs to be clear, concise, distinguish fact from opinion, be respectful to those involved and explain the rationale for the decision made.

*MASH will endeavour to record accurate and up to date contact details and addresses for families. This will support the new process and will ensure that social workers are able to make contact with families as required.*

The decisions made and outcomes of discussions should be clearly recorded, including the people responsible and timescales. Managers/ CSW's will be required to agree or amend the decisions made and record management oversight.

All information gathered during triage/ screening will be recorded on the Initial Contact by the Mash Officer/ Social Worker/ Decision Maker completing the work.

### **Contingency Planning**

- If a family cannot be contacted via phone, email, text etc. then an unannounced visit will need to be undertaken if there are concerns about child being at risk.
- If parents are refusing access/self-isolating/or have symptoms – discussion to be held with team manager and then relayed to service manager for a decision to be made as to how the case/visit is progressed. Service Manager will escalate to Strategic Manager if required.
- The police may be asked to assist in safeguarding children when deemed necessary in accordance with Working together to safeguard children
- Further safeguarding visits need to be coordinated if there are continuing safeguarding concerns.
- The use of technology will be considered for future visits and meetings as appropriate and per national and local guidance*
- Social workers will be creative and consider the impact of the current emergency situation limited resources whilst always putting the children first.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

If possible, our DSL and/or deputy DSL will be available on site during the school day.

Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video; or
- ensure we have access to a trained DSL or deputy DSL from another school or college by phone and/or online video.

Where our DSL or a deputy DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

**The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is:**

Mrs A Lakey Contact details: email: [lakey@guilborough.northants.sch.uk](mailto:lakey@guilborough.northants.sch.uk) tel: 01604 740641

**The deputy designated leads are:**

Miss L Ward Contact details: email: [ward@guilborough.northants.sch.uk](mailto:ward@guilborough.northants.sch.uk) tel: 01604 740641

Mrs J Greenwood Contact details: email: [Greenwood@guilborough.northants.sch.uk](mailto:Greenwood@guilborough.northants.sch.uk) tel: 01604 740641

Mrs L Concar Contact details: email: [concar@guilborough.northants.sch.uk](mailto:concar@guilborough.northants.sch.uk) tel: 01604 740641

Mr N Haddon Contact details: email: [haddon@guilborough.northants.sch.uk](mailto:haddon@guilborough.northants.sch.uk) tel: 01604 740641

**At Naseby CE Primary Academy (DSL) for child protection is:**

Mrs B Thornton Contact details: email: [head@naseby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk](mailto:head@naseby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk) tel: 01604 740540

**The deputy designated leads are:**

Mrs L. Newlyn-Jones Contact details: [newlynjones@nasebyacademy.com](mailto:newlynjones@nasebyacademy.com) tel: 01604 740540

Mrs S. Burdett Contact details: email: [burdett@nasebyacademy.com](mailto:burdett@nasebyacademy.com) tel: 01604 740540

**For safeguarding concerns outside of school hours:**

*Staff members - should follow normal safeguarding procedures using the 'Safeguarding – out of hours' pink card.*

*Non-staff members – If it is an emergency and you think that a child may be in immediate danger please contact the emergency services directly by calling 999 or contact Northampton County Council evening, at night or at the weekend, phoning the out-of-hours team on 01604 626 938 or refer online using the link below.*

<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/SEND/local-offer/local-government-department/2459-multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash-and-child-protection-team>

## Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - care leavers

There is an expectation that 'vulnerable children' will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent/carer does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the parent/carer and, where appropriate, the social worker and external agencies supporting the family.

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support and to students who need to attend to receive additional support.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

### **Increased vulnerability or risk**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them in line with our remote learning policy.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns via myconcern. At Naseby CE Primary Academy, concerns will be shared with the DSL or a deputy using a cause for concern form.

### **Identifying vulnerability**

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children. All students in the named categories above, plus students who are being monitored closely by the Student Support Team due to being at risk of being in one of these categories, have been risk assessed by the Safeguarding Team. This risk assessment is reviewed weekly by the Safeguarding Team.

Where students are considered safe at home by the Safeguarding Team monitoring through usual school processes continue.

Where students are considered higher risk we have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups if they are not attending school to enable us to monitor remotely (these are all in addition to monitoring participation in remote learning and contact with class teachers):

- Looked After Children – weekly phone call with carer and student\*. Any concerns raised with Social Worker and risk assessment updated.
- Previously Looked After Children – monitoring through school processes with any concerns followed up by Safeguarding Team.
- Children subject to a child protection plan – weekly phone call with carer and student\*. Any concerns raised with Social Worker and risk assessment updated.

- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker - weekly phone call with carer and student\*. Any concerns raised with Social Worker and risk assessment updated.
- Children with an EHCP – weekly contact with keyworker to support student with their learning, may be by email or by phone as appropriate. Monitored by SENDCO.
- Young carers – weekly phone contact with the student by a member of the Student Support Team.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker – minimum fortnightly phone contact by a member of the Student Support Team.
- Where the Safeguarding Team has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, a communication plan is in place to support that child.

\*Phone call is not logged as completed until the student has been spoken to directly.

## **Attendance**

The school is following the attendance guidance issued by the government. Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, e-mail or by contacting a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will contact the social worker, if appropriate, and ask an appropriate agency to undertake a home visit. Depending on risk the academy may undertake a home visit. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure that staff and the family are not put at risk.

## **Reporting concerns about children or staff**

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Safeguarding procedures and advise the DSL of any concerns, through our online reporting system **my concern**.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently.

We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team for concerns about children and to the Principal if concerns are regarding a member of staff .

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged <http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/schools/referrals-eha/designated-officer/>

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

### **Staff training and induction**

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSL and deputy DSLs are still likely to receive their refresher training through online training. However, in line with past government guidance, our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our safeguarding Policy and New Staff Induction procedures.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

### **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.

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy

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.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness

### **Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Safeguarding Policy, which can be accessed here <http://www.guilsborough.northants.sch.uk/for-parents/key-information/documents-hub/policies/curriculum-and-student-welfare/794-safeguarding-policy-2/file>

### **Online safety**

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Safeguarding Policy <http://www.guilsborough.northants.sch.uk/for-parents/key-information/documents-hub/policies/curriculum-and-student-welfare/794-safeguarding-policy-2/file>

- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#).
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
  - [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

Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL through **myconcern**

### **New children at the school**

Children may have to join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that 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).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen 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 our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

**This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and is available on the school website at [link](#)**