



# CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY ADDENDUM

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) arrangements for Child Protection and Safeguarding at Wellsway-Multi Academy Trust (WMAT)

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## **Context**

This is an addendum created in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic/school closure that summarises key changes as a result of the COVID-19 response. All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this addendum and kept up to date as it is revised. The addendum will be made available publicly on the WMAT website and the website of each Trust school.

## **Principles**

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that schools are under, it remains essential that they continue to be safe places for children.

All actions by schools should continue to be in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (KCSIE, 2019) and Coronavirus (Covid 19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers 2020. The latter document suggests where schools might consider safeguarding policy and process differently during this period, when compared to business as usual.

A number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- 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.

Schools should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. It will be especially important that wider opening risk assessments and related Health and Safety risk assessments are appropriately linked into a school's approach to the safeguarding and child protection policy.

Every school will face unique challenges at this time such as increased concerns related to domestic abuse and mental health. Where reasonably possible and where relevant, the DSL (or deputy) of each WMAT school should consider these challenges in a child protection context and, if required, reflect them as an addition in the appendices of the school specific WMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as appropriate.

Prevent is a vital part of our work to safeguard children from radicalising influences, and it remains in operation in all WMAT schools during this challenging time.

## **Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**

As more children return, it is expected that each school will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible, and where this is the case there are two options to consider:

- A trained DSL (or deputy) from the school can be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example if working from home.
- Sharing trained DSLs (or deputies) with other WMAT schools (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, a senior leader will take 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.

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school 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.

The DSL (or deputy) should provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school. Where possible, staff should try and speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff should be encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school site via school phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they must withhold their personal number.

For the period coronavirus 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.

DSLs (and deputies) should continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.

### **Reporting a Concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school WMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Principal/Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Principal/Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Principal/Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Principal/Headteacher.

Concerns around the Principal/Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors:

Mr. Graham Shaw

Concerns around a member of the Executive Leadership Team should be reported to Malcom Broad – Chair of Trustees, Wellsway Multi Academy Trust.

### **Identification of Vulnerable Children**

Vulnerable children for the purposes of continued attendance during the coronavirus outbreak are those across all year groups who:

- Are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children 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 and it is determined, following risk assessment (risk assessment guidance), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment.
- Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion.

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and virtual school heads will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period. School staff (supported by the DSL or deputy) should continue to work with and support children's social workers, virtual school heads and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners to help protect vulnerable children. Local authorities will liaise with schools to outline their expectations in relation to how schools should be supporting vulnerable pupils.

The DSL should liaise regularly with the school SEN/D lead to review identification and monitoring of welfare concerns linked to those students with EHC plans.

### **Attendance of Vulnerable Children**

Attendance of vulnerable children is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending. Vulnerable children – regardless of year group – that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to nursery, early years or school provision where this would now be appropriate for them to do so. It is expected that all WMAT schools and other relevant partners work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school, where attendance is appropriate. A brief summary of attendance expectations across the different groups of vulnerable children is as follows:

- For vulnerable children who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable).

- For vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment.
- For vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school or local authority discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable).

Schools should continue to notify social workers where children with a social worker do not attend. They should also continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

### **Attendance – All Pupils**

In line with government guidance parents and carers will not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision.

Schools should resume taking their attendance register from 1 June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending. Please use this link for advice on attendance coding – [Attendance Coding](#).

### **Staff Training and Safeguarding Induction**

All existing WMAT school 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, especially if these are being reviewed/changed as a result of more children returning, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter WMAT schools, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. The WMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, The WMAT Coronavirus Addendum 2020 and part 1 of KCSIE will support this process.

The existing WMAT workforce may continue to move between WMAT schools on a temporary basis in response to coronavirus. The receiving school 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 would have read the mandatory WMAT safeguarding documentation. All they will require is confirmation of the receiving setting's DSL arrangements.

### **Children Moving Schools**

It will be important for any school whose children are attending another setting to continue 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 virtual school head 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 virtual school head 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 special educational needs (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 must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection law, that does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found in the WMAT Child Protection Policy and at paragraphs 76 to 83 of KCSIE, 2019.

### **Safer Recruitment/Volunteers and Movement of Staff**

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to enter the education's workforce or gain access to children. Schools should use their judgement on whether recruitment is needed and how this can best be done given the circumstances. If schools 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 coronavirus, 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. The Home Office and Immigration Enforcement have also temporarily adjusted the right to work checks due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Where WMAT schools 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 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 to support the response to coronavirus. 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 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.

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason the school have concerns about the individual, they may obtain a new check in the usual way.

Schools 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 should continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's advice for making a referral. During the coronavirus period all referrals should be made by emailing [misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto: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 is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. This will be more important than ever as more children and staff return. As such, schools 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 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 negatively affect the mental health of children and their parents. Schools should ensure appropriate support is in place for all pupils.

The Department for Education's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/755135/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_behaviour\\_in\\_schools\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools_.pdf)) can help schools to identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state, which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Support for pupils in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from specialist staff or support services.

Previous and ongoing training will ensure teachers are aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of those pupils (and their parents) who are continuing to work from home, including when setting expectations of children's work.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Two Rivers CofE Primary School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the WMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

### **Online Safety**

#### **- Online Safety (Filtering)**

As more children return it will be important that schools continue to provide a safe online environment for those who remain at home. WMAT and schools should continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems.

#### **- Online Safety (Staff)**

All schools should continue to 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 WMAT Online Safety Policy and the WMAT Code of Conduct. These policies amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media. The documents apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

WMAT schools should continue to ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection requirements.

#### **- Online Safety (Pupils)**

All schools should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all their children safe. Whilst more children return to school, others will continue to stay at home and, in many cases, will be continuing to engage with their school online.

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 WMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should continue to be made to children's social care and as required the police.

#### **- Online Safety (Sources of Support for Schools)**

- The UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help WMAT and schools assure themselves that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.
- The UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline, email [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk) or telephone 0344 381 4772 provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face.



## **Remote Education**

WMAT schools will follow the Department for Education safeguarding guidance in relation to remote education. A copy of the guidance can be found at the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

WMAT schools will consider the approaches for virtual lessons and live streaming that best suit the needs of their children and staff.

If required, the WMAT Director of IT and Executive Leader for Safeguarding will provide guidance to ensure the approaches used by the school are safe and secure.

## **Pupil and Parent/Carer Support Organisations**

An essential part of the safeguarding planning process is to ensure children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst at home or online. All WMAT schools should signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- Speak to the school to ask the child's teacher or SENCO to contact you
- School nurses provide health advice
- There is a confidential telephone drop-in service Monday – Friday 12-2 pm.
- 01225 831666
- There is a CHAT health text service so you can text a School Nurse for advice or support for any health issues or worries, 07480635513
- Speak to your GP
- Kooth provide free online emotional and mental health support, [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)
- Off the Record provide a range of free services including counselling and listening support. <https://www.offtherecord-banes.co.uk/contact>
- Childline is here to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. Childline is free, confidential and available any time, day or night, 0800 1111
- CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Schools are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Parents/carers should be made aware of the above support organisations for their child. Schools should continue to reinforce the importance of children being safe online.

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- Thinkuknow provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online.
- Parent info is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations.

- Childnet offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support.
- Internet Matters provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world.
- London Grid for Learning has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online.
- Net-aware has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games.
- Let's Talk About It has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation.
- UK Safer Internet Centre has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services.

### **Support from the Wellsway Multi-Academy Trust**

The WMAT Board will comply with its duties under legislation. They must have regard for Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, ensuring policies, procedures and training in all WMAT schools are effective and comply with the law at all times. The WMAT Executive Leader for Safeguarding will be available to advise Principals, Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads in relation to implementation of all aspects of this policy. The WMAT Executive Leader for Safeguarding will support WMAT Designated Safeguarding Leads to deliver high quality training for staff to ensure they are prepared to respond to the needs of all children during these unprecedented times.