Safeguarding: SCHOOL CLOSURE COVID-19 appendix

Burgess Hill Girls

Approved by:	SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM	Date: 7TH APRIL 2020
Last reviewed on:	7TH APRIL 2020	
Next review due by:	ONGOING	

Contents

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from the government during COVID-19.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers

It sets out addition as to our normal safeguarding 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 safeguarding 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, and parents have responsibility for this

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.

Liz Laybourn – Whole School Designated Safeguarding Lead

Heather Cavanagh – Deputy Designated Whole School Safeguarding Lead

Nikki Donson – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Senior School and Boarding

Suzanne Roberts – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Nursery

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

During the school closure due to COVID-19 our DSLs remain contactable via email or telephone.

If you have a concern about a child then you contact the DSL appropriate for that school section, as per the normal channels of communication.

The DSL's already have listed and identified students who are potentially the most vulnerable during school closure due to COVID-19.

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 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

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 phone call initially, followed by email correspondence.

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

We will use ISAMs 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.

The guidance on peer on peer abuse from the safeguarding policy will continue to be followed and support victims and perpetrators as necessary during school closure. This will be done on an individual basis.

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.

If you have a concerns about a staff member then please contact Liz Laybourn Whole School Designated Safeguarding Lead. Investigations will take place under the normal guidance from the LADO during school closure.

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 you are concerned about a child then in the first instance contact the DSL for the school section.

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 whom we have identified as vulnerable and the pastoral heads together with the Nurse will contact these children.

> 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

With these children identified the following will be the procedure.

> How often the school will make contact – the school teachers will use their professional judgement in how often they will contact students whom have been identified as vulnerable and / or as directed by the section Head.

> The Pastoral Head and/or the Nurse will make contact once a week

> Staff will make contact via google classroom, telephone calls and gmails initially.

We will review this process after 2 weeks.

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 class check-ins or video 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 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==.

Including following the guidance for remote learning for staff students and 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

12.2 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. This will include gmails, phone call home and google meets where necessary.

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 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

14.3 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, we will not use any staff 'on loan' from any other establishment.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the government, KCSIE is released. At every review it will be approved by the senior leadership team.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

> Safeguarding policy
> Staff behavior policy
> Staff code of conduct
> Student code of conduct
> IT acceptable use policy
> Health and safety policy
> Online safety policy
> Whistle blowing
> Anti-bullying policy