

St Nicholas C of E
Primary School.

Child Protection:
COVID-19
Addendum

Approved by: Chair of Governors

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Context

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the UK Government has asked parents to keep their children at home wherever possible. However, schools are being asked to provide care for a limited number of children – vulnerable and also to children whose parents are key workers.

The key principles of our existing Safeguarding and Child Protection policy still apply as follows:

- With regard to safeguarding, the child’s best interests must continue to come first.
- Our DSL or Deputy DSL will be available at all times when the school is open to families.
- If anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern about any child or member of staff, then they should continue to act immediately and inform the DSL/Deputy.
- Unsuitable people will not be allowed to enter our workforce and/or gain access to children.
- Children will continue to be protected when they are online.

We will ensure that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 will not weaken our approach to safeguarding or undermine this policy.

1. VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Current guidance from the Government defines vulnerable children as ‘those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC (education, health care) plan.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a CP (child protection) Plan and those who are being looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Our school’s Headteacher, in consultation with our school’s SENDCo and DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead (and class teacher if deemed necessary), can also put a child on the vulnerable list for attending school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In line with the current guidance, we will risk assess those children with an EHC plan in consultation with the LA and parents to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a place in school in order for their needs to be met, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Our SLT – Senior Leadership Team – and especially our DSLs and their Deputies know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support.

Our school will continue to work with, and support, children’s social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

DSL – Mrs Alison Shearer and Mrs Alecia Spike. Deputy DSL – Miss Zoe Cochrane and Miss Amy Hall.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an educational setting, so long as they do not have an underlying health condition that puts them at risk. We will continue to encourage our vulnerable children to attend school – remotely if needed.

In circumstances where parents do not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school staff will explore reasons for this directly with the parents. Where the parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, school staff or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

2. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS (DSLs)

St Nicholas C of E Primary School aims to have our DSL (or at least Deputy DSL) available on site as far as possible in current COVID-19 circumstances in line with statutory guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education document). Where this is not possible, the DSLs or their Deputy will be available via phone or online video – for example when working from home during their working day. Where a trained DSL or Deputy is not on site, in addition to the above, another member of the school team will assume responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing our new online tool – ‘My Concern’ and liaising with the DSL or Deputy and children’s social worker where they require access to children in need files and/or carry out statutory assessments at our school. All staff on site will be notified whether the DSL, Deputy DSL or another named staff member is the point of contact for a particular day’s safeguarding supervision.

The DSLs will continue to engage with social workers and co-ordinate remote attendance of case holding staff and all multi-agency meetings.

3. REPORTING A CONCERN

Where staff members have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process out-lined our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This includes making a report using our usual process. Staff are to record all concerns on My Concern.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff is unable to access the online system from home, they should email the DSL and Deputies. This will ensure the concern is received and acted upon as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

All staff members are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. Where staff members are concerned about an adult working with children in our school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher, Mrs Alison Shearer, as soon as possible. This should be done verbally and then followed up with a written log/ an email to the Headteacher within 24 hours. Concerns about the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors. If the concern is about the Chair of Governors or anyone on the Governing Board, the Safeguarding Office at County (aka LADO) Mr Antony Goble should be contacted immediately.

4. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

Our school will follow the latest updates in attendance recording.

We will continue to be aware of children not engaging with our online teaching and learning resources. We will follow up children who are not attending planned days in school and also planned online meetings.

St Nicholas will, when communicating with parents and carers, 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 in school, or stops attending without prior agreement and notification, St Nicholas will notify their social worker.

5. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND INDUCTION

During the period that COVID-19 measures are in place, our DSL and Deputy who are trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL or Deputy even if they miss their refresher training. All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of KCSiE. Our DSLs will communicate with staff 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 join St Nicholas, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding training session and induction.

St Nicholas has no need to deploy staff to other schools or to receive any staff from local schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. 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, St Nicholas will continue to follow safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSiE – Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.

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. If we are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSiE 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be allowed to enter the school premises. During COVID-19, it is highly likely that no pre COVID19 volunteers will be invited in to work in school; this is due to reduced pupil numbers during COVID-19.

We will continue to follow the 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.) We will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSiE 2019 and the TRA's Teacher Misconduct Advice for making a referral by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff will be in school and that appropriate checks have been carried out – especially for anyone engaged in regulated activity. We will continue to keep the SCR – Single Central Record – up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSiE 2019.

7. ONLINE SAFETY IN SCHOOL

Our school will continue to provide a safe environment for all our pupils, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

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8. CHILDREN AND ONLINE SAFETY AWAY FROM SCHOOL

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk of harm or neglect. Any such concerns should be dealt with in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and

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where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and, if required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as in the classroom and during the teaching day.

We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. All staff are made aware of the following considerations when delivering virtual lessons:

- No 1:1s, groups only.
- Teaching to take place within normal school hours.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing – as should all others in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas – for eg not in bedrooms. The background should be blurred where possible.
- Live classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate – including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms agreed by Governors and the DSLs.
- Staff should record the length, the time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

9. SUPPORTING CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL

St Nicholas is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils. Where the DSL or Deputy DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive any form of pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child. Details of this plan must be recorded as well as a record of any contact made with the child and/or their family.

The communication plans can include the following: remote contact or phone contact. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. St Nicholas and our two DSLs will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan which will be reviewed regularly (at least

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once a fortnight). Where concerns arise, the DSLs will consider any referrals as appropriate.

We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and the current circumstances can affect the mental health and well-being of pupils, their

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parents/carers and staff members. Our school team are aware of this and will take this in to account when setting tasks. Expectations of the quantity and quality of work will also be adjusted to suits the current COVID-19 situation we find ourselves in.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded in line with our normal reporting and recording procedures.

10. SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

St Nicholas is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its pupils and we will continue to be a safe place for all children to attend and flourish. Social distancing language will be considered carefully – we will use phrases such as ‘remember your safe bubble’ instead of ‘Keep away from one another.’ Some staff may, where appropriate, choose to sing a self-composed safe bubble song – e.g. in EYFS – early years foundation stage.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff members are on site and staff-to - pupil ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety.

We will refer to the Government guidance for educational settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19. (Social distancing now 1-metre as from 23rd June 2020 whilst the Government has asked for the public to still respect the 2-metre rule where possible. 23rd June 2020)

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded in line with our normal reporting and recording procedures.

Where St Nicholas has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our DSLs, Deputy DSL or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the local authority.

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11. PEER ON PEER ABUSE

We recognise that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report on peer on peer abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principals as set out in part 5 of KCSiE 2019 and of those outlined within our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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We will listen and work with children, parents/carers and multi-agency partners to ensure the safety and security of the child concerned. All concerns and actions will be recorded in line with our normal safeguarding processes and appropriate referrals made.

SUPPORT FROM SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL:

If you are worried about a child or young person who could be in danger, please contact:

- Children's Social Care on 0300 123 2224 - Early Help Advice Hub on 01823 355803
- Consultation line for DSLs and GPs on 0300 123 3078
- Email at childrens@somerset.gov.uk
- Or the police – direct dial is 101 and they will discuss with Children's Social Care what action should be taken. **IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CONTACT THE POLICE BY DIALLING 999**
- If you would like to speak to a social worker outside of office hours, please phone the EDT – Emergency Duty Team – on 0300 1232327
- SSCP@somerset.gov.uk
- Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, PP2 B3W, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

Remember – in law, young people are children until their 18th birthday. Child abuse can occur at any age from birth onwards. There can also be serious concerns pre-birth.

REMEMBER – SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS at St Nicholas – don't delay – if you see it or hear it, then report it. Don't be afraid to voice your concerns; the child may need urgent protection and help and you might just be the spoke in the safeguarding wheel that makes a difference.