



South Gosforth First School

'Roots to grow and wings to fly'

Updated Guidance for CES Schools

COVID-19 Addendum to the School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

May 2020

Emergency contact details:

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Safeguarding:			
Name	Email	Telephone	Mobile
Rob Adams	robert.adams@southgosforth.newcastle.sch.uk	0191 2853453	07837710877
Jill Whitehouse	jill.whitehouse@southgosforth.newcastle.sch.uk	0191 2853453	07788282834
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Introduction

In light of the ongoing challenges faced by schools in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the new arrangements and ways of working schools are developing to meet the challenges of supporting

- pupils identified as vulnerable
- children of key workers
- the wider pupil population
- providing and delivering community support
- responding to identified local needs

The DFE have issued additional guidance for schools and academies relating to their existing Safeguarding /Child Protection Policy documents. We have produced this document to summarise the key issues described in the DFE guidance and to act as the additional element / addendum to your existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that the DFE Guidance document suggests.

It is not exhaustive, and we would encourage schools to consider this document and amend it to reflect your specific context and situation, and to ensure it addresses the way in which your school is delivering safeguarding support, and responding to community issues.

Schools are asked to read the new guidance and act in accordance with the advice provided.

The Guidance Document: Key Messages

KCSIE 2019 must still be adhered to. Schools / academies must continue to

- provide a safe environment
- keep children safe
- ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required

Key safeguarding principles remain unchanged

- with regard to safeguarding, 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

Annex ___ to Existing Policy in Response to Additional DFE Guidance Issued on 20th May 2020

Context

These updates reflect current guidance in response to managing the Covid-19 pandemic and reflect the actions taken and planned by school / academy in preparation for the reopening of our school to our pupils in June 2020. The updated policy is intended to complement our existing policy document and not to replace the principles, procedures and approach we take to safeguarding the welfare and safety of all our pupils at South Gosforth First School.

Our existing school /academy policy continues to be compliant and fit for purpose. It recognises and responds to the key guidance documents

- ✓ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019
- ✓ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- ✓ Existing Local Authority / Safeguarding Partnership Advice and Guidance

Key issues and amendments to the policy are summarised below and are in direct response to the areas identified in the DfE advice of May 20th 2020.

Where staff identify a new safeguarding concern in relation to a child returning to school / academy following school closure.

When pupils return it is likely that some may have experienced challenging and difficult circumstances during the lockdown period. Where we are already aware of a vulnerable child, and staff are working to support the child and family, all current policies, procedures and reporting requirements of staff remain the same.

For some children, staff may identify or raise a new concern. Our expectations of staff remain the same. Where staff have a cause for concern then you must share that concern with an identified DSL immediately. The DSL will advise on next steps. In accordance with our procedures staff must record the concern and actions taken following our existing school / academy guidance on reporting and recording.

Our responsibilities remain the same...the welfare of the child is paramount and we expect staff to continue to follow our existing reporting and recording process.

DSL response and support during the period pupils are returning to our school / academy.

The DSL(s) remain our key point of contact for all safeguarding and child protection concerns and issues as pupils return to school / academy following the lockdown restrictions being lifted.

We recognise that as a consequence of our phased return to school / academy for our pupils that there may potentially be greater scope for the DSL to plan, provide and deliver additional support to staff and pupils alike. This is dependent upon a number of issues and other commitments / area of responsibility within the context of our school / academy. Staff

are encouraged to seek DSL advice and guidance in all appropriate cases, and we fully appreciate the need to ensure these discussions take place and safe decisions are made.

Staff are asked to continue to use the DSL contact appropriately, according to our current policy and process, and to remember that all at South Gosforth First School recognise that **we all have responsibility for safeguarding.**

Ensuring our pupil / family information is accurate and up to date.

During the Covid-19 pandemic it is essential that we do all we can to ensure pupil and family information for all pupils, and especially those we have identified as vulnerable is accurate, complete and appropriately recorded.

We recognise that in some families specific issues and challenges may have altered previous family structures / living and care arrangements. As pupils return to school it is vital that we gather up to date information to ensure we can respond to need and plan for reintegration into school as effectively as possible. We will undertake an information gathering process with all families where pupils are returning to school in the first instance, and this will extend to all pupils as and when they return to education.

At South Gosforth First School this process will be coordinated by Rob Adams or Jill Whitehouse who will ensure all staff are informed of how we will address this issue.

DSL (and deputy) arrangements

Staff have previously been notified of our DSL arrangements during the lockdown period. As we move toward the gradual return of our pupils these arrangements may alter. Staff will be informed regarding any changes and all staff must continue to discuss all concerns with the identified DSL(s) during the re-opening process.

The current school arrangements and contact details are below.

Rob Adams	robert.adams@southgosforth.newcastle.sch.uk	0191 2853453	07837710877
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Peer on Peer Abuse; Our Response.

As a school we recognise that for some pupils the lockdown period will have been difficult and upsetting. We cannot be aware of all the circumstances or issues which may have arisen for some of our pupils, especially those we identify as vulnerable.

We recognise that for some young people they may have been involved in a range of potentially abusive situations, in their home, community or on-line. This includes the potential for Peer on Peer abuse to have taken place.

Where staff are aware of an issue or have a specific concern that a pupil may have been subject to any form of peer on peer abuse then they must discuss this with the DSL immediately, following our agreed procedure. The DSL will determine next steps, and we will ensure that our response is compliant with and reflective of the guidance provided in Part 5 of KCSIE 2019.

Concerns regarding the conduct or behaviour of a staff member / volunteer.

Whilst we recognise that our staff have worked in exceptional circumstances during the period of the lockdown, we must ensure that all staff remain vigilant and open to the potential for pupils to be abused by a professional / volunteer.

- ✓ Where colleagues have a concern then they must follow the current school / academy guidance in response to raising concerns regarding the conduct of staff member or follow the process identified within the school / academy Whistleblowing Policy.
- ✓ We will ensure that all concerns are dealt with appropriately, sensitively and in line with the guidance described in Part 4 of KCSIE 2019.

Protecting vulnerable children

At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic staff identified all pupils we considered to fall within the definition of 'vulnerable'. School / Academy put in place a range of measures in terms of contact arrangements, provision of work / on-line learning opportunities and continued contact with other professionals / agencies working with the child / family.

This identification process was in line with the guidance provided by the DfE and covered the definitions of a vulnerable child set out below.

- ✓ 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.

This ongoing support remains in place and will continue until new arrangements can be agreed and appropriate safety and protective factors can be established. South Gosforth First School Senior Staff and Governors will keep this under review and we will ensure that

we continue to act in the best interests of all our pupils and in compliance with DfE advice and guidance on this issue.

Arrangements for pupils not attending school and on-line safety procedures.

The response to the pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we have delivered education and support to our pupils. Staff and pupils have identified new and creative ways to keep in touch, receive academic work, and receive and provide feedback. We have developed new on-line approaches which have adhered to all guidance in respect of both pupil and staff safety. This will continue for some time and staff are reminded of our existing guidance and advice and are expected to continue to remain vigilant in the way they deliver on-line learning, ensuring that all home-learning links are adequately checked for content.

Where pupils remain at home, then we will continue to ensure we have regular contact according to our agreed procedure, and that we remain aware of and responsive to any causes for concern which might be identified.

Currently, class teachers speak to all children from their class via telephone for a welfare check. Any pupils who are considered to be vulnerable are contacted once a week by a member of the senior leadership team (apart from during holiday periods). Any concerns which arise from this are recorded on CPOMS and the DSL is informed.

At all times staff must continue to follow our agreed procedure for reporting concerns.

Responding to updated advice and guidance

We continue to work closely with all our partners and external organisations in respect of ensuring our safeguarding response is effective and compliant. Where we receive advice or guidance requiring us to update / revise any aspect of our safeguarding procedures to ensure compliance with our Local Safeguarding Partners arrangements we will ensure this is actioned and relevant documents reviewed.

Similarly where we receive updates regarding our response to meeting the needs of pupils with an EHCP, Referral criteria or thresholds, or where the LADO or CSC inform us of any issues where we need to review our procedure or documentation, this too will be actioned in a timely manner.

Supporting colleagues and partners within the Local Authority.

The response to this pandemic and the planning for re-opening schools has been complicated, and guidance and information is subject to change and amendment regularly. However, South Gosforth First School remains committed to actively supporting the work of colleagues and partners in ensuring we provide the most effective safeguarding response to all our pupils.

We recognise the pressures faced by colleagues but will continue to work positively with colleagues in CSC, Virtual School and all our safeguarding and welfare partners.

Other Issues

We remain fully committed to, and compliant with all aspects of Safer Recruitment processes during the time of the pandemic and gradual re-opening of school. We will work to ensure we remain compliant with updated guidance and in Line with Part 3 of KCSIE 2020.

We will also ensure that staff receive access to updated safeguarding training and that any new staff appointed during the time of our gradual re-opening are provided with an appropriate induction process which fully addresses their safeguarding role and responsibility.

POLICY UPDATED / AMENDED May 2020.

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

