

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

March 2021



Living, Learning and Loving together with Christ

Key Messages

Schools must continue to have regard to the statutory guidance KCSIE 2020.

Schools 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

As children return we will try to give designated safeguarding leads and their deputies more time to:

- support staff and pupils with new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals to children's social care and other agencies where appropriate

The designated safeguarding lead will continue to co-ordinate with children's social care, the local three safeguarding partners and other agencies and services to identify harm and ensure children are appropriately supported. They will speak to school nurses who have continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in school.

Annex O to Existing Policy

Context

This updated addendum 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.

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

- ✓ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- ✓ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- ✓ Existing Local Authority / Safeguarding Partnership Advice and Guidance

School attendance procedures

School attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from 8 March.

The usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure their child's attendance regularly at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

The school acknowledges the importance of attendance in safeguarding pupils and we will follow our procedures to monitor children when they are absent.

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

Self-isolation and shielding

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

We will continue to provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19). We have developed approaches to remote teaching and learning which have adhered to all guidance in respect of both pupil and staff safety. This will continue 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, at all times adhering to our agreed policy.

When a **vulnerable** pupil is required to self-isolate, we will:

- notify their social worker (if they have one)
- agree with the social worker the best way to maintain contact and offer support
- check if a vulnerable pupil is able to access remote education support
- support them to access it (as far as possible)
- regularly check if they are accessing remote education

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.

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

Where staff identify a new safeguarding concern in relation to a pupil returning to school following a Covid-19 related absence.

When pupils return it is likely that some may have experienced challenging and difficult circumstances during the absence 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. Staff will use a range of resources to establish pupils' experiences during lockdown.

Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers.

We will consider using pastoral and extra-curricular activities to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID19)
- support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

Our expectations of staff remain the same. Where staff have a cause for concern then they 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 guidance on reporting and recording.

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.

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