

Safeguarding & Child Protection, COVID-19 Update August 2020

Sacred Heart Primary School Child Protection Policy Addendum

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally near to normal, however and a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- 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

Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

DSL staff	Contingency plan staff
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Safeguarding partners

The current position from the multi-agency safeguarding partners is as follows:

As of Monday 23rd March 2020 The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service within Luton will convene Virtual Initial and Review Child Protection case conferences. This approach means that all professionals will have to submit reports to the SQAS inbox and wherever possible be available for conference calls or Skype facility. **At present, this process still remains the same until further notice.**

Where there are no available professionals to convene the virtual conference the Child Protection chair will make a decision whether a child should be subject to a Child Protection

plan using reports provided. This approach will enable Initial and Review case conferences to take place in line with the Council guidance regarding Covid-19. Please ensure that all professionals within your services and partnership are aware of this.

The guidance for [re opening of schools](#) highlights processes and guidance for September and the months thereafter.

Vulnerable Children

- Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans.
- Senior leaders, especially DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.
- School staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the COVID-19 period,
- (Insert name of school) will accommodate children that are a child of a 'key worker' to ensure they are able to work in response to Covid-19

Attendance

- **Sacred Heart Primary School** acknowledges that mandatory attendance rules apply for attending school in September – CME and EWO processes will be explored as normal regarding nonattendance.
- **Sacred Heart Primary School** has agreed with families that children should be attending their education provision
- **Sacred Heart Primary School** will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to 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 at school or college, or discontinues, the school/college will notify their social worker

Staff training and safeguarding induction

- At (school) all existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of **KCSIE 2020**. It is important that staff are aware of any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a child
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.

- Where schools are recruiting new members of 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 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.
- Where schools and colleges 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 or college to support the care of children. 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 and colleges 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.
- 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 '[Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral](#)'. During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing 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 or college is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, schools and colleges 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 or college 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

Online safety in schools

- **Sacred Heart Primary School** will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what “appropriate” looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the school or college’s IT systems or recommended resources.
- **Sacred Heart Primary School** will consider who in their institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements – in school this is.....
- **Sacred Heart Primary School** pays due regard to experiences children may have been exposed to during the period of partial closure in relation to online activity – appropriate referral methods remain in place should this become apparent or known.

Please see the following links for further advice:

[UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#)

[UK Safer Internet Centre’s professional online safety helpline.](#)

Children and online safety away from school

All schools should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. 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 child protection policy and, where appropriate, referrals should still be made to children’s social care.

DSL operations

DSLs and schools should have a heightened awareness of the possibility of disclosure or behaviour changes that may present themselves after a long period of partial closure.

All schools should ensure that DSLs have dedicated time to manage safeguarding related matters on children’s return. Appropriate supervision should take place thereafter and