

Child Protection and Safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum



CELEBRATING & SUPPORTING
EVERY CHILD

**AVON HOUSE
PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

Approved by:

Amanda Campbell

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Contents

Important contacts	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Scope and definitions	3
3. Core safeguarding principles	4
4. Reporting concerns	4
5. DSL (and deputy) arrangements	5
6. Working with other agencies	5
7. Monitoring attendance	5
8. Peer-on-peer abuse	6
9. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer	6
10. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns	6
11. Safeguarding for children not attending school	6
12. Online safety	7
13. Staff recruitment, training and induction	7
14. Children attending other settings	8
15. Mental health and wellbeing	9
16. Monitoring arrangements	9
17. Links with other policies	9

Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Amanda Campbell	head@ahsprep.co.uk 07809 339791
Deputy DSL	Gavin Biston	bistong@ahsprep.co.uk 020 8504 1749
Other contactable DSL(s) and/or deputy DSL(s):	Rebecca Telling	rtelling@ahsprep.co.uk
Head Teacher	Amanda Campbell	
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Helen Curtis	020 8708 5350 helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk
Chair of Governors Safeguarding Governor	Cheryl Macnair Fay Cookson	

This addendum should reflect any updated advice you've received from your 3 local safeguarding partners, and from your local authority (for example 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).

1. Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and, in conjunction with other agencies, they play a vital role in safeguarding children during the current emergency arrangements. This policy is an addition to our existing policy and has been produced to cover arrangements in place during school closure due to COVID-19. This policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community.

2. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners Redbridge, Barking and Waltham Forest and neighbouring local authorities. It sets out changes to our normal child protection 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 normal child protection 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

3. 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 5 for details of our arrangements)
- It is 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

Schools have been instructed to close, although they are required to offer a place to vulnerable children and children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989. There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend provision, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want their child to attend, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will explore (with the social worker) the reasons for this and agree an appropriate plan for that child. We obviously want to support all our children during this time and will consider making a place available to other children with vulnerabilities, although this will be in discussion with other professionals involved and based on a risk assessment process.

4. 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. Contact details are listed above.

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.

5. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed, using the staffroom board for on-site reference, as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. Their contact details are listed above.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school
- Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

6. 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 3 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

7. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, our usual attendance registers have been amended with codes for children working remotely and we will follow our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance during this period.

Where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by telephone or email
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

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

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

8. 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.

9. 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.

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.

10. 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 about whom we have safeguarding concerns. We will work with parents/carers to do this.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put in place a contact plan, as explained in section 11.1 below.

11. Safeguarding for children not attending school

11.1 Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children about whom we have safeguarding concerns, for circumstances where:

- 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

These plans set out:

- How often the school will make contact
- Which staff member(s) will make contact
- How they will make contact

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them as necessary. If we can't make contact, we will contact children's social care or the police.

11.2 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 particular, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 12 below).

12. Online safety

12.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school. If our IT provider (Joskos Solutions) are unavailable, our contingency plan is the SLT will ask for support from another source or school.

12.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy.

The SLT are monitoring what staff post on the portals we have opened up and we ask staff to be careful as to what they post on social media. Please remember to refer to policies on acceptable use of technology, staff/pupil relationships and communication, including the use of social media. Please ensure appropriate safeguarding practices in your approach to remote learning – for example, if you are pre-recording videos to share, making video calls or phoning pupils.

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 4 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.

12.3 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

Parents will be notified that they can access this via the school website.

13. Staff recruitment, training and induction

13.1 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 are not in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13.2 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 Child 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

13.3 Keeping records of who is 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
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

14. Children attending other settings

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them

- The child’s EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the child’s social worker
- Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO can’t share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

15. Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils is always a priority and it is recognised that, without the protective factor of attending school, some of our children may be more vulnerable. Understandably, this is a worrying and challenging time for everyone, and we understand that families may be placed under considerable additional pressures, potentially coping with issues such as increased anxiety, financial difficulties, caring for children at home fulltime and illness or bereavement. When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers should bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children’s and adults’ mental health. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them. We will do all we can to support our pupils and it is vital that we work in partnership with parents/carers to do so. Parents/carers should share any concerns about the wellbeing of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented. The school has a bank of resources, including appropriate helpline numbers, for families when required. We have the option to offer places in school to children who do not meet the Department for Education’s definition of ‘vulnerable’, but about whom we have safeguarding concerns. We will work with parents/carers to do this on an individual basis.

17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks by Amanda Campbell, Head Teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

18. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policy (Child Protection)
- Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- First Aid and Sickness and Medication Policies