

## COVID 19 – Addendum Child Protection & Safeguarding policy

### **Introduction**

From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 parents and carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend, or vulnerable children. As per previous stages of this ongoing pandemic, it is highly likely that new challenges will emerge. However, we must ensure that our robust systems to protect and safeguard children do not waiver and continue to remain a key priority throughout.

All staff and volunteers have a legal responsibility to protect and safeguard children and young people, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020.

### **Vulnerable children**

As per DfE guidance, vulnerable children include those who have a social worker, children and young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plans, and children who have been identified as otherwise vulnerable, by the school or local authorities (including children's social care services), who could benefit from continued full-time attendance.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk.

If vulnerable children and young people do not attend, our schools will:

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests
- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate.

All schools across our Trust will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **SEND**

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, 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 and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

All schools across our Trust will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, staff or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carers following the advice set out by Public Health England.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)**

We will endeavour to ensure a DSL or deputy DSL will be on-site however, if this is not possible senior leaders will make alternative arrangements such as:

- the trained DSL (or deputy) being available via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs (or deputies) with other schools across the Trust (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, a senior leader should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

All DSL, Deputy DSL and senior leaders **must** inform staff of their contact details, including email address and telephone numbers. Staff should be made aware of who is taking lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection on a daily basis.

### **Class Bubbles**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all staff working in individual 'Class Bubbles' are made aware of their vulnerable pupils. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans, plus other pupils who may be being monitored internally due to welfare concerns. Details of the child's vulnerability will be shared on a 'needs to know' basis, in order for effective monitoring to occur. It is vital that staff remain vigilant and report any issues or concerns without delay.

### **What to do if you have a concern?**

If staff become concerned that a child may be at risk or possible risk of significant harm, during telephone contact, remote learning or attendance at school, they **must** inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL) immediately. It is recognised that during this period there may be time when the DSL or Deputy DSL are not on site but this should not prevent staff from taking swift and timely action. Arrangements are in place for staff to contact the DSL or Deputy DSL via telephone or email, but in the event of not receiving a response, staff must inform the on-site senior leader. In the rare event of the none of the designated staff being available, then it becomes staff's responsibility to contact Children's Social Care EHASH team (tel no: 01482 448879) direct to seek advice, and possibly make a referral. If you **cannot** get through to EHASH on the phone you should email [ehash@hulcc.gov.uk](mailto:ehash@hulcc.gov.uk) stating **URGENT - call back required**. Any action taken in these circumstances should be shared with the DSL or senior leader as soon as practically possible. All concerns relating to a child's health, safety and wellbeing must be accurately recorded on CPOMS, as per the existing safeguarding protocols.

### **When seeking advice or making a referral**

#### **Preparing to Discuss Concerns about a Child with Children's Social Care**

Try to sort out in your mind why you are worried, is it based on:

- What you have seen;
- What you have heard from others;
- What has been said to you directly.

**Try to be as clear as you can about why you are worried and what you need to do next:**

- This is what I have done;
- What more do I need to do?
- Are there any other children in the family?
- Is the child in immediate danger?

**In the conversation that takes place the duty Social Worker will seek to clarify:**

- The nature of the concerns;

- How and why they have arisen;
- What appear to be the needs of the child and family; and
- What involvement they are having or have had with the child and / or family.

#### **Questions Children's Social Care may ask at Initial Contact**

- Address and contact details of referrer;
- Has consent to make the referral been gained? Information regarding parents' knowledge and views on the referral;
- Where consent has been sought but refused and child protection concerns persist you will be asked what informed your decision making;
- Where consent has not been sought to make a referral, you will be asked to explain what informed your decision making;
- Full names, dates of birth and gender of children;
- Family address and, where relevant, school/nursery attended;
- Previous addresses;
- Identity of those with **Parental Responsibility**;

It is extremely important that you record all information onto CPOMS, including your concerns, the name of the contact in EHaSH, plus the date, time, and agreed actions by both parties.

#### **Attendance**

If any identified vulnerable children offered a place during the crisis does not attend, then the school should follow up their absence with the parent/carers. The school must inform the allocated social worker if the child has not attended or has discontinued to attend.

It may be necessary for the school and social worker to agree a supportive strategy to help either engage or re-engage the family into their child attending school.

All other systems currently in operation, for recording daily attendance, should continue throughout these exceptional times.

If schools are unable to make contact with families, and all available avenues have been exhausted (telephone calls, home visits, checks with known sibling schools and emergency contact numbers etc), schools should refer the matter to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service, as per the locally agreed protocols for Children Missing in Education.

As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they **should not** be marked as **Code X** if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know and the absence recorded as **Code C** (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

#### **Safe learning environment**

It is extremely important that we maintain a safe learning environment for children attending school, especially as there will undoubtedly be a mixture of different age groups, vulnerabilities and need. Therefore, we must ensure that thorough risk assessments are completed for areas in use, plus emergency evacuation/lockdown procedures are well known to all staff and pupils.

If schools are receiving assistance from new volunteers, then they **must** still be vetted accordingly and complete an induction process. As a minimum, volunteers **must** receive a copy of the child protection, interim child protection policy, staff code of conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1), the E-Safety/Acceptable User policy and Health & Safety policy. For any new staff starters joining the school during this period, all the safer recruitment procedures **must** still be followed, and mandatory checks undertaken, as per Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 3. In addition, all new entries must receive a comprehensive induction, as per the Trust's agreed Induction policy.

### **First Aid arrangements**

All schools must use their best endeavours and ensure that a Paediatric First Aid (PFA) trained member of staff on-site. If this is not possible, then advice needs to be sought from either the CEO or a senior member of central team to determine the best course of action, which may include, schools running with a first aider on-site instead of a paediatric one, for a limited number of days. The schools PFA arrangements will be outlined in individual school's risk assessments, as per DfE Planning guide for early years and childcare settings, May 2020.

### **Staffing Ratios**

Where possible it is desirable to ensure that 2 members of staff are supervising each group of pupils within classrooms. If this is not possible, then a minimum of one member of staff will be allocated to each group. Should this need emerge, then schools will need to ensure that sufficient provision is in place to support with any injury, accident, behaviour/emotional distress or if a child develops symptoms of the virus and needs isolating.

### **What to do if you have concerns about another member of staff/volunteer, or unsafe safeguarding practice within your school?**

Current working conditions are very different to the norm, and daily school life is not simple. It is, therefore, important that during these challenging times public trust and confidence continues to be upheld and all actions taken are in the best interest of children and young people. However, if staff have any concerns about another member of staff/volunteer's conduct or behaviour towards a child or children, or they are worried about unsafe practice, this must be reported to either the DSL, Deputy DSL or Senior Leader. If staff do not feel comfortable using internal reporting systems then they must contact the Trust's Safeguarding Lead or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO tel: 01482 613372), or alternatively the NSPCC Whistle Blowing helpline tel: 0800 028 0285 or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Never rely on anyone else to make a report.**

### **Remote Learning**

It is extremely important that the school's internet continues to be monitored regularly and that filtering systems are robust, in order to protect children whilst on-site. Any device loaned by the school, or donated to the school to support remote learning, must thoroughly checked and reset to the manufacturers setting before being issued to any pupil.

If you become aware of an e-safety concern, please seek immediate assistance from the school's IT technician/provider or alternatively from the DSL and/or Senior Leader. Senior leaders should have the contact details for their IT provider, in the event of the usual personnel being unavailable.

For pupils who are accessing remote learning, there needs to be a clear mechanism in place for pupils to report back to the school if there are any concerns. Therefore, if you are setting activities for pupils to complete online then please ensure you include any internal reporting system, plus details of other national organisations where they can seek support (eg Childline, CEOP, UK Safer Internet Centre).

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 and as required, the police.

Each school will have procedures in place to check that vulnerable children are able to access remote learning, support with access (as far as possible), and regularly check pupils are doing so. Furthermore, our schools will work collaboratively with families, putting in place reasonable adjustments as necessary, so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education alongside their peers.

The existing E-Safety and Acceptable User policy and Staff Code of Conduct is still very much applicable during this period, plus staff are reminded to follow the Trust's Remote Learning Policy.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

As the majority of schools are operating on a much smaller basis, staff supervision will be greater. However, staff must remain vigilant to any signs of peer on peer abuse, especially if younger children are engaging with the older population throughout the day. If staff have concerns that any child is being targeted by another young person, they must report this without delay to the DSL, Deputy DSL or Senior Leader, and if necessary, seek advice from Children's Social Care and/or the police.

### **Mental Health**

Pupils and staff mental wellbeing may have been severely affected during the Coronavirus outbreak due to various reasons.

In times of uncertainty, it is vital that we support, encourage and guide one another, plus look out and care for everyone in our school community.

Each school has dedicated staff to support children, and staff, if they needed.

As children and staff return to our settings, it is important that they are provided the opportunity to talk openly about how they feel, or are feeling as we adjust, plus offer strategies of how to manage any worries or anxieties.

The Department for Education (DfE) have suggested additional ways of how we can support mental wellbeing, which include:

- opportunities for children to talk about their experiences
- opportunities for one-to-one conversations with trusted adults where this may be supportive
- some re-focused lessons on relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or staying safe
- pastoral activity, such as positive opportunities to renew and develop friendships and peer groups
- other enriching developmental activities

If staff have concerns for the wellbeing of any child, they must inform either the school Emotional Wellbeing Officer, or Designated Safeguarding Lead, if they believe that the child is a significant risk.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is highly likely that these interim procedures will evolve over the coming weeks and months, as new guidance is issued by the DfE and Local Authority. Your designated staff and leaders will update you, as and when needed.

### **Other related policies**

This addendum replaces the previous interim COVID 19 Child Protection policy issued in June 2020. The addendum policy must be used and read in conjunction with policies such as: Anti-Bullying, COVID 19 Behaviour, Bereavement, Health and Safety, Intimate Care, Physical Intervention, Special Educational Needs, plus any associated risk assessments.

**Contact details**

Key Staff	Name	Telephone Number	Email
Exec Headteacher	Karen Siedle	01482 326610	ksiedle@smchull.org
Headteacher	Anthony Foster Sarah Woodmansey	01482 326610 01482 326610	<a href="mailto:afoster@stchull.org">afoster@stchull.org</a> <a href="mailto:swoodmansey@stchull.org">swoodmansey@stchull.org</a>
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Elisha Wilson	01482 326610	
SEN Co	Eleanor Blacksell	01482 326610	<a href="mailto:eblacksell@stchull.org">eblacksell@stchull.org</a>
Senior Leader (1)	Anthony Foster	01482 326610	<a href="mailto:afoster@stchull.org">afoster@stchull.org</a>
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