

Annex to our Safeguarding Policy during the COVID-19 measures

Context

The way Worsthorne Primary School is currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most of our pupils are no longer in school and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak. We have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. This Annex to our Safeguarding Policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements during this period of school closure

Version control and dissemination

This is version 1.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Louise Young or our deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Miss Justine North, on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website, www.worsthorne.lancs.sch.uk, and is made available to staff via email.

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school, whether they are currently at home or attending the childcare provision, continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first;
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately;
- a designated safeguarding lead will always be available;
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children; and
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff supervising the childcare provision are aware of who is on duty as Safeguarding Lead, and how to contact them.

Current school position

Currently, we have between 70 and 94 pupils attending the on-site childcare provision each day. All of the members of staff delivering the childcare provision have up-to-date safeguarding training (September 2019), are aware of safeguarding risks, know what to do if they have concerns and have access to the school's record keeping system, CPOMS.

Safeguarding partners' advice

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

We continue to work closely with our safeguarding partners and will ensure this annex is consistent with current advice. This will include expectations for supporting 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.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Sarah Nicholls, is in close contact with special educational needs specialist teachers, the Practice Manager at Children's Social Care and the Virtual School for looked after children.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Sarah Nicholls, and the deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Miss Justine North are in school every day.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children with Education Health Care 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 school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with their social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Those with an Education Health Care 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 place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home.

The senior leaders in our school know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting Home Learning tasks. We will ensure appropriate support is in place in our childcare provision for the children of critical workers and the vulnerable children on site

Our staff and volunteers will be mindful of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the Designated Safeguarding Leader or a deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have any concerns.

Attendance

Where a child is listed on our register for childcare but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed. If they are unable to make contact via telephone or email, they will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such home visit is made to ensure staff members are not put at risk.

Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, we will notify their social worker.

Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff will continue to follow our safeguarding procedures and advise the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The arrangements in place at our school as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against the members of staff providing the childcare at our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our existing policy.

Staff training and induction

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Sarah Nicholls, attended statutory training last term. Therefore, her safeguarding training is up to date. As always, all school staff received safeguarding training at the start of the school year and have read Part One and Annex A of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and Children's Barred List check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

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. Should we be required to recruit new staff, we will continue to follow the local authority's Safer Recruitment protocols.

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.

Should we engage the services of any volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019*. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff or volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers, and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will continue to follow the process set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children. Our staff will continue to follow the process for online safety set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

New children at the school

Children may join our school from other settings. If they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child's Education Health Care Plan, Child in Need Plan, Child Protection Plan or, for looked-after children, their Personal Education Plan and request to know the name and contact details of the child's social worker. Ideally, this will happen before a child arrives but, where that is not possible, it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead level. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our the senior leader on site will take responsibility. A risk assessment will be undertaken, based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

Supporting children not in school

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded on CPOMS for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.