

COVID-19 Child Protection Policy Addendum (January 2021)

During the arrangements put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Child Protection/Safeguarding policy will continue to apply unless superseded by the provisions set out here. This addendum will be reviewed and revised to take account of ongoing changes to COVID-19 guidance and arrangements.

- If the DSL and all other trained Deputy DSLs are isolating away from school, where possible, they will continue to be available to support and advise staff with safeguarding concerns. In this scenario, or where a DSL or Deputy is not available, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be designated to respond on site to safeguarding concerns. Staff will continue to report all safeguarding concerns in the usual way (including allegations and safeguarding concerns about adults working in school) and be thoroughly briefed about any changes that are required – eg where the DSL or headteacher may be isolating at home.
- Where a child known to social care is required to isolate at home, the DSL will immediately inform the social care worker allocated to the case.
- Parents/carers of vulnerable children who are asked to isolate at home will be regularly contacted by school staff. Where parents or carers do not respond to calls or visits, a risk assessment will be completed and a referral to Children’s Services considered.
- There may be a greater prevalence of mental health concerns when children return to school following a period of isolating at home. Staff will be briefed about this and time will be made available to the DSL or other relevant staff to support children as required.
- Children will be expected to attend school unless a special arrangement is agreed. The school’s standard procedures will be applied in the case of absence.
- Where a parent or carer indicates that they intend to electively home educate because of concerns related to COVID-19, before removing the child from the school roll, a meeting will be arranged involving the parent / carer, the local authority Inclusion Service and any other key professional eg social worker. All the options will be explored in order that the parents fully understand what is involved and so that the best interests of each individual child can be carefully considered before making a final decision. This is particularly important where vulnerable children, children with a social worker, and those at greatest risk of harm are involved. Where an EHCP is in place for the child the local authority will be asked to give consent to Elective Home Education before removing the child from the school roll.
- Staff engaged in remote teaching and learning will follow the code of conduct guidance set out in the “Safer Working Practice Addendum” April 2020 (Safer Recruitment Consortium).
- The online safety of children who may be learning remotely at home will be considered and any necessary adjustments made to networks and school devices used for this purpose. Children will be taught how to stay safe online when they are learning remotely.
- Safer Recruitment procedures will continue to be robustly applied including where virtual interviews may be used and if so, a risk assessment will be completed.
- The Single Central Record will be continuously updated and include the details of any staff who may be engaged in teaching and learning from home and any catch-up tutors employed by the school, for example.