**St Peter’s Church of England (Aided) Primary School**

**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Annex**

**During COVID-19 Measures**

**Policy Annex update on Tuesday 3rd November 2020**

**Context**

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are now returning to school but schools are being asked to follow Covid guidelines for educational settings.

This annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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**Version control and dissemination**

This is version 1.2 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL 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 and is made available to staff by email and by paper for those in school.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSL are and how staff and volunteers can to speak to them.

**Safeguarding priority**

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – 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 (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
* no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
* children should continue to be protected when they are online.

**Current school position**

The school is now open for all pupils. They will consider the safety of pupils currently in school in line with the detailed risk assessment, staff availability and the wider school context.

All staff and volunteers attending on site from outside our school will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

**Safeguarding partners’ advice**

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their 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 current advice is as follows:

* Continue to be vigilant and aware of children’s mental health and how this may present in changes in their behaviour. Continue to support within school and use the white “Services Directory” (on LTS and in DSL pack) to signpost parents who are struggling with specific issues.
* Staff who have health conditions which make them extremely vulnerable, and who work in an admin role may be supported to work at home. An individual risk assessment will be carried out.

**Roles and responsibilities**

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

If possible, our DSL will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will have a trained deputy DSL on site or available by phone and/or online video.

Where our DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to the above option we will also ensure that the senior leaders from the school know where the DSL’s records are kept and can take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site if needed.

**The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is** Alison Banks

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**Deputy designated leads are –** Paul Bolstridge, Lorna White andLesley Stewart

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**Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education or health 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.

We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school. Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are will support families so that they are reassured to return.

We will continue to work with children’s social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

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.

**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 expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home. We will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of [children](https://safeguarding.network/safeguarding-resources/specific-risks-children-additional-needs/mental-health/) and their [parents and carers](https://safeguarding.network/safeguarding-resources/parental-issues/parental-mental-ill-health/) and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

**Attendance**

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, FaceTime, Skype or by contacting a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff and the family are not put at risk.

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 e.g. social worker. All the options will be explored in order that the parents / carers 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 greater 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.

**Reporting concerns about children or staff**

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff Policy.

**Staff training and induction**

For the duration of the COVID-19 our DSL and deputy DSLS will receive updates to training remotely.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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.

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy.

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.

For 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/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, including 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.

**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](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CChristine%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5C0CGV3O2R%5Csafeguarding.network%5Cpeer-on-peer) and will follow the process set out in our Child Protection and 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 follow the process for online safety set out in our Child Protection and 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 DSL or deputy DSL.

**New children at the school**

Children may join our school from other settings. When 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 EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child’s social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

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 DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff needs to know the information.

**Supporting children not in school**

Where the DSL 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 in the safeguarding file for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.