

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy: COVID-19 addendum

Oakdene Primary School



In the event of school closure, or partial school closure, this Addendum to the full Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to.

Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

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## Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Helen Lee	<a href="mailto:Helen.lee@sthelens.org.uk">Helen.lee@sthelens.org.uk</a>
Deputy DSL	Martin Weston	<a href="mailto:Martin.weston@sthelens.org.uk">Martin.weston@sthelens.org.uk</a>
Other contactable DSL(s) DSL at Longton Lane	Linda Speed	<a href="mailto:Linda.speed@sthelens.org.uk">Linda.speed@sthelens.org.uk</a>
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Caroline Hughes - assistant headteacher (has undertaken online DSL training) Alison Mouldsdale - SBM (has undertaken online DSL training)	<a href="mailto:Caroline.barlow@sthelens.org.uk">Caroline.barlow@sthelens.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Alison.mouldsdale@sthelens.org.uk">Alison.mouldsdale@sthelens.org.uk</a>
Headteacher	Helen Lee	<a href="mailto:Helen.lee@sthelens.org.uk">Helen.lee@sthelens.org.uk</a>

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Local authority designated officer (LADO)		<a href="mailto:sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk">sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk</a>
Chair of governors	Mr. Paul Forester	<a href="mailto:paul@etechcomponents.com">paul@etechcomponents.com</a>

## 1. 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 - The Local Authority (LA), Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Chief Police officer & Education (St Helens). These partners make up our local St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

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

## 2. 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 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's 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

## 3. 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.

Staff will continue to use CPOMS to record any evidence of minor concerns in the normal way, which is immediately sent to the DSL and deputy DSL. For immediate concerns, staff are aware to contact the deputy DSL until the DSL is back in post.

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.

#### 4. 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.

At present, the DSL is absent from school. In their absence, the first point of contact is the Deputy DSL. On any occasions they are not on site, they can be contacted by email or by phone. All staff also have a mobile number for the Deputy DSL.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be in school, they can be contacted remotely by: [oakdene@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:oakdene@sthelens.org.uk), on the email addresses listed above.

If our DSL (or deputy) is unavailable, we will share a DSL with Longton Lane. Their DSL can be contacted on the contact number listed at the start of this addendum.

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed by email and text message as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them. A staff rota has been forwarded to all members of staff.

We will ensure that DSL (and deputy), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are - the register for children in school can be accessed remotely at all times.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Caroline Hughes (assistant headteacher) or Alison Mouldsdales (business manager). You can contact them by: [oakdene@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:oakdene@sthelens.org.uk) or email addresses at the top of this addendum. Staff also have their mobile contact details.

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

#### 5. 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

The following guidance is currently in place:

In light of the government announcement requesting further measures be taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Safeguarding Unit announce the following changes for LADO's, Child Protection Conferences and Children and Young People's Looked after reviews. Where ever possible, when you are trying contact us please email through to the unit the email address:

[safeguardingunit@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingunit@sthelens.gov.uk)

or for LADO

[sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk)

for the partnership Board please email

[safeguardingchildrenboard@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingchildrenboard@sthelens.gov.uk)

Alternatively, please email the IRO/ CP & QA chair directly. Where you receive an out of office due to annual leave please email the Safeguarding unit who will ensure another team member will contact you. The current number for the LADO is 07717366904, but please use the LADO referral forms in the first instance unless your call is urgent.

### **Children we look after reviews**

These reviews will all now be virtual meetings and the following is required:

- All agencies will still need to submit a report for the Review. The reports should be submitted at least three days prior to the review to allow the IRO to consider the information
- The IRO will contact you in the event they need to clarify any information
- The IRO will contact you in the event they feel you should be formally invited to be part of the virtual meeting
- The IRO will contact the child, the placement and the social worker to participate in the virtual meeting. It maybe that each person is spoken to separately rather than all being on the call together
- The Outcomes and Minutes will be sent as they have previously, there will be no change to this process.

### **Child Protection Conference**

Conferences will be held as a virtual meeting. This means that all agencies will still need to be available by telephone for the meeting.

The following will need to happen:

- Social workers must continue to prepare the family for the virtual meeting, this will include checking telephone numbers.
- Your reports will need to be submitted to the Safeguarding Unit as previously required. Whilst the current standards advise it to be two days prior, where able this should be done earlier
- The SGU will share the reports from agencies to those other professionals who will be in attendance and will forward a copy of the windscreen.
- The Admin officer for the conference will ring all participants for the meeting.
- The CP plan and minutes will be sent out as previously.

### **LADO's**

LADO meetings have been held virtually and this will continue. Where you have a LADO concern please ensure you complete the referral form with all the required details and contact numbers so that we can contact you quickly.

### **Safeguarding Children Partnership**

- All meetings of the Partnership will be held virtually
- Ongoing Reviews will be put on hold until such a time as practitioners involved can meet.

- All Face to Face Training is cancelled with online briefings/ materials being provided wherever possible.
- Multi Agency audit will still be conducted on a monthly basis
- Multi Agency Escalations will still be accepted and should be sent to the Safeguarding Partnership e mail [safeguardingchildrenboard@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingchildrenboard@sthelens.gov.uk)

## 6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn't attend, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- › Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by contacting them by phone call, or text message if no answer is obtainable.
- › 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. All contact detail forms are up-to-date currently, and parents advised to alert us of any changes.

## 7. 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.

## 8. 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

## 9. 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 who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10.1 below.

## 10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

## 10.1 Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, 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
- › Recording of responses

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them on a monthly basis.

If we can't make contact, we will contact children's social workers in the first instance, and then police if needed].

## 10.2 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 11 below).

## 11. Online safety

### 11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

Although the LA IT staff are not currently coming into school on a regular basis, the service they offer is still available remotely and queries/calls should be logged as usual using the Schools IT Portal. The deputy DSL also has contact details for the school IT technician.

### 11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing e-Safety and Social Media policies.

Staff will be providing home learning for children on the school website. They will also be using Seesaw as an online platform where children submit work. Staff will be required to review work on this platform. Permission has been sought from parents for children to use this platform. Children have individual home learning log-ins that were sent home in advance of closure and cannot access anything other than their own work. Teachers and learning assistants will be required to check work that comes in, and potentially make comments. All staff are on the same log-in, so comments can be regularly monitored by the deputy DSL (who is also Computing subject leader). Staff also may choose to create pre-recorded videos on Seesaw to demonstrate examples for home learning.

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 3 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.

### **11.3 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

All information regarding access to home learning and related internet safety message will be provided on the school website in regular updates to the Home Learning tab. Parents are alerted to any new content by text message.

## **12. Mental health**

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. Staff in school will continue to work with children within the school building. PSHE work as part of home learning will focus on mental wellbeing.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. Staff are being provided with specific online training linked to wellbeing.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health. All teachers in school are following the same format so expectations are clear and consistent across all classes.

## **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 aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### 13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks. This will be carried out by the most available senior leaders from each school.

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

### 13.3 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 children 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

### 13.4 Keeping records of who's 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, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

We also keep records of staff on site on our staff rota during the COVID-19 closure, and staff sign into the building as normal using our electronic sign-in procedure.

## 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. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and at a minimum every 4 weeks by Martin Weston (Deputy DSL) until Helen Lee (DSL) returns to school. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

### **16. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy