



## **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

### **St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy**

**Policy owner:**

**J Leech**

**Date:9.9.2020**

**Date shared with staff: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020**

## 1. Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents 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.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of the St Mary's CPVA Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	James Leech	01652 653355	safeguarding@stmarysbrigg.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Anne McIntyre	01652 653355	safeguarding@stmarysbrigg.com
Trust Safeguarding Manager	Tamer Hodgson	01522 849620	Tamer.Hodgson@stl-cmat.org.uk
Chair of Governors	James O'Shaughnessy	01652 653355	james.oshaughnessy@stmarysbrigg.com
Governor Safeguarding Lead	Suki Jackson	01652 653355	suki.jackson@stmarysbrigg.com

## Keeping Children safe in schools and colleges

KCSIE 2019 is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools and colleges should continue to have regard to as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements.

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that we are under, it remains essential that as far as possible the school continues to be safe place for children. This addendum supports our school so we can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE 2019 and keep all children safe.

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

The St Mary's CPVA should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow us to satisfy ourselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining our child protection policy. Hence the reason for the creation of this addendum to our Child Protection Policy.

This Addendum reflects the following:

- any updated advice received from the local 3 safeguarding partners
- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding 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
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns
- DSL (and deputy) arrangements
- the continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools and colleges are operating in a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part

- 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform any revised approach)
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns)
  - any arrangements to support children the school or college are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition
  - what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school or college safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. This addendum should be made available publicly and published clearly with a link on the front page of the school's website.

## 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, health and 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.

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.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

St Mary's CPVA 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.

The lead person for this will be: James Leech

The Lead person for **LAC: James Leech**

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. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and St Mary's will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

St Mary's CPVA will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

## **Supporting children not in school**

St Mary's CPVA is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this communication must be recorded on CPOMS as should a record of contact having been made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

St Mary's CPVA and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight, with clear records that this is completed) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

St Mary's CPVA recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at St Mary's CPVA need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

St Mary's CPVA will ensure that, where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

## **Children moving schools and colleges**

It will be important for the school or college whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change at St Mary's CPVA should be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable 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). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information

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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 senior leaders should take responsibility.

Whilst our school must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE 2019.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

St Mary's CPVA and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – St Mary's CPVA will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not, in accordance with the attendance policy. St Mary's CPVA will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, St Mary's CPVA will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, St Mary's CPVA will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

St Mary's CPVA has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: James Leech

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Anne McIntyre**

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children

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in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

It is important that all St Mary's CPVA staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers which can be done remotely.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the DSL whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the DSL.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors:  
James O'Shaughnessy

The Multi-Academy Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations, as per the policy.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter St Mary's CPVA, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:-

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### **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, St Mary's CPVA will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE). No new member of staff can start their appointment without confirmation from the CMAT that all necessary checks have been completed.

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.

Where St Mary's CPVA are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

St Mary's CPVA will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

St Mary's CPVA will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing

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[Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, St Mary's CPVA will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Mental Health**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers at St Mary's CPVA are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. The Department for Education (DfE) is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely, this will be communicated to staff when it is released.

Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, St Mary's CPVA will ensure appropriate support is in place for them. The DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools (which may also be useful for colleges) sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services. Click on the link at the bottom of this document to see the guidance on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools.

### **Online safety in school**

St Mary's CPVA will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **Children and online safety away from school**

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.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the MAT code of  
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conduct. St Mary's CPVA will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

## **Supporting children in school**

St Mary's CPVA is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children.

St Mary's CPVA will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

School name will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

St Mary's CPVA will ensure that, where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Where St Mary's CPVA has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Trust.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

St Mary's CPVA recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

## **Support from the Multi-Academy Trust**

The Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Central Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

This includes remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

## **Website links for further information:**

### **Guidance, Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

### **Keeping Children Safe in Education:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

### **Vulnerable children:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

### **Attendance Monitoring:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

### **Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

### **Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

### **Online safety in schools and colleges:**

Appropriate filtering and monitoring guidance:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring>

Online safety in schools and colleges: Questions from the Governing Board:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-safety-in-schools-and-colleges-questions-from-the-governing-board>

Professionals online safety helpline:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/professionals-online-safety-helpline>

Safe remote learning:

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/safe-remote-learning/>

Safeguarding Considerations for Lesson Livestreaming:

<https://static.lqfl.net/LqflNet/downloads/digisafe/Safe-Lessons-by-Video-and-Livestream.pdf>

Young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium:

<https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/>

[Childline](#)

for support

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

to report and remove harmful online content

[CEOP](#)

for advice on making a report about online abuse

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