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COVID-19 Safeguarding Addendum to Safeguarding Policy - for use during the current COVID-19 Lockdown (to be read alongside Safeguarding Policy)

The Oaks Academy
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Context

This addendum of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy outlines our practice during the current crisis resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19, and the subsequent closure of our schools to the majority of children. This addendum contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

- Attendance of children in school
- Attendance monitoring
- Safeguarding Team
- Reporting a concern
- Supporting children attending school
- Supporting children not in school (including conference and individual calls)
- Safeguarding training and induction
- Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
- Safeguarding & remote learning
- Data protection
- Peer on peer abuse
- Radicalisation and extremism



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Attendance of Children in School

In line with current DfE and Cheshire East guidance, the attendance in school of:

- vulnerable children
- children and young people up to the age of 25 with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans,
- children who have a parent who is identified as a critical worker

is encouraged, where it is appropriate for them. This is the case where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household e.g. where they are self-isolating or are clinically vulnerable.

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker e.g.

- children who are Children in Need,
- those who have a Child Protection Plan
- and those who are Cared For (Looked after by the Local Authority).

A child may also be deemed vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

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

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 it is safer for them to have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Deputy DSL and safeguarding team, 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.

We will continue to work with others to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for cared for and previously cared for children.



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Attendance Monitoring

Where a parent chooses not to send their child to school we will ascertain the reason for this and will ensure it is recorded; following this up, over time, as necessary.

We expect all our families to notify us if their child is unable to attend on a particular day so staff can explore the reason with them and offer support as appropriate.

Where a child has been in school but has stopped attending and the parent has not notified us, checks will be carried out in line the school's attendance policy.

Where a vulnerable child does not attend/stops attending, we will notify the relevant professionals including social workers and family support workers; liaising with practitioners and the family to remove any barriers. School will continue to link in with the child e.g. doorstep visit, phone call etc. to ensure their continued well-being.

In line with updated guidance, we will resume daily recording of attendance and will continue to submit daily attendance information to the DfE.

We have confirmed that emergency contact numbers are correct with parents and we have asked for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team comprises:

DSL: Steve Frost

Deputy DSL: Rachael Todhunter and Laura Bailey

Pastoral Manager: Karin Leech

Reporting a Concern

Any safeguarding concerns should be shared with the school's safeguarding team, and the process adhered to as outlined in the school's safeguarding policy. All concerns should be completed through CPOMS (or alternative reporting mechanisms if used). In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access CPOMS/alternative reporting mechanisms from home, they should email the DSL/ Deputy DSL. This will ensure that the concern is received. All staff are reminded of the need to report any concern **immediately and without delay**. We aim to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available at all times; we are aware though that, in the current situation, this might not always be possible. If the concern is particularly urgent then please contact Rachael Todhunter (Non SEND) or Laura Bailey (SEND) AND make the SLT lead on site aware.



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Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concerns to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher. Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Mike Cladingbowl (CEO).

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the DSL and Deputy and, if necessary the senior leader who is assuming responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site; and how to contact them on any given day.

The Safeguarding Team will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings (many of which will be remotely).

Supporting Children attending School

We 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.

We 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 COVID-19.

Where we have concerns about the impact of staff absence, we will discuss them immediately with the Headteacher/ CEO and the local authority.

We recognise that children may present differently when they return to school than they did prior to the lock-down; this does not mean that they have been in abusive situations; however, staff will be alert to the signs of abuse and will take appropriate action should they become aware of it. Staff and volunteers will be alert to new safeguarding concerns about individual children and in relation to children where there have never been concerns raised previously.

Key staff including SLT, pastoral and support staff will ensure that all children have someone to talk to about their experiences of lockdown.

Staff are briefed each morning about any vulnerable children on site, and how best to support them.

We have asked parents and carers to advise school of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that we should be aware of before a child returns.



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Supporting Children not in School

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children; including those children who are not attending school.

Where we have identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, the safeguarding team will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child.

Details of this communication plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file/CPOMS, and a record of contact will be made.

Where it has become evident that a child has not accessed any online learning for a sustained period of time we will notify parents (and any other relevant agencies); liaising with practitioners and the family to remove any barriers. School will continue to monitor and support with the child e.g. doorstep visit, phone call etc. to ensure their continued well-being.

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

We will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. This plan will be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and, where concerns arise, the safeguarding team will consider any referrals as appropriate at its weekly meeting.

We will regularly share safeguarding messages on its website, social media pages and will send these out as communications to parents.

We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. They take appropriate action should any concerns arise including signposting to relevant support agencies, initiating an Early Help assessment or consulting with ChECS or adult social care.

Safeguarding Training and Induction

For the period that 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).

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training; including an annual refresher; they have all read and signed Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).



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We will send regular safeguarding updates to staff and inform them about any new or existing safeguarding expectations

Where new staff or volunteers are recruited, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Where staff are moved/offer support to another school, the school should seek assurance from their home school that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training and a record will be kept of this.

Upon arrival, staff and volunteers will be given a copy of the receiving setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the COVID-19 addendum and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer Recruitment/Volunteers and Movement of Staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable to work with children are barred and vetted.

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE) statutory guidance.

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.

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

Where we 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



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circumstances will a volunteer, who has not been checked, be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

We 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.

We 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 Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

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

Safeguarding and Remote Learning

We 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.

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 staff code of conduct.

We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Conference calls including one to one video calls with students, and any direct messaging should be limited to Teams where a record can be held by school. It is also acceptable to converse with students through school email. All communications with students require a trail which can be monitored by school, If you have concerns about



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a child and feel additional support is needed then please inform the safeguarding team.

The school will inform parents about live learning lessons and how they can support this e.g. ensuring they provide an appropriate workspace without interruptions, supporting any IT issues, letting you know as early as possible if they are experiencing issues etc. Parents are advised that they can opt their children out from live learning and similar communications.

To safeguard both staff and students it is recommended that the following procedures are adhered to:

- invite students in advance of any conversation by a Microsoft Teams calendar notification and keep a written schedule of all calls.
- do not deviate from agreed school policies e.g. calling the pupil at other times/messaging them outside of the session
- ensure that you are GDPR compliant at all times e.g. do not download or keep pupil information on your personal devices.
- only use work accounts to communicate with pupils. Under no circumstances should you use your personal accounts for this work.
- use Microsoft Teams on your school laptop for phone or video calls. We would recommend that this conversation is recorded. Where this is not possible, and you need to use a personal device, you **must** prefix 141, and never reveal any personal phone numbers or direct messaging details. Do not use any other media for contacting students e.g. **WhatsApp** or **Facebook Messenger** etc for video calling. These would require sharing of personal mobile numbers or Facebook accounts with pupils which may lead to safeguarding concerns.
- arrange for your line manager or suitable colleague to be part of the call if you have any concerns.
- refer any concerns arising from the call immediately to your line manager or safeguarding team, as relevant.
- use school email addresses, not personal ones, for yourselves as well as for pupils.



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- remember that the pupils are not friends, and that you should deal with them at all times as a professional.
- be aware of your working environment, and ensure you are appropriately dressed and in a living space, i.e. not a bedroom. Do not have personal things around you e.g. photographs of your family/your address etc. Use a background from Teams or blur your background.
- Do not request any photographs/recordings of the pupil and you should make it clear that they should never send you photographs/recordings of themselves. If they do you should alert the parent and line manager/safeguarding team immediately.
- record and save all live lessons as recommended practice. Otherwise you may arrange to have at least two adults in the conference at any one time.
- ensure you log out of your devices securely, especially if you are working in shared workspaces with family members.

The following might be useful guides about online safety:

[Thinkuknow - home](#), [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [Net Aware](#)

Discussion Prompts for Video and Phone Calls re well-being / academic catch-up

How are things?

Tell me about what you've been up to?

How have you been connecting with friends and family?

What's it like working independently?

Have you coped with the work ok?

Have you got a space to work and access to a computer?

Is there anything I need to share with any of your teachers for you?

If you any concerns, then you should alert your line manager and/or the safeguarding team (including use of CPOMs) as appropriate



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Data Protection

Schools and colleges are reminded to follow the guidance outlined in the data protection toolkit for schools when managing personal data e.g. taking care not to share contact details when emailing multiple people, being careful when sharing usernames and other personal data for access to online resources and providing access to school data systems safely.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, staff will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe In Education and of those outlined within our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

We will listen and work with the child, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required ensuring the safety and security of that child.

Concerns must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as per normal safeguarding reporting processes and actions must be recorded.

Radicalisation and Extremism

We are aware that the impact of COVID-19 on communities may give individuals and extremist organisations opportunities to promote hateful or harmful narratives. This may present in the form of graffiti, leafleting and stickering that is of an extremist nature. As a school we will consider the impact this material may have and encourage pupils to share any concerns if they feel worried, upset or anxious.

We will report any concerns and take advice from:

Prevent Referrals: 01606 362147