



# **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Eastfield Primary Academy**

**Academy: Eastfield Primary Academy**

**Policy owner:** Kerry Thompson

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## Context

There have been significant changes within our settings in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the Trust's Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with our established safeguarding procedures.**

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.

In principle, every child who is not vulnerable and can be safely cared for at home should be, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

This addendum of the Enquire Learning Trust Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Designated Safeguarding Lead

Eastfield Primary Academy has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Mrs Kerry Thompson**

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Mrs Caroline Pell**

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.

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

It is important that all Eastfield's 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, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## Children of critical workers:

If a parent is a critical worker and work can be done at home, they should stay at home. If they are a critical worker, they should still keep their child at home where possible. Every child who is not vulnerable and can be safely cared for at home should be, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

A link to the list of critical workers as defined by the government in January 2021 is included below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

## 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.

The definition of vulnerable now applies to pupils who have difficulties accessing remote learning. Wherever possible, leaders should work with these families to alleviate this issue so they can continue to work from home.

**Schools may class some other pupils who do not have a social worker as vulnerable.** These pupils should remain at home unless your risk assessment deems them to be at significant risk.

Eastfield 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: **Mrs Caroline Pell.**

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. **However, this should be subject to a risk assessment through the school's RAG rating system.**

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

[Eastfield Primary Academy will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.](#)

Wherever possible, daily contact should be made with your most vulnerable pupils. **A RAG rating system will apply, setting out the details of how you maintain contact with different pupils.** It is important that verbal contact is made with these pupils wherever possible. If you are not able to talk to them directly, it is recommended that you contact social services so that they can follow up this up.

**The frequency of contact is likely to be:**

Red- daily oversight

Amber- twice weekly contact

Green- weekly contact

**However**, this may be adapted to suit individual cases. If you are unable to make contact then home visits may be undertaken. Principles of social distancing should be observed. Again, record any home visits and the outcome on CPOMs.

**Please record any communication or any attempt to communicate on CPOMs.**

**Vulnerable pupils at highest risk:**

- Will have ongoing contact with a social worker
- Will be at risk of significant harm e.g. physical harm, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence etc
- May act as a home carer

**When RAG rating pupils**, aspects to consider may be that the pupil:

- Has poor prior attendance
- Has significant behavioural needs
- Lives with parents/carers with significant mental health issues or significant illness
- May have isolated parents/carers
- May have significant medical needs
- May have been excluded in the past and parents have difficulties managing behaviour
- May have recently been CP or CIN
- May speak English as an additional language so has difficulty understanding new systems and procedures

This list is not exhaustive and should be used as guidance only. Each pupil and their context should be considered on an individual basis.

Schools should ensure they have a process in place to check on the welfare of any child in need who does not attend on any day. This may mean contacting social services.

If a child who is being supported by children's social care is **self-isolating**, the LA will be expected to prioritise support to the most vulnerable, including undertaking necessary visits whilst taking appropriate infection control measures.

## Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)

Schools should risk assess pupils who have an EHCP. Schools will need to consider a number of different risks to each individual, including:

- the potential health risks to the individual from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This must be on an individual basis with advice from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the individual if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
- the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered

Government guidance sets out that we expect most children will fall into the following categories:

- children and young people who would be at significant risk if their education, health and care provision and placement did not continue, namely those who could not safely be supported at home. This may include those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those receiving significant levels of personal care support. Local authorities will need to work with the individual's educational setting – especially residential special schools and colleges – as well as local health partners, to ensure they are able to remain open wherever possible. This may mean deploying staff from other schools, to keep staffing ratios safe
- **children and young people whose needs can be met at home, namely those who are not receiving personal care from their educational setting, or whose limited need for personal care can be met in their family home. As part of the government's emergency powers, we will modify the statutory duties on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans and will expect educational settings and local authorities to use their reasonable endeavours to support these children and their families**

We anticipate that the majority of our EHCPs will fall into the second paragraph. Your risk assessments will identify this. **Therefore, they may remain at home.**

If the local authority has not yet issued an EHC plan for your child, then they will not automatically be included in this group of children.

## Self-isolation

There may be requests to receive pupils who have been in self-isolation.

Attendance registers will show the date that that pupil was first absent from school. These pupils should not be allowed to return to school until 10 days from their first day of absence.

It is important that you ask parents to let you know **if their child is now self-isolating and from what date**. You will need this information to set a 10-day period for which they are able attend school. Most children will remain at home following this 10-day period. However, you may have requests from parents of vulnerable pupils or key workers to allow their child to return to school.

Following this request, if a parent has not provided you with this information the 10-day period of self-isolation will begin from their request to return their child to school. You should alert parents to this when you put out your request for information about self-isolation.

If a parent requests that their child returns to school following a period of self-isolation, please ask the following questions:

- What was the date self-isolation began?
- Have the child or members of the family left the house? For what reasons? Whom did they come into contact with?
- Has the child or any members of the household displayed symptoms of the virus during this period?

## Attendance monitoring

All schools should complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. All schools are required to complete a daily attendance return in which they are required to submit a daily spreadsheet of pupil attendance to the DfE by 2pm each day.

Children attending the school and non-attendance should be recorded in accordance with government coding guidance as outlined by the DfE.

Eastfield Primary Academy and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Eastfield will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Eastfield 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, Eastfield will, when communicating with parents/carers 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, Eastfield Primary Academy will notify their social worker.

## Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. Professional development opportunities are, however, available to all staff through our Flick Learning platform (<https://app.flicklearning.com/local/login>) and through Safeguarding Pro. Additional opportunities may be provided by local authorities which may reinforce any localised challenges- please encourage DSLs to access this as these may provide important information.

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 Eastfield Primary Academy they will continue to be provided with relevant safeguarding information.

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 partner school that the member of staff has had relevant safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given:

- A copy of the school's behaviour policy setting out your expectations (sanctions may not be relevant here, but it will set out your expectations)
- Health and Safety policy including fire procedures
- First Aid procedures
- Code of conduct
- Details of the key person working in school they can request support from (this will be flexible so it may be wise to have single point where this is displayed each day)
- A timetable of the school day and relevant collection/ drop-off points

## **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, Eastfield Primary Academy 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).

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 Eastfield 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, 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.

Eastfield 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.

Eastfield Primary Academy 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](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, Eastfield Primary Academy will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## Online safety in academies

Eastfield Primary Academy 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 academies

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 conduct.

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

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Staff should **record all live sessions** in Microsoft Teams so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed. Live recordings are saved and deleted after seven days.
- The length, time, date and attendance of **any** live session is recorded; Microsoft Teams does this automatically.
- Wherever possible there should be two adults present when providing live teaching.
- Staff invite children to join their 'live' Microsoft Teams session; children wait in the 'lobby' until invited to join the session.
- Staff alert both parents and children via the comments section if a Microsoft Teams session requires any specialised equipment.
- Any Microsoft Teams session will always have the disclaimer, *'By joining this meeting, you are agreeing to not take photographs, screenshots or recordings for any reason. You are also agreeing to behave in an appropriate manner, as would normally be expected in school. This includes appropriate language and dress.'* at the start of the session; to safeguard staff.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by Eastfield Primary Academy to communicate with pupils.



## Supporting children not in school

Eastfield Primary Academy 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 they maintain communication with that pupil directly or through the relevant social worker.

Details of communication must be recorded on CPOMS

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

Eastfield and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication arrangements.

Arrangements must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

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

Eastfield 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 Eastfield Primary Academy need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

## Supporting children in school

Eastfield Primary Academy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Eastfield Primary Academy 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.

Eastfield Primary Academy 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.

Eastfield Primary Academy 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. This will be bespoke to each child.

Where Eastfield Primary Academy has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the Directors within the Trust.

## Alternative provision

Local arrangements are now required in order to determine the best way to protect vulnerable children in AP, including by keeping AP settings open where it is feasible to do so. Local authorities will be best placed to determine how this can be delivered locally, working closely with local schools and headteachers, and regional schools commissioners.

Where it is not possible for an AP setting to remain open to support this small group of vulnerable children, local authorities and schools will need to assess the safeguarding needs of those children on a case by case basis, working with social workers and other agencies to make appropriate arrangements for any vulnerable children that will be affected by their AP setting closing.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Eastfield Primary Academy 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 of the Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency 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.