



Child Protection Policy Addendum – COVID19

Reviewed by: DHT Pastoral / Inclusion

Date of Adoption by Governing Body: Chair Approval

Chair of Governor's Signature: _____

Date to be Reviewed: June 2021

ADDENDUM - COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at The Joseph Rowntree School to be read in conjunction with the existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Context

From 20th March 2020 parents/ carers 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 and those children deemed to be vulnerable.

From the week commencing 15 June, we expect to be able to begin to welcome back students in Year 10 and Year 12 in small numbers. For vulnerable children, attendance is also expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable

We are now preparing to welcome all children back this autumn. While coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, this means making judgments at a school level about how to balance and minimise any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience for children and young people.

This addendum of The Joseph Rowntree School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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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, 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.

Vulnerable children also include those who have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion.

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.

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust to school; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.

The Joseph Rowntree School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children and to support the transition back into school. 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: Charlotte Mann

The Joseph Rowntree School will also provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified that individual pupils may need help with, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. We will also support the needs of particular groups we are already aware need additional help (for example, children in need), and any groups we identify as newly vulnerable on their return to school, through our pastoral structures and liaising with wider agencies.

Some pupils with SEND (whether with education, health and care plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that this will involve, so teachers and special educational needs coordinators have planned to meet these needs, for example using social stories and through extended transition and resources.

Attendance monitoring

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, it was decided that no parent or carer would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school.

School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.

This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer them access to remote education and will monitor engagement.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school

All other pupils must attend school. We are aware of the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and will put in place support to address this. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we will invite parents to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school. However, pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

We will work with families to secure regular school attendance from the start of term by:

- communicating clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate)
- Identifying pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and putting in place plans for re-engaging them. This includes

disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic

- Using existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance
- Working closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy.

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 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 Chair of Governors: Dianne Gomery.

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 The Joseph Rowntree School, 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

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, The Joseph Rowntree School 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.

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 The Joseph Rowntree School 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.

The Joseph Rowntree School 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.

The Joseph Rowntree School 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 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, The Joseph Rowntree School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety in schools

The Joseph Rowntree School 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.

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

The Joseph Rowntree School guide to safe online usage is on the school website, and includes guidance for online use by students, in addition to resources and website for information, support and reporting of any concerns by parents and carers.

Supporting children in school

The Joseph Rowntree School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The Joseph Rowntree School 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 student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The Joseph Rowntree School 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.

Where The Joseph Rowntree School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Headteacher.

Supporting children on return to school.

We understand that staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following partial school closures.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay, including new concerns where children are returning.

The Joseph Rowntree School will continue to communicate with parents/ carers to ask parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a child returns.

The Joseph Rowntree School will continue to provide support for pupils and students in the current circumstances for social, emotional and mental health which will include existing provision in school or from specialist staff or support services.