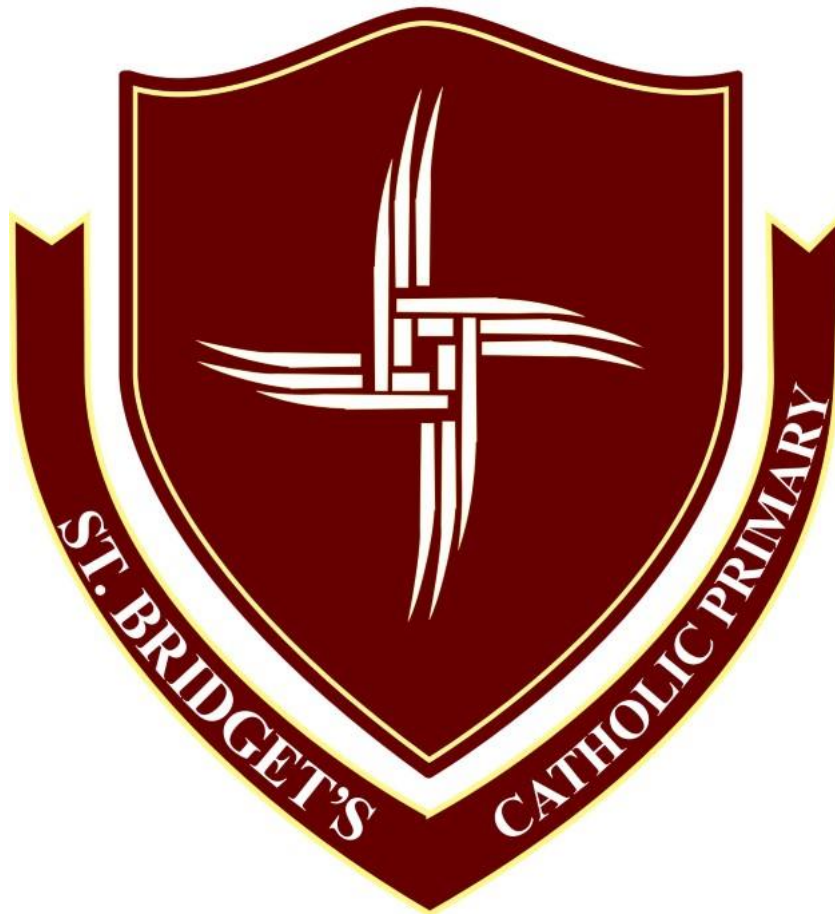


# *St. Bridget's Catholic Primary School*



## **Child Protection Policy and Procedures – COVID-19 Addendum MARCH 2020**

Headteacher: Mrs. Suzanne Smith

Chair of Governors: Mr. Paul Farran

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES – COVID 19 ADDENDUM

## March 2020

| <i>At the time of publishing the following roles were held:</i>         |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Head teacher  | Suzanne Smith                 |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead  | Suzanne Smith                 |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)                                  | Georgina Taylor, Vivian Newby |
| Designated Teacher for looked-after or previously looked-after children | Georgina Taylor               |
| Governor with safeguarding responsibility                               | Paul Farran                   |

Please note: The above roles are held by individuals in attendance at the school when it is operating normally.

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## Contents

|     |   |                              |
|-----|---|------------------------------|
| 1.  | Introduction .....  | 1                            |
| 2.  | Context .....   | 1                            |
| 3.  | The current school position and local advice .....              | 1                            |
| 4.  | Vulnerable children/groups .....                                | 1                            |
| 5.  | Attendance and monitoring .....                                 | 2                            |
| 6.  | Safeguarding Arrangements.....                                  | 2                            |
| 7.  | Reporting a concern.....  | 3                            |
| 8.  | Peer on peer abuse .....  | 3                            |
| 9.  | Child Protection Training and Induction .....                   | 3                            |
| 10. | Safe Recruitment.....   | 3                            |
| 11. | Online Safety .....   | 4                            |
| 12. | Safety of children using online systems remote from school..... | 4                            |
| 13. | Supporting children not in school.....                          | 5                            |
| 14. | Supporting children in the Childcare Hub .....                  | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

**Appendix A - Model contact form for children with a Social Worker**

**Appendix B - Model Critical Absence Plan**

## 1. Introduction

This addendum has been created following DfE guidance on [safeguarding in schools and other providers](#) issued by GOV UK on 27 March and applies to all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent (including academies, academy trusts, free schools and alternative provision academies), maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units. It is an addendum to the School's Child Protection Policy and procedures which in turn complies with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019](#) statutory guidance and must be read in conjunction with that Policy and procedures. The Child Protection Policy and procedures is available on the school website or in hard copy on request.

## 2. Context

From 20th 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.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff will respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This addendum sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

## 3. The current school position and local advice

At St Bridget's School (hereinafter referred to as 'the school') the current position is that the school is open as a Childcare Hub and will continue 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.

Details on the definition of a vulnerable child are outlined in section 4. below. Further supporting information on this is outlined in the Government advice '[Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision](#)'. This is following advice from the Local Authority and their safeguarding partners (Health Authority and Police). Further advice on this issue can be found on [Cumbria County Council website](#). This includes information issued to schools regarding children with EHC plans, details of the [Designated Officer \(DO\)](#) appointed by the Local Authority (see also section 7. below) and children's social care, referral thresholds and children in need.

## 4. Vulnerable children/groups

Vulnerable children include those who have an allocated social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after or have in the past been 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 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 is not necessarily the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy know who most

vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

The School 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.

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 the school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, the school DSL/Head teacher or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

## 5. Attendance and monitoring

Department for Education (DfE) advice is that Local Authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Childcare Hubs will, however, complete a daily attendance return for the Centre to be sent back to the DfE by 12 noon each day. In addition, the Local Authority also require their online data collection form to be completed by 12 noon each day - [LA Daily Data Collection Form](#).

The Head teacher/Senior Manager and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – school staff will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend school or a designated Childcare Hub but who does not. We will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care (via the Designated Childcare Hub) for their child/ren and the child/ren subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, the school will, when communicating with parents/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 a designated Childcare Hub, or discontinues, the school will notify the child's social worker, as stated in the flow chart at **Appendix A**. Any deviation from this plan will result in the application of a Critical Absence Plan (**Appendix B**) approved by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## 6. Safeguarding Arrangements

Our School is currently operating as a Childcare Hub. The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL and/or deputy available on site each day the facility is open to children at outlined in Section 3 above. Where this is not possible, a trained DSL or deputy DSL will be available to be contacted via phone for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to the above, the Head teacher/Senior Leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system (e.g. CPOMS) or the normal school recording system 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.

It is important that all our Hub staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them. The DSL or deputy DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings in collaboration with the DSL from the normal host school, which can be done remotely.

## 7. Reporting a concern

Where staff or other adults have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the procedures outlined in the School's Child Protection procedures. Staff and volunteers are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay to the DSL or deputy DSL. In the absence of an onsite DSL or deputy DSL, all concerns must be directed to the Head teacher.

Any concerns or allegations made against staff or other adults in the school must be directed to the Head teacher. Concerns or allegations made against the Head teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors in accordance with our existing Child Protection Policy and procedures. Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership have procedures for [reporting and dealing with allegations against adults](#) and details of the Designated Officer (DO) appointed by the Local Authority.

If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made Cumbria Safeguarding Hub immediately – **anybody can make a referral**. If a referral is made by a member of staff or other adult, they should inform the DSL or deputy DSL as soon as possible.

**Cumbria Safeguarding Hub - 0333 240 1727**

E mail: [safeguardinghub.fax@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardinghub.fax@cumbria.gov.uk)

## 8. Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of peer on peer or child on child abuse and supporting victims.

Where school staff receive a report of peer on peer abuse either online or in the wider school community, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSiE 2019 and those outlined within our Child Protection Policy procedures *and the Peer on Peer Abuse Policy*.

The school will listen to 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 the normal school recording system and appropriate referrals made.

## 9. Child Protection Training and Induction

Statutory 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 (including those contracted by other employers but who regularly work in the school) have had safeguarding training, have read part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), 2019, the Child Protection Policy and procedures, the school staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing procedures and the school Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures. Regular volunteers have also read part 1 and Annex A of KCSiE in relation to their role in school.

The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child or have concerns about the behaviour of another adult in school. Where new staff or volunteers are recruited, they will be given a safeguarding induction and be provided with a copy of the School staff Code of Conduct and appropriate school Policies as outlined above.

## 10. Safe Recruitment

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, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSiE 2019.

[If, during our period as a designated Childcare Hub, 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 check for regulated activity (i.e. includes a children's barred list check<sup>1</sup>);
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children;
- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training and has read part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

Volunteers **will not** be given unsupervised access to children under any circumstances unless they have an enhanced disclosure for regulated activity (i.e. with a barred list check) and the above information has been sought and verified.

Upon arrival, all staff and other adults will be given, or provided with access to a copy of the Childcare Hub's Child Protection Policy and procedures<sup>2</sup>, the staff Code of Conduct, Whole School Behaviour Policy and procedures, Whistleblowing procedures and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance ([COVID-19: Free-of-charge DBS applications and fast-track Barred List check service](#)) on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face to face contact.

Where we are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSiE 2019. A risk assessment will also be put in place for any volunteer used in the setting. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to work in regulated activity.

The 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 2019.

The school will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSiE 2019 and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice' for making a referral.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals to the TRA 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, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. **As such, the school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSiE 2019<sup>3</sup>.**

## 11. Online Safety

The school will continue to provide a safe environment, including online.

This includes the use of the online filtering system. Where children and young people are using computers in the setting, appropriate supervision will be in place.

## 12. Safety of children using online systems remote from school

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with in accordance with our Child Protection Policy and procedures and where appropriate, referrals will be made to children's social care and as required, the Police. Any member of staff who has concerns about a child must report this to the DSL in the first instance and failing the availability of the DSL, the Head teacher. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the school Code of Conduct.

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of a special school this may also need to include an adults barred list check

<sup>2</sup> This will be the normal school Child Protection Policy and procedures

<sup>3</sup> In the case of a Childcare Hub, the agency tab on the Single Central Record (SCR) should be used for recording staff and volunteers from other settings. Written confirmation that all the necessary checks have been carried out will be required.

The school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection (GDPR) requirements. The delivery of any live lessons must be agreed with the Head teacher or other senior leader in advance. Consent must be sought from both parents and pupils.

We will ensure that children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns with the school whilst online e.g. incidents of cyberbullying and we will apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as if children were learning at school.

The school has taken on board guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on safe remote learning. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly. Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.

Staff have read the [20 safeguarding considerations for livestreaming](#) prior to delivering any livestreamed sessions.

Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school.

We also recommend the following to pupils:

- Childline ([www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)) – for support
- UK Safer Internet Centre (<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>) - to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP (<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education sites they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

### **13. Supporting children not in school**

The school 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, they will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child.

Details of this plan must be recorded on the school normal recording system as should a record of any contact made. The communication plans can include: remote contact; phone contact; or socially distant door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The school 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) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

We will share safeguarding and child protection messages on its website and social media pages.

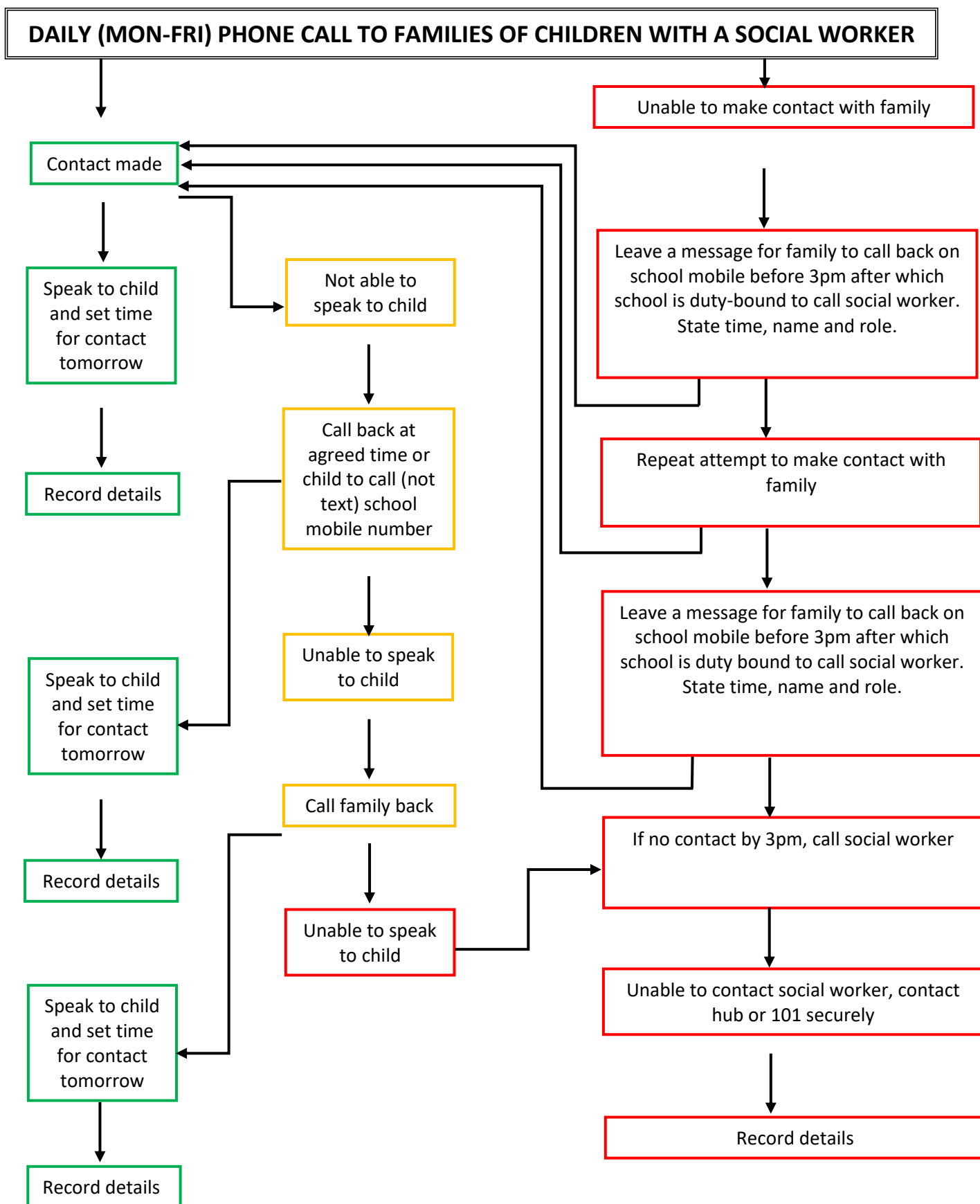
We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils, their parents/Carers and immediate family. To this end, we will do everything we can to minimise the effects in relation to any online resources made available to pupils' home learning.

Teachers at our school need to be aware of the above in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

We will endeavour to support our pupils and their families in the current circumstances using the existing school systems and processes. We will also make reference to DfE guidance [mental health and behaviour in schools](#) 2018.

The DfE have also issued advice for parents/carers on [supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#).

Welfare checks will be made on all pupils. The frequency and method of communication will be decided by the Head teacher working with the DSL and SENCO.



Many families have multiple agencies working with them and will be inundated by welfare calls, so it may be prudent to schedule a timetable with other agencies e.g. siblings' schools, AP providers including HHTS, Young Carers etc. These students may be subject to Critical Absence Plans. Please ensure that the other organisation informs the school of contact/concerns so the information can still be logged using CPOMS or similar recording system.

**St Bridget's School - Critical Absence Plan**

**Date Plan agreed:**

| CRITICAL ABSENCE PLAN   |                                       |                       |                     |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Name(s) of child(ren):  |                                       |                       |                     |
| Year Group(s):  | CP, CIN, CLA or OTHER<br>(circle one) | Key Worker in school: |                     |
| Parent's/Carer's name(s)  |                                       | Contact Number:       |                     |
| Social Worker:  |                                       | Contact Number        |                     |
| Other agencies/organisations known to be working with the family: |                                       |                       |                     |
| Reason given for absence:   |                                       | Authorised absence?   | YES/NO (circle one) |
| Reason for plan:  |                                       |                       |                     |

|           | Plan to ensure contact is made with family & child daily | Follow up procedure if no contact is made | Plan to ensure key worker is informed of successful contact and can log on school recording system |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| MONDAY    |  |   |  |
| TUESDAY   |  |   |  |
| WEDNESDAY |  |   |  |
| THURSDAY  |  |   |  |
| FRIDAY    |  |   |  |

| Next scheduled meeting e.g. .Core Group, TAF, Review Meeting: |      |          |
|---|------|----------|
| Date  | Time | Location |
|   |      |          |

**Plan Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by DSL:** \_\_\_\_\_