



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for  
Safeguarding and Child Protection at  
  
St Peter's Catholic High School



School Name:	St Peter's Catholic High School
Policy owner:	Neil Ashton
Date:	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020
Date shared with staff:	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020

## **1. Context and Contact Numbers**

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 who were critical to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) response - who absolutely needed to attend. The government made this decision in order to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, to protect the NHS and to save lives.

1.2 In March 2020, schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who were vulnerable, and children whose parents were critical to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) response and could not be safely cared for at home. This included children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan who were risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they needed to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they could 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, safely remained at home.

1.3 There was an expectation that vulnerable children who had a social worker or Start Well worker would attend an education setting, so long as they did not have underlying or complex health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent did not want to bring their child into an education setting, and their child was considered vulnerable, the social worker and St Peter's explored the reasons for this directly with the parent

1.4 As the situation improved, the government began to consider how they could bring more children and young people back into schools, and supported primary schools to do so from 1 June 2020, focusing on some year groups being educated in small 'bubbles', and secondary schools from 15 June 2020, with Year 10 pupils spending some time in school in small groups, with public health risk reduction measures in place. (Department of Education, 27 July 2020)

1.5 In guidance published on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the government stated that they planned for all pupils (including those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SENDS) and EHC), in all year groups, will return to school, full time, from the start of the autumn term, that is September 2020.

1.6 This addendum of the St Peter's Safeguarding Policy applies only whilst the ongoing COVID-19 (coronavirus) response is required to be in place.

1.7 It should be noted that every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education [and safety] (Department of Education, 27 July 2020).

1.8 This COVID-19 Appendix recognises the fluid nature of what the return to education for pupils within education settings involves and that both the Local

Authority in line with DfE advice may change. The education setting will implement new approaches in line with LA advice and guidance and maintain / update links to the overarching model safeguarding policy as and when required.

Role	Name	Contact email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr N Ashton	<a href="mailto:ashtonn101@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">ashtonn101@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Mrs C Hartley Mr I Bromelow Mr C Pollitt Mrs K Houghton	<a href="mailto:hartleyc@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">hartleyc@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:bromelowi940@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">bromelowi940@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:pollitc@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">pollitc@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:houghtonk@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">houghtonk@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a>
Headteacher	Mr A McGlown	<a href="mailto:head@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">head@saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a>
Chair of Governors	Mr C Hough	<a href="mailto:enquiries@admin.saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">enquiries@admin.saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a>
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs S Platt	<a href="mailto:enquiries@admin.saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk">enquiries@admin.saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk</a>

## **2. Vulnerable children**

3.1 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.

3.2 Those who have a social worker or Start Well 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 have otherwise been deemed to meet the definition in [Section \(17\) of the Children Act 1989](#).

3.3 St Peter's will continue to work with and support children's social workers and other connected professionals to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) Rachel Clemow for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be Mr Ashton

3.4 Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19. The Headteacher/SENCO/HOY/Assistant Head or the child's social worker or Start Well worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the [guidance for full opening for schools](#) set out by the Department of Education, which has been endorsed by Public Health England. St Peter's will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **3 .Attendance monitoring**

3.1 A member of staff from St Peter's will follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

3.2 A member of staff from St Peter's 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.

3.3 Schools need to complete the DfE Attendance Recording daily and send these with information on your contacts to the Local Authority. This will be emailed daily, by a member of the office staff.

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

3.5 In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, St Peter's will notify their social worker or Start Well Worker.

3.6 DfE published guidance for schools on attendance for further details. The DfE has also produced a useful checklist for school leaders to support full opening regarding behaviour and attendance

### **4. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

4.1 St Peter's has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr N Ashton

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Mrs C Hartley

Mr I Bromelow

Mr C Pollitt

Mrs K Houghton

4.2 The aim is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site throughout the times that the school is operating under the COVID-19 arrangements. Where this is not the case the DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

4.3 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. It is important that all school name 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 will continue to engage with social workers and Start Well Workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

4.4 Designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) should be provided with more time, especially in the first few weeks of term, to help them provide support to staff and children regarding any new safeguarding and welfare concerns and the handling of referrals to children's social care and other agencies where these are appropriate, and agencies and services should prepare to work together to actively look for signs of harm (Department of Education, 27 July 2020)

4.5 Communication with school nurses is important for safeguarding and supporting wellbeing, as they have continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in school.

## **5. Reporting a concern**

5.1 Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the existing process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy. To discuss any concerns please call the MAST for advice, but for any immediate risks, complete the usual referral process.

## **6. Safeguarding Training and induction**

6.1 Training needs to be refreshed every two years, for both Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies.

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

6.3 If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to St Peter's 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.

6.4 Upon arrival, any new staff will be given a copy of the St Peter's child protection policy.

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

7.1 People who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children and this does not change under COVID-19 arrangements/school reopening arrangements. When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for the setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#).

7.2 In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has advised that it has made [temporary changes to its guidance](#) on basic, standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

7.3 Where our school uses volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 186 to 188 of [KCSIE](#). **Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.**

7.4 St Peter's 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 179 of [KCSIE](#) and also see Part four of [KCSIE](#).

7.5 St Peter's will continue to consider and make referrals to the [Teaching Regulation Agency](#) (TRA) as per paragraphs 166 and 172 of [KCSIE](#) and the [Teaching Regulation Agency's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral'](#). All referrals should be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

7.6 Whilst acknowledging the challenge posed by the necessities of COVID-19 responses, St Peter's will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in [KCSIE](#).

## **8. Online safety in schools and colleges**

8.1 St Peter's 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.

## **9. Children and online safety away from school and college**

9.1 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 Safeguarding Children Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and/or to the police. See paragraphs 219-227 in [KCSIE](#)

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

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

10.1 St Peter's remains committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children.

10.2 The School will have contact details for the social worker or start well worker for any child who is open to those services and a communication plan between the school and those professionals specific to the COVID-19 arrangements period will be implemented.

10.3 Parents can continue to contact school with regard to any need by contacting [enquiries@admin.saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@admin.saintpetershigh.wigan.sch.uk) or the use of EduLink to contact individual staff.

## **11. Supporting children who are in school**

11.1 The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

11.2 St Peter's will refer to the Government guidance for education 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.

11.3 Where there are concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – the Headteacher will discuss them immediately with the Chair of Governors and / or the Local Authority.

## **12. Peer on Peer Abuse**

12.1 Where school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in Part 5 of KCSIE (Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment) and of those outlined within of the existing Safeguarding Children Policy.

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

If abuse includes bodily contact or other physical contact (e.g. spitting) staff will follow Covid 19 saef hygiene protocols to minimise any risks.

### 13. References

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