


# COVID-19 addendum to Safeguarding Policy Version III



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## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Categories of vulnerable children as defined by Department of Education
3. Key workers as identified by Government
4. Attendance procedures
5. Key personnel in Academy, including DSL arrangements (school staff to insert)
6. Updated advice from academy's local 3 safeguarding partners (school staff to insert)
7. Updated advice from academy's local authority regarding children with EHCP (school staff to insert)
8. Updated advice from academy's local authority designated officer (LADO) (school staff to insert)
9. Updated advice from academy's local children's social care department, i.e. MASH (school staff to insert)
10. Communication procedures between school staff and social care and virtual school head (LAC)
11. Arrangements for reporting a concern ensuring urgency of actions
12. Vigilance regarding peer-on-peer abuse
13. Reporting concerns about an adult
14. Supporting school identified 'vulnerable' children who are not attending school
15. Moving to a hub – things to consider
16. Safer Recruitment and staff movement - ensuring safeguarding standards
17. Online Safety
18. Mental Health considerations
19. Domestic Violence
20. Communication of this document with all staff
21. Child Protection Referrals

## 1. Introduction

On the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the government declared another 'lockdown' period for the nation starting in law from 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021. This again required schools to 'partially close'. Only children identified as being vulnerable and those of key workers have been offered a place at school. Remote learning will occur for the rest of the school cohort delivered by staff online in various methods (see Remote Learning Policy).

As always, our academies will continue to support families most in need, and also ensure that the numbers of children and parents/carers travelling to and from school is as low as can be to help protect public health.

Each academy will organise its staffing around the delivery of the 'new curriculum' as best suits its individual needs and priorities and academies will communicate this with their families.

Our academies will continue to ensure that all pupils on site are cared for using advice on managing Covid-19, including testing where appropriate in line with guidelines.

This document is an update to previous versions of the addendum to our Safeguarding Policy. It is important to note that as Government guidance may change, so must this document to reflect any changes.

['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#) remains the key document for safeguarding children and this document supports KCSiE for the current unprecedented events which are occurring.

[Academy staff](#) and [parents/carers](#) should also refer to gov.uk for further information.

## 2. Categories of vulnerable children as defined by Department for Education

[Vulnerable children](#) include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers

o others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

- Those that schools and other education providers may identify as 'vulnerable', e.g. previously looked after children, those who have recently had safeguarding issues not yet processed by social care, some SEN K children.

Our academy will continue to work with social care and other agencies to ensure any recognised vulnerable child is supported throughout this time.

### 3. Key workers as identified by Government

Key workers have been identified as those who work in the areas of:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Local and national government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport and border
- Utilities, communication and financial services

### 4. Attendance Procedures

Academies should follow guidelines as directed by DfE on attendance procedures.

Attendance issues around vulnerable pupils may include academies being in communication with social care. Those children on the identified list who are not attending school will be monitored using '**Guidance for Safeguarding Vulnerable children during prolonged school closure**', which has been communicated to all academies.

Staff attendance – academies will ensure own arrangements for ensuring they know which staff are on site at any given time. Any staff attendance issues should be passed on to the RD/DRD team.

### Section 5-10 Individual Academy information:

#### 5. Key personnel in Academy, including DSL arrangements (insert information below)

Role	Name	Contact (School hours)	Contact details (Out of schools hours)
Designated Safeguarding Lead			
Deputy(s) Designated Safeguarding Leads			

Relevant Senior Leadership Team staff			
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The academy will attempt to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site every day during school hours when children are present.

In the event this cannot be achieved, the DSL/Deputy DSL can be contacted via phone or online video. See contact details above.

If this is not possible due to illness etc. our academy will contact SET central team who will put the school in touch with another DSL to be available.

In addition, a member of the senior leadership team with responsibility for safeguarding to support the DSL, should always try to be on site and/or available on the phone if not on site.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). 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.

Academies may wish to use table below as a template for DSL/DDSL/SLT on site:

	DSL/DDSL	SLT link
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

## 6. Updated advice from academy's local 3 safeguarding partners (insert information below)

Insert here any relevant advice/communication from your local Safeguarding Partnership.

Contact person at SG Partnership	Contact details

## 7. Updated advice from academy's local authority regarding children with EHCP (insert information below)

Insert here any relevant advice/communication from your local authority SEND department.

Contact person at LA SEND dept.	Contact details

**8. Updated advice from academy’s local authority designated officer (LADO)  
(insert information below)**

Insert here any relevant advice/communication from your local designated officer (Principals may have received this information)

LADO name	Contact details

**9. Updated advice from academy’s local children’s social care department, i.e. MASH (insert information below)**

Insert here any relevant advice/communication from your local Safeguarding Partnership.

Contact person at MASH	Contact details

**10. Communication procedures between school staff and virtual school head (LAC) (insert information below)**

Virtual school headteacher	Contact details

Our academy will ensure that any ‘looked after child’ is supported as with all vulnerable children and that there will be clear lines of communication between the school and the VSH team, both inside and outside school hours.

**11. Arrangements for reporting a concern ensuring urgency of actions**

It is imperative that during this period of uncertainty that all staff ensure that any concerns are acted on as quickly as possible. For the most part, reporting procedures will remain as they are during normal school procedures as stated in the Safeguarding Policy, e.g. contact DSL/DDSL, and log on relevant system, e.g. My Concern/**CPOMs**. This can of course be done remotely if need be.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access the relevant information system, they should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. If urgent, then a phone call should be made followed up with an email to the DSL and the Principal/Headteacher. If deemed ‘non-urgent’, and just in need of recording and informing the DSL, an email should be sent asap to again, both the DSL and Principal/Headteacher.

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, e.g. phone call, and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of the Academy Council. Staff may also contact SET central team if need be at any time concerning any worries about

reporting a concern.

Academies must also have in place a system to ensure that pupils themselves are able to report a concern whilst working from home, whether that be on school email, telephone etc. Academies may well already have in place a system for pupils reporting safeguarding concerns that can be used remotely.

## 12. Vigilance regarding peer-on-peer abuse

Staff should be aware that certain issues may arise at this time which are more difficult to detect than when all children are in school. Behaviours linked to online issues may cause some cases of peer on peer abuse (see section 18). Part Five of [KCSIE](#) outlines these concerns. It is important that where staff suspect peer-on-peer abuse, that they follow the reporting guidelines of the academy, including recording the issue on the appropriate system.

## 13. Reporting concerns about an adult

All staff must be vigilant to adults seeking to take advantage of these extraordinary times. Reports from the media have included stories of who will see this as an opportunity to possibly gain access to vulnerable children online. All school staff must be as vigilant as possible and reinforce the message of online safety in all communications with parents/carers who are home schooling.

In addition, where any staff is concerned about the behaviour of any adult, they should report using procedures as soon as possible.

## 14. Supporting school identified ‘vulnerable’ children who are not attending school

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, schools have been able to identify ‘vulnerable’ children who may not automatically appear on any of the identified lists. In this case, academies should include these children in regards to all actions and ensure that whether the child is in school or not, that they are supported. If the child is not in school, the **‘Guidance for Safeguarding Vulnerable children during prolonged school closure’** should be used. It is important that lines of communication with social care and external agencies are clear.

## 15. Moving to a hub – things to consider if this occurs

If the academy moves to a cluster/hub model for supporting pupils, the following aspects will be put in place in addition to the procedures already in place:

- Appropriate information is transferred by DSL/SENCo staff or relevant senior leaders, to the appropriate member of staff who may assume responsibility for the pupil if this is not one of our academy staff. This information will outline how best to support the relevant pupil, e.g. EHCP, name of social worker etc.
- Any transfer of a LAC will be under the direction of the relevant virtual school headteacher.

- All information will be transferred in the strictest confidence complying with GDPR guidance.
- All parents/carers and relevant external agencies will be notified prior to the transfer.
- The 'cluster' DSL will ensure that safeguarding processes in the new setting will be to the same high standards of our own academy and liaise daily with the 'home school' DSL.

## 16. Safer Recruitment and movement of staff - ensuring safeguarding standards

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.

**Clusters/Hubs** - Where staff are moving between academies within SET, there is an expectation that all have had adequate safeguarding training, including having signed Part One of [KCSiE](#). This can be verified by DSLs.

*A designated senior leader will communicate to host school via written confirmation, e.g. email, that all staff moving to a cluster have been adequately checked by their academy, i.e. satisfy the requirements of the single central record.*

*The important thing for any staff who may be, for example moving to support a cluster/hub, that they be aware of the local arrangements around safeguarding and what to do if concerned about a child, i.e. are in receipt of relevant safeguarding policies/procedures.*

The respective DSLs will ensure that safeguarding induction information is communicated to all 'new staff' in this situation. It will be for the receiving school to ensure adequate induction is completed and assessed on a case by case basis. There is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another academy to support the care of children

**Staff Recruitment** - Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the academy, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction as with normal procedure.

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) made changes last March to its [guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#) to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

All our academies will follow the DfE guidance on DBS checks as normal ensuring any adjustments during this period are adhered to.

If volunteers are used, the academy will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 183 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.

All academies will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date, and ensure a full register of adults on site each day is maintained. Referrals of concerns will be carried out in the normal method.

## 17. Online Safety for children on and off site

The Shaw Education Trust has produced Remote Learning procedures which outline safeguarding systems for online learning conducted by academies. Each academy will



communicate with parents/carers the procedures relevant to their setting and aspect of online teaching, whether that be recorded or live streamed to pupils.

As the majority of education for pupils off-site may be online, it is vital that each academy protects all pupils as best it can during this period. On site IT safety systems will operate as normal during this period. The following aspects of online safety should be in place in our academies:

- Communication to parents/carers will include, periodically, information about online safety and signpost relevant resources.
- The academy will continue to ensure monitoring and filtering mechanisms are in place.
- IT support will be available on-site or remotely at all times. (A back-up plan will be in place where IT support staff become unavailable).
- Staff must be vigilant around online safety as much as possible when checking-in with pupils not in school. This will be difficult as monitoring their online activity will be responsibility of parents/carers but if in doubt staff should investigate as best they can.

Academies should continue to use available resources to encourage safe online use including [Government guidance](#) to parents/carers.

There is a lot of support available to keep children safe online for parents/carers. Below are some useful links to help parents/carers:

- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and careers from the NSPCC)

## 18. Mental Health considerations

We are aware at our academy that this current situation can bring many anxieties for both pupils and staff. Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Where staff are concerned for their own or a pupil's mental health they should seek support as appropriate.

Staff wishing to learn more about mental health and mental health of young people can access a [Flick](#) module and also refer to Government [mental health guidance](#).

Staff must continue to be vigilant of returning pupils when academies fully open because of the experience some may have faced, such as bereavement, domestic abuse etc. Staff should refer to relevant safeguarding policies for support if needed.

## 19. Domestic Abuse

The government and various charities acknowledge that lockdown and restrictive measures in

place to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19), such as self-isolating, social distancing and spending much more time at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk. Some families might need extra support with parenting. And if a child is experiencing abuse, there aren't as many opportunities for adults to spot the signs and help.

[Government guidance](#) and [NSPCC guidance](#) have been produced in support of families and professionals at this time and how various agencies are ensuring that relevant support services remain open during this challenging time. Academy staff will as always remain vigilant to any signs of possible domestic abuse report accordingly. This includes children who are currently in school and those at home considered vulnerable.

Reporting any concern will be done following each academy's reporting systems asap and in addition our DSL may wish to seek guidance from the NSPCC who can be contacted on 0808 800 5000 by phone or email at [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Promotion of support organisations is important to all our community in addition to those mentioned of DfE and NSPCC. [Childline](#) can be used by children directly.

Spotting the [signs of abuse](#) might be more difficult and it can be difficult to know for certain if something is wrong. During visits and 'check-ins', it is important to be able to physically see a child you are visiting and if on the phone, speak to them directly.

Think about questions you could ask that will help you see what life's like for them. Ask open-ended questions like, "tell me about your day", "what are some good things that have happened today", "tell me about some sad things that have happened this week" and "what's life at home like". It's okay to ask similar questions - it can sometimes take time for a child to open up about what's happening.

Give children and young people the opportunity to talk about what's going on for them. It may take time for them to feel comfortable talking over the phone or on their doorstep, so staff may need to keep in touch more regularly than stated in our guidance document. Talking about things like what they're watching, reading or playing, or what they've had for dinner, may help them feel more comfortable.

It's also important to support parents and carers. Ask them about how they're coping and any worries and concerns they have. Let them know you're there to support them if they need help.

Certain children are more vulnerable to domestic abuse, e.g. SEND & disabled children, so it's important to make a greater effort to keep in touch.

Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation, no matter what stresses anyone is under.

## **20. Communication of this document with all staff**

Lead staff should ensure that this document is circulated to all staff as appropriate.

## **21. Child Protection Referrals**

Child Protection referrals have fallen during lockdowns but in some cases then increased at

the end of lockdowns. Due in the main to referrals usually being made by schools and health professionals, so with schools closed to most children, referrals dropped during lockdowns.

Therefore, once again we are aware that with the reopening of our academies after any period of lockdown, it may be after 'assessment' of some of our pupils, that we deem a referral to social care may be appropriate, which may ultimately result in a Child Protection Plan. Each academy has secure procedures in place already which assess and refers pupils and this will continue but we must be vigilant and prepared that an increase in referrals is likely. Relevant staff will be supported to ensure this can occur.



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