



The  
**Birkenhead Park**  
School

# Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

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## Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Ms Weekes	<a href="mailto:wek@birkenheadparkschool.com">wek@birkenheadparkschool.com</a>
Deputy DSL	Mrs Bentley Ms Robinson Mr Mee	<a href="mailto:dgb@birkenheadparkschool.com">dgb@birkenheadparkschool.com</a> <a href="mailto:pro@birkenheadparkschool.com">pro@birkenheadparkschool.com</a> <a href="mailto:mee@birkenheadparkschool.com">mee@birkenheadparkschool.com</a>

## 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our local safeguarding partners Wirral Children Safeguarding Children Partnership and Wirral Local Authority.

It sets out changes to our normal safeguarding policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal safeguarding policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

- Have a social worker, including children:
  - With a child protection plan
  - Assessed as being in need
  - Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

## 2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

## 3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children still attending school and those at home.

The reporting procedure for any safeguarding concerns is as outlined in our current safeguarding policy.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

## 4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

Staff have access by email to the safeguarding team when students are on site. The personal mobile numbers of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Headteacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead have been made available to all staff for an immediate response to any safeguarding

concerns. The site leader in school will provide immediate support to any staff or students in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where necessary.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team are informed each day of the attendance of the vulnerable students in school. In addition, the site leader will prioritise and refer on any requests for information from Social Care and partner agencies to ensure a prompt response and information sharing.

## **5. Working with other agencies**

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our local safeguarding partners
- The local authority about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

The following guidance is currently in place: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/working-arrangements-during-covid-19>

## **6. Monitoring attendance**

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn't attend, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by making a first day absence telephone call to establish the reason for the absence.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We will continue to work with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

## **7. Peer-on-peer abuse**

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about both children attending school and those at home. The procedures outlined in the current child protection policy will be followed in order to complete investigations, provide support to the victim and perpetrator, and consider thresholds for referral.

## **8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer**

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely. There is no change to current school procedures.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

## **9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns**

We have the option to offer places in school to students who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this. Any decisions on offering placements to these students will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and will be informed by staffing levels and advice from Public Health England on following social distancing guidelines. This cohort may include supported students with level 3 input, students who have been previously looked after (PLAC) or children who are at risk of meeting the child protection threshold without additional support.

If these students will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

## **10. Contact plans**

We have contact plans for students with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or
- They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

Each student has an individual plan which sets out:

- How often the school will make contact – this will be once a week for the majority of students, and twice weekly for those families who are identified as needing more support or are at greater risk.
- Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
- How staff will make contact – this will be primarily over the phone

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them on a weekly basis.

If we can't make contact, we will inform the relevant Social Worker for an escalated response. In cases where there is an immediate concern, contact would be made with the police for an urgent welfare check.

Wirral Social Care are working from revised guidance on 'Interim Case Management Guidance which was shared with schools in April 2020. Cases have been risk assessed and 'RAG' rated to inform the level of response. School will collaborate with Social Workers to inform these ongoing risk assessments and share information.

## **11. Safeguarding all children**

Staff are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also

safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line with normal school procedures. For children at home, the pastoral staff are completing a programme of welfare telephone calls and following up on any issues. All information is shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for review. Where staff are struggling to make contact, concerns are referred to the Local Authority Attendance team for support from the Attendance Officer. The contact details of key staff are on the website to enable families to make contact for support with any issues.

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support pupils' mental health. Families are signposted to the Wirral Coronavirus helpline at 0151 666 5050.

## **12. Online safety**

### **12.1 In school**

Advice on online safety for both parents and students has been provided by the Local Authority and is published on the school website.

### **12.2 Outside school**

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing safeguarding policy and acceptable use of IT policy.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too using the school website.

### **12.3 Working with parents and carers**

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online using the Wirral Local Authority advice.

## **13. Mental health**

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. The pastoral team are available for telephone calls for any students that need additional support, and staff are signposting families to kooth.com and the Wirral mental health phone line on **0300 303 3972** for 24/7 urgent mental health support.

When setting expectations for students learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

## **14. Staff recruitment, training and induction**

### **14.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers**

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

### **14.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools**

This is not applicable currently.

### **14.3 Safeguarding induction and training**

We will make sure staff are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

### **14.4 Keeping records of who's on site**

We will keep a record of which staff are on site each day.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

## **15. Children attending other settings**

This is not applicable currently.

## **16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 4 weeks by Lyndsey Weekes, Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## **17. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Online safety policy