

## **Safeguarding Policy – Addendum – November 2020**

This addendum has been written in response to DfE guidance issued on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March in relation to school closures due to the Covid 19 Outbreak.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

First and foremost, we must adhere to **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020**.

### **Priorities for schools**

- Keeping children safe
- Continue to report any safeguarding concerns immediately using existing systems
- DSL/DDSL should be available – could be phone or possible online eg video call. If there is no trained person on site due to staff restrictions, a member of the SLT should take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. All staff should know who the available DSL/DDSL is each day and how they can be contacted. If there is a DSL/DDSL whose training has expired, they should continue in the role and be regarded as trained.
- Continue to consider online risks and how to protect children online (in school and at home)
- Welcome children back with a wider re-opening and monitor any potential increase of incidents of concern.

This addendum complements the existing Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy but takes into account how we might deal with incidents during these extraordinary circumstances.

### **Supporting Vulnerable Children**

The DfE have defined vulnerable children as those SEND children with an EHCP and those children with a social worker (including LAC children).

Places at school are provided for the children. Where those children are not attending school, we will call the families at least once a week to check in with them. If parents do not answer the calls, we will send an email requesting that they do and inform the social workers so they can make safety checks too. Should it be deemed necessary we will make a call to Early Help.

Staff will not be expected to undertake a home visit during this school closure period. Normal protocol would be for staff to undertake visits in pairs and this would leave the school vulnerable if we are working on a skeleton staff. It could also put those staff members (or the families of said vulnerable children) at risk of transmission of the disease. This is in line with current government advice.

Risk assessments will be completed for vulnerable pupils where necessary. As the wider re-opening of the school begins we will need to ensure all staff are vigilant for a potential increase in concerns about the safety of some individuals.

### **Attendance & Absence**

Where we are expecting a child but they do not turn up to school, we will follow the usual protocol of calling contacts to check on their welfare. Should we not be able to make contact, we will make contact in the first instance with the child's social worker if they have one and may consider making contact with the police to conduct a welfare check.

- Children will be expected to attend school unless a special arrangement is agreed. The school's standard procedures will be applied in the case of absence.
- Where a parent or carer indicates that they intend to electively home educate because of concerns related to COVID-19, before removing the child from the school roll, a meeting will be arranged involving the parent / carer, the local authority Inclusion Service and any other key professional eg social worker. All the options will be explored in order that the parents fully understand what is involved and so that the best interests of each individual child can be carefully considered before making a final decision. This is particularly important where vulnerable children, children with a social worker, and those at greatest risk of harm are involved. Where an EHCP is in place for the child the local authority will be asked to give consent to Elective Home Education before removing the child from the school roll.

### **Isolation**

- If the DSL and all other trained Deputy DSLs are isolating away from school, where possible, they will continue to be available to support and advise staff with safeguarding concerns. In this scenario, or where a DSL or Deputy is not available, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be designated to respond on site to safeguarding concerns. Staff will continue to report all safeguarding concerns in the usual way (including allegations and safeguarding concerns about adults working in school) and be thoroughly briefed about any changes that are required – eg where the DSL or headteacher may be isolating at home.
- Where a child known to social care is required to isolate at home, the DSL will immediately inform the social care worker allocated to the case.
- Parents/carers of vulnerable children who are asked to isolate at home will be regularly contacted by school staff. Where parents or carers do not respond to calls or visits, a risk assessment will be completed and a referral to Children's Services considered.

### **Mental Health**

- There may be a greater prevalence of mental health concerns when children return to school following a period of isolating at home. Staff will be briefed about this and time will be made available to the DSL or other relevant staff to support children as required.

### **Sharing of Information**

As our school intends to remain open, there should be no need to share information with other schools. In the unlikely event that we need to close fully, appropriate information will be shared with the headteacher/DSL/CEO of the umbrella locality trust we would be working with. Should we offer places to children from other schools, we will make contact with the DSL to request to share appropriate information.

All staff have been reminded of the necessity of reporting any concerns especially around the areas of domestic violence and possible mental health, including as children return to school. Safeguarding reminders have been included on the parent newsletters.

### **Remote Learning & Online Safety**

Staff will only use the online platforms that have already been agreed (on school devices). They will still adhere to the normal code of conduct (as noted in the LA Guide to Safer Working Practice Addendum April 2020). Staff will report any concerns from contact from pupils on CPOMS.

The online safety of children who may be learning remotely at home will be considered and any necessary adjustments made to networks and school devices used for this purpose. Children will be taught how to stay safe online when they are learning remotely.

### **Safeguarding Induction**

Should we need to utilise staff from other settings, they will be inducted using the Highgate Staff Handbook which details all safeguarding procedures. Should we need to recruit new staff or volunteers, we will continue to follow existing safer recruitment procedures.

### **DSL Availability / Concerns about other adults**

The DSL for Highgate is Troy Jenkinson (who is also the appointed Covid-19 DSL). The Deputy DSLs for Highgate are Carole O’Leary and Jim Hodder. Where possible one of these people will be on site. If this is not possible, one of these named people will be contactable by telephone. Whichever senior person on site at the time will be able to contact a DSL/DDSL in an emergency. The named governor for Safeguarding is Dr Jason Fitchett and the Deputy named governor for Safeguarding is Denise Taylor.

In the case of concerns about other adults working with children, the same procedures should be adhered to (in that this should be reported as soon as is reasonably possible to the headteacher ([headteacher@highgate.leics.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@highgate.leics.sch.uk)) or (in the case of the headteacher themselves) the chair of governors ([gbrowngov@highgate.leics.sch.uk](mailto:gbrowngov@highgate.leics.sch.uk))).

The Single Central Record will be updated as necessary to reflect any individuals who come to work at Highgate from another school, should this need arise.

### **Reporting & Recording**

All staff have access to CPOMS and as such may record as normal any incidents (including peer on peer abuse). The Single Central Record will be maintained as usual by the DDSL.

### **Online Support**

Children have been taught how to use online facilities such as Purple Mash and Class Dojo. They may contact their class teacher using these facilities. Should children raise any concerns, staff should record these on CPOMS in the usual manner.

### **Children with a Social Worker**

The expectation is that these children will attend school unless it has been decided in consultation with the social worker and the family that it is not in the best interests of the child.

### **Safer Recruitment**

Though interviews may be conducted remotely, we will still undertake all safer recruitment procedures and checks. The Single Central Record will be updated and include details of any staff who may be engaged in teaching and learning from home (including any potential catch up tutors).

Written by T. Jenkinson

March 2020.

Reviewed June 2020 and November 2020

To be reviewed as necessary during the Covid 19 Crisis.