



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at The Firs Lower School

Temporary Appendix to The Firs Lower School Child Protection Policy - 21/4/20
Based on CBC Model Addendum

1. 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.

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.

This appendix does not replace the schools Child Protection policy and should be read in conjunction with the main policy.

Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole school approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

Key safeguarding contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Head DSL / ST	Adam Campbell	07710 418931	adam.campbell@firslower.org
SENCO DDSL / ST	Allison Brady	07976 248522	allison.brady@firslower.org
Assistant Head DDSL / ST	Kerry Mercer	07967 970861	kerry.mercer@firslower.org
Office Manager DDSL / ST	Sue A'Court	07884 232658	sue.acourt@firslower.org

Additional safeguarding contact

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Pastoral Care Assistant / ST	Ganine Hurrell	07963 936125	ganine.hurrell@firslower.org

Safeguarding partners

With effect from Monday 23rd March 2020, we will be convening **Virtual Initial and Review Child Protection case conferences**. All professionals must submit reports to the chair and, wherever possible, be available for conference calls or a video call via Microsoft teams. The Conference and Review Service will contact us prior to the conference and provide us with the details as to how each conference will take place and the details on how to join.

On the exceptional occasions that professional attendance at the conference is not quorate, the child protection chair will determine whether a child should be subject to a Child

Protection plan based on all of the information provided. This approach will enable Initial and Review case conferences to take place in line with the Council guidance regarding Covid-19.

Vulnerable children

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.

Those who have a social 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 a child 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 should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

The school Safeguarding Team, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies, know who the most vulnerable children are. The school will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support where deemed necessary.

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. The staff member responsible for this is the SENDco Allison Brady.

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/carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the school will discuss the reasons for this directly with the parent. The school will share the names of those attending with allocated social workers to discuss their views on attendance/non-attendance. The school will put in place measures to ensure there is regular contact with non-attending children, this contact should be recorded, and information shared as appropriate.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the school or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer, following the advice set out by Public Health England.

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

Attendance monitoring

The school does not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

The school and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. **The school will follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.** All children, with an allocated social worker, will be contacted by a member of the Safeguarding Team. A DSL or DDSL will update social workers of any changes.

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 discontinues, the school will notify their social worker.

Ideally, the DSL or a 'DDSL' will be on the school site. Where this is not possible, the DSL or a 'DDSL' will be available to be contacted via phone or online video. Where a The DSL or a DDSL is not on site a teacher will be responsible for coordinating safeguarding on site, which will include accessing child protection files.

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of who is responsible for safeguarding and how to speak to them.

The DSL and Safeguarding Team will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Whilst schools must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR, this does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. However, schools must be mindful of how this information is shared. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection Policy and Firs Safeguarding Guidance.

Staff must report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children, they should continue to follow the school policy.

Safeguarding Training and induction

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or DDSL) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy).

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new

local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This may be conducted remotely.

HUB SCHOOL

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to a hub school, the school 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, DBS number, date the check was undertaken and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing safeguarding disciplinary investigations relating to that individual

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the school's child protection policy, safeguarding guidance document and confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

HOME SCHOOL PROVISION

The home school must ensure that where a vulnerable child attends a cluster/hub school they must consider the following actions

- The home school will ensure that any change of school for looked-after children will be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child.
- The home school will ensure that they provide relevant information to the hub school such as the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them.

As a minimum the hub school should, as appropriate, have access to a child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

The school should ensure that this ideally happens before a child is transferred to the hub school and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs coordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, **senior leaders should take responsibility**.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the school will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

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

The school is not currently using volunteers, but in the event that any volunteer worked in school during this period of partial closure, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. **Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or 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.

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

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing 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 or college, 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.

Online safety in schools and colleges

The school 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.

Children and online safety away from school and college

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 Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Supporting children not in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students

Where the ST identifies that a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive support in school, the Team will ensure that a plan is in place for that child to be contacted regularly by the SENDco or Pastoral Care Assistant.

Supporting children in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The school will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings 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.

Domestic Abuse

Home school/ Supporting children not in school

Where a child is known to be experiencing domestic abuse at home or a disclosure is made it is important that children and their parents and carers are asked directly about whether any further incidents have taken place and how safe they are feeling at home.

Where there is escalation of abuse or any incidents of physical assault the child's social worker should be notified or a where they are not known a referral will be made to the Children's Safeguarding Hub. A DASH risk assessment should be completed with the victim to assess the level of risk and, where appropriate a referral made to MARAC. Further guidance an information for this can be found here; <https://bedsdv.org.uk/marac/>

It is important that families experiencing domestic abuse are signposted to appropriate support services throughout the lockdown period. These include but are not limited to;

A safety planning aid to work through with victims from Safelives;

<https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safety%20planning%20guide.%20victims%20and%20survivors.%20COVID-19.pdf>

The Hestia Bright Sky app contains information about support services for victims of domestic abuse that can be 'hidden' under a weather app on their mobile phone.

Women's Aid are currently offering an instant messaging service for those experiencing domestic abuse at home <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

The FORTIS project is part of SORTED and offers support to young people who have lived experience of domestic abuse/unhealthy relationships. They are currently offering virtual support online. Links and numbers are <https://www.sortedbedfordshire.org.uk/> 01582 674442

<http://thehideout.org.uk/young-people/home/> is an online space to help children and young people understand domestic abuse and how to take action



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COVID-19 Safeguarding & Child Protection



For those who are exhibiting harmful behaviours they can be signposted to [Respect](#) which offers information, advice and support to perpetrators of abuse call us for information and advice on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000), email help@nspcc.org.uk or fill in our [online form](#)

Chat online – Respect have a [webchat service](#) available on Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-4pm.

For professionals who need more information or guidance on domestic abuse and it's impact;

NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/>
NSPCC <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools>

Peer on Peer Abuse

The school recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where the school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Child Protection Policy.

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

PEER ON PEER ABUSE - HUB SCHOOLS (where appropriate)

The school will ensure that pupils are socialising with children in an appropriate age range whilst on the school site.

Concerns and actions will be recorded, and appropriate referrals made.