

# Annex to Child Protection Policy

## COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

### The current school position and local advice

The school and boarding provision remain open and we have a DSL or Deputy DSL onsite at all times. We are following Somerset Local Authority and Department of Education COVID-19 advice and this is reviewed daily by the Headteacher and DSL and changes made in our procedures as required.

### Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead : **Clare Wilson (07701303992)** [CWilson@sexeyes.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:CWilson@sexeyes.somerset.sch.uk)

The Deputy DSL : **Helen Cullen (07955856587)** [HCullen@sexeyes.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:HCullen@sexeyes.somerset.sch.uk)

The school's approach ensures the DSL or Deputy DSL is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible the DSL or Deputy DSL will be contactable and the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will email all staff by 9am to advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role together with contact details for the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting children's services are:

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure. As set out in the Safeguarding Handbook.

## Identifying and supporting vulnerability

Sexey's School recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect mental health and safety of pupils and their parents and carers.

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children.

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children – Phil Clackson to make contact weekly with Carers, student to be contacted weekly by member of the Pastoral Support Team
- Previously Looked After Children – Student to be contacted weekly by member of the Pastoral Support Team.
- Children subject to a child protection plan – Weekly planned liaison in addition to as needed by DSL with Social worker, weekly contact with Parent and student by member of Pastoral Support Team. Student voice to be heard by a member of staff each week.
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker or – Weekly planned liaison in addition to as needed by DSL with Social worker, weekly contact with Parent/Carer and student by member of Pastoral Support Team. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Children with an EHCP – Weekly contact from member of the SEND TA team with student to offer support with remote learning. Named key worker in place.
- Children supported By CAMHS – weekly contact by Pastoral Team.
- Children on the edge of social care or who are supported by a Level 3 agency involvement or pending allocation of a social worker – Student to be contacted weekly by member of the Pastoral Support Team. Where required these children will be offered a place at school (or another school by arrangement).
- Pupil Premium Student – weekly contact by Pupil Premium Co-ordinator
- Free School Meals – Vouchers or food boxes provided
- Other children the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required and if at home will access weekly contact via email or phone by member of the Pastoral Support Team.

Where appropriate individual support plans will be shared with other agencies involved in each students care, including their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Looked After and previously Looked After Children, families supported by PFSA, FIS, School Nursing Team and CAMHS.

In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school.

- Children of key workers who may attend school – weekly email to see what their plans are around attendance for the week ahead, remote learning, in school support when they attend.
- Children at home – remote working, weekly email and contact from HOY as needed.

All Plans will be reviewed at the end of the initial 2 week period and then monthly thereafter.

The school will share relevant safeguarding messages in the end of week emails, on its website and social media pages and in newsletters.

All staff have an out of office message with clear links to support and advice for young people and their families.

## Holiday arrangements

Sexey's School is continuing to provide places for Boarders whose Parents are Key Workers or who are "trapped" due to closure of boarders between countries over holiday periods.

## Attendance

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#). Parents are asked weekly to identify their requirements for the following week. Where a child is expected and does not arrive the school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (Skype, FaceTime, through a relative etc) but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

The school will also follow the attendance procedure if contact proves impossible with children at home.

## Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, [poverty](#), and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both [children](#) and their [parents and carers](#), informing the DSL about any concerns. Staff will log all concerns on MyConcern and this will be triaged daily by the DSL and DDSL.

## Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the [signs of peer-on-peer abuse](#), including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

We also address the issue of peer-on-peer abuse in our remote learning curriculum. Students are encouraged to report this to their Head of Year who will liaise with Assistant Head Pastoral and DSL.

## Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of [cyberbullying](#) and [other risks online](#) and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure [appropriate filters and monitors are in place](#)
- Our governing body will [review arrangements](#) to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on safe remote learning and guidance for [safer working practice](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium.
- Students and Parents have been issued with the latest ESafety advice.
- Staff have been provided with advice on keeping themselves safe from allegations.

- the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Staff have read the [20 safeguarding considerations for livestreaming](#) prior to delivering any livestreamed sessions
- When teaching or providing pastoral support on a 1:1 basis, implement appropriate strategies which will mitigate safeguarding risks such as: recording meetings/lessons; conduct lessons with another member of staff in the group/Team or able to drop into the lesson/meeting; make parents aware of the meeting.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#).
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
  - [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
  - [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
  - [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

## Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the Head Teacher.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

## New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, 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 member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a [written risk assessment](#) to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our safeguarding procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- The school will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with [DBS guidance](#).
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by Sandra Lewis of who is working in the school each day.

## New children at the school

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on January 2021 and is available on the school website.