Covid-19 Safeguarding Policy

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes made:
0.1	April 2020	Lauren Hirst	

St Bede C of E Primary Academy

COVID-19: Interim *additional* arrangements for Child Protection and Safeguarding:

Policy, Procedures & Guidance

Rational

From 20th March 2020, parents/carers 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 - who absolutely need to attend. Schools and all childcare providers were also asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents/carers are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. This addition to St. Bede Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy sets out the arrangements specific to our responses during the Covid-19 emergency situation. We recognise that this is a fast-moving situation. This document sets out overall expectations.

The current situation potentially presents an increased risk to children and vulnerable adults. Organisations such as the NSPCC and The Children's Society have highlighted the potential risks for children whose homes are not safe places. Contacts to Childline have significantly increased in recent weeks.

The arrangements set out here are *in addition* to the normal safeguarding and child protection policy. It is important that, as far as possible, we continue to adhere to the good practice set out in the full policy.

Key contacts

Lauren Hirst (DSL) – working from home – contact through CPOMS, email or on 07818565772
Rochelle Connor (Deputy DSL) – working from home – contact through CPOMS, email or on 07891084222
SMT on site will act as DSL on site if needed so approach member of SMT in that day.
Rebecca O'Brien - Contact through CPOMS or email.
Stephanie Devlin - Contact through CPOMS or email.
Hayley Edgington - Contact through CPOMS or email.

Local contacts (e.g. the LADO or social care 'front door') may have changed the direct numbers given that people are working from home – check this and make sure it is accurately recorded. Ring R and A to ask for any particular social workers number if needed.

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 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 parents/carers and other partners, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or 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. Indeed, for some, this may be the safest and most comfortable place for them. Eligibility for free school meals should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We 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.

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 school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent/carer. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, school and/or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school but even where it is judged this is not appropriate, we will keep in regular contact.

Attendance monitoring
Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Working with social care staff, we will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. We will follow up on any pupil that we were expecting to attend who does not. We will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend. To support the above we will 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, we will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead
An on site DSL would be the preferred model. As the school closures continue, this may not be possible. In all cases, however, the people working on site need to know how to contact the DSL and/or Deputy at all times. When the DSL or Deputy is not on site, the member of SMT in overall charge of the provision for that day will assume day-to-day safeguarding responsibilities and communicate with DSL and/or Deputy.

The DSL will continue to maintain good contact with children's social care and other partner agencies. Using remote access they will contribute to relevant multi-agency discussions such as strategy meetings and reviews.

Personal Education Plans for children who are looked after will need to be considered and a discussion held with heads of the local virtual schools to see what would be most useful in supporting children and young people.

Reporting a concern
The process of reporting concerns about a child or an adult are unchanged. Processes set out in the full policy apply. Where school closure arrangements present any barriers to the reporting of concerns, **do not delay. If you are unable to access normal online reporting systems whilst working remotely, make a careful, thorough, factual note of the concerns.** Emergencies need to be reported to the police in the same way as normal.

Safeguarding training and induction for staff and those involved in governance

Safeguarding training other than that which can be completed online will not take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (even if they miss their refresher training.)

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training. The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. It is worth reminding staff of any additional risks associated with school closure.

Where new staff are recruited, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. 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 DBS portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:
- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

When new staff arrive, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's safeguarding and child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

During times of emergency measures there are people who seek to exploit any gaps or relaxation in procedures. **It is essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.**

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes set out in our policies including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE). Our Safer Recruitment policy can be found on the Trust's website.

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. Where we are deploying volunteers, 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.** We 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. We 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 and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, we will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE and in accordance with the process detailed on page 11 of the Bright Futures' 'Safer and Fair Recruitment' policy.

Online safety in schools

The increased use of online resources means that eSafety is more important than ever. All the usual policies governing safety online should be implemented at all times. It may well also be timely to remind students of the potential for them to be exploited at this time. There are a large number of scams being enacted on various social media platforms, exploiting the fact that unscrupulous people know that children and young people are spending more time than ever accessing materials online

Whenever staff are interacting with children either face to face or by virtual means, they should continue to be alert for signs of safeguarding concerns. These should be reported in the usual manner.

Online teaching and signposting to online materials/resources
Any teaching conducted virtually should adhere to the same high professional standards expected in all other contexts. We will need to ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Andrew Hall, safeguarding consultant, has offered the advice (below) for online lessons, especially if live webcams are used. **As a point if principle, if there is no established custom and practice for using direct online (live) teaching, now is not a good time to start it.** It is much better for students to access approved online resources or to have links to resources that the school has pre-recorded
Specific considerations if online (live):
• No 1:1s, groups only
• Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
• Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
• The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
• Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
• Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
• Staff must only use approved platforms to communicate with pupils
• Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school
We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children and young people. Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. Details of this plan must be recorded on the school's systems, as should a record of contact have made. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact or any approved 'doorstep' visit.

We will work closely with all stakeholders and partner agencies to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Staff need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. Where bespoke support is provided for a child it will be recorded on the school's usual systems.

Supporting children in school
We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Where bespoke support is provided for a child it will be recorded on the school's usual systems. Our schools will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The person in charge will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety.

We 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.

Peer on Peer Abuse
We recognise that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and for supporting victims. Where a 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 of the Safeguarding and

Child Protection Policy. The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded on the school's systems and appropriate referrals made.

Useful links
Safeguarding network advice on COVID-19 implications: https://safeguarding.network/covid-19/

NSPCC Home Page: HERE

Children's Commissioner COVID-19 advice: COMMISIONER