

# Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum



Lavington Park Federation  
2020

Approved by: Mrs Helen Martin,  
Head Teacher  
Full Governing Body

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## Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mrs Helen Martin	Via Graffham Office Manager, Mrs Kathie Gyles <a href="mailto:office@graffhaminfant.org.uk">office@graffhaminfant.org.uk</a> 07540 433170
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Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Claire Coles	0330 222 6450 (9am-5pm) LADO@westsussex.gov.uk
MASH WSCC		01403 229900 (Out of Hours - 0330 222 6664) <a href="mailto:MASH@westsussex.gov.uk">MASH@westsussex.gov.uk</a> Referral forms: <u>Adults</u> <a href="https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/raiseaconcernaboutanadult">https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/raiseaconcernaboutanadult</a> <u>Children</u> <a href="https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/raiseaconcernaboutachild">https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/raiseaconcernaboutachild</a>
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## 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of government-enforced school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is based on a template developed by The Key, and includes all important elements of the model provided by West Sussex County Council.

The addendum sets out changes to (and reinforces key elements of) our existing Child Protection 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 the existing policy.

Reference is made below to 'vulnerable children'. 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 plan (EHCP).

**It should be noted that at the present time there are no children on roll at Lavington Park Federation who have a social worker, or whose family is working with Children's Social Care.**

**It should further be noted that our staff are in constant contact with families whose child holds an EHCP, and we are compliant with new guidelines set on 30 April 2020 in relation to statutory duty of provision in EHCPs. All such children on roll at Lavington Park Federation have been individually risk assessed against 'reasonable endeavours' guidance to reduce their vulnerability during the pandemic, maintaining individual provision to the very best of our abilities.**

## 2. Core safeguarding principles

We will have regard always 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 must 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 any children attending school and those at home.

As always, concerns should be discussed with the DSL in the first instance, without delay.

### **4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements**

We aim for our trained DSL or deputy DSL to be available for anybody to speak to at all times - and, in the case of either school being open for emergency childcare, present on the school site, wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

The Graffham School Office Manager (who is also the Safeguarding Governor) is in continuous contact with both the DSL and deputy DSL, and provides the quickest way of contacting either of these individuals.

If it is known in advance that neither the DSL or Deputy DSL will be available on any given day, all school staff, Governors and volunteers will be informed - with at least 24 hours notice - by email and text message as to who will be the key safeguarding contact that day, and how to contact them. This might be, for example, a trained DSL from another local school.

If there is any occasion when either school is open and neither the DSL or Deputy DSL is able to be physically on site, the most senior teacher on site will take responsibility for safeguarding. This individual will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or Deputy) to make sure they can:

- identify the most vulnerable children in school
- arrange for child protection files to be accessed, managed or updated, where necessary
- liaise with appropriate outside agencies if necessary.

### **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 review and update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (the latest guidance from WSSCP can be found here <https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/news-2/>)
- our Local Authority West Sussex County Council
- local police
- local NHS Trusts

We receive very regular email communications from both the DfE and WSCC's Director of Education & Skills; these are circulated to key members of our leadership team, and are read carefully for any important updates to safeguarding guidance.

## **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, without delay, by attempting to contact a responsible adult by whatever means we have available
- notify any outside agency currently working with the family, such as Early Help or Children's Social Care.

When or if our schools are open, we use the DfE's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We will always check with parents and carers of children attending to ensure our emergency contact records are fully up to date, and will request 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 - both about children attending school and those at home - immediately.

## **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.

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**

Our staff keep in regular contact with, and closely monitor the wellbeing of, any children or families who we believe may need additional support of any kind, at any time. We do this through Class Dojo, our remote learning app to which all our families are signed up, and through personal telephone contact.

A record of any contact and/or concerns is kept on a shared document to which all relevant members of staff contribute, overseen by the Head Teacher and DSL Mrs Helen Martin. This document includes a 'RAG' rating of all contacts, to highlight significant concerns where appropriate.

Note that whilst we maintain absolute adherence to the laws of data protection and GDPR, these do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

We have the option to offer places in school to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about; if this were deemed appropriate, we would work with parents/carers to do this

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

## **10. Contact plans**

We may develop contact plans for children about whom we have safeguarding concerns, for circumstances where:

- they won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and any outside agencies involved have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests), or
- they would be attending, but have to self-isolate.

Each child would have an individual plan setting out

- how often the school will make contact (this will be at least once a week)
- 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 - over the phone, doorstep visits, or a combination of both
- specific trigger points (for example, being unable to make contact at all within a given timeframe) that might prompt further action, and what that action would be.

## **11. Safeguarding all children**

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

All members of the school community 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 the procedures set out in section 3.

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

- not completing assigned work, or not logging on to school systems
- a lack of contact from children or families
- seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls.

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.

## **12. Online safety**

### **12.1 In school**

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

Our IT technicians are based off site but are always available during normal working hours to assist with any IT issues.

### **12.2 Outside school**

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing policies regarding staff behaviour, online safety and use of social media.

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 the reporting procedures set out in section 3 above.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have to our school staff, and will signpost them to other sources of support (such as Childline, UK Safer Internet Centre or CEOP) too.

### **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.

## **13. Mental health**

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current mental health support options to all pupils - including online / remote therapy sessions, in appropriate cases.

We will also regularly signpost all pupils, parents and staff to appropriate resources to support good mental health at this time.

At all times when setting expectations for pupils 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 anybody who works in our school is 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, in line with revised guidance from the DBS, though new staff must still present original documents when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and carry out risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who are not in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Under no circumstances will an individual who has not been checked (or is not a regular helper already checked and well known to us) be left unsupervised with children, or be allowed to work in regulated activity.

### **14.2 Safeguarding induction and training**

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of any variations and additions to our usual procedures and arrangements.

New staff and volunteers, including individuals who may be 'on loan' from other schools, will continue to receive (and be required to read) :

- a safeguarding induction, as appropriate
- a copy of our Children Protection Policy, and this addendum
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

### **14.3 Keeping records of who is on site**

When the school is open we will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and ensure that appropriate checks and/or risk assessments have been carried out for them. We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

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

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information that we hold.

Wherever possible, and before the child attends the alternative setting, our DSL (or Deputy DSL) and/or Inclusion Manager (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- the reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- the child's EHCP, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- details of any outside agencies working with the family.

## **16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy addendum will be reviewed when any key guidance from the WSSCP, WSCC or DfE is updated.

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

This document links to the following existing Lavington Park Federation policies and procedures:

- Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Medicines in School Policy
- Use of Force and Restraint Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Safe Touch Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Confidential Reporting / Whistleblowing Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy for staff
- Use of Photography and Video Policy