

Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Northampton School for Girls

Approved by:

Full
Governing
Board

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1st June
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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Abigail Boddy	aboddy@nsg.northants.sch.uk
Deputy DSLs	Cath Carré Carol Pichler Sarah Timms Jane MacDonald	ccarre@nsg.northants.sch.uk cpichler@nsg.northants.sch.uk stimms@nsg.northants.sch.uk jmacdonald@nsg.northants.sch.uk

Other contactable DSL(s) and/or deputy DSL(s):	Heads of Year are also DSL trained and can be contacted Julia Smallman is the DSL with responsibility for LAC children	To contact Heads of Year, please use the school email address: admin@nsg.northants.sch.uk jsmallman@nsg.northants.sch.uk
Headteacher	Cristina Taboada-Naya	c.taboada-naya@nsg.northants.sch.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)		LADOReferral@northamptonshire.gov.uk Designated Officer Administrator - 01604 364031
Chair of governors	Clare Bottle	cbottle@nsg.northants.sch.uk

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from the DfE and Northamptonshire local authority.

It sets out changes to our normal 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 that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal Child Protection Policy continues to apply. 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 (EHC) plan

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education¹.

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 should continue to 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 is 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 children still attending school and those at home.

¹ Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible; plus there is always at least one DSL trained member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on site every day. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum (page 2). If due to unplanned circumstances no member of the DSL is available on site, or if DSL support is needed outside of school opening hours, please use the remote contact numbers above

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed through the Shared Staff Rota (Google document) as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

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 continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our three local safeguarding partners
- The local authority -regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans
- The LADO and Children's Social Care regarding reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need.

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:

- Use the member of SLT on duty each day to follow up the non-attendance with the parent/carer; and
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to ensure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. This takes place through the online eligible families' registration scheme.

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 immediately on any concerns they have about both children attending school and those at home.

All concerns must be reported as usual. Investigations will take place remotely, over the phone where possible.

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 immediately on any concerns about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely. All concerns must be reported as usual. Following the advice and guidance of the LADO, investigations will take place remotely over the phone where possible.

We will continue referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) any adults who have harmed (or pose a risk of harm to) a child or vulnerable adult.

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 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

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 do raise safeguarding concerns. We will work with parents/carers to do this. For example, this could include children who have previously had a social worker, or who haven't met the threshold for a referral but where staff have raised concerns.

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

10. Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or
- They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

Each child has an individual plan setting out how often the school will make contact (at least once a week), including the following details:

- 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 —(this will be via phone call, doorstep visits, or a combination of both)

In addition, students identified by the school as "vulnerable" but who don't meet the DFE definitions will also have an individual contact plan.

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them weekly. If we can't make contact, we will take all necessary steps, for example contacting children's social care or the police.

11. Safeguarding all children

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

Staff and volunteers 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 above.

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

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No 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 operate appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in school to be monitored and managed daily by a member of the IT team.

12.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff IT Acceptable Use Policy which was reissued to staff at the start of the school closure. Staff are expected to abide by this policy in regard to teaching via Google Classrooms.

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 our reporting procedures as set out in Section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns to the school, and will actively direct them towards other sources of support.

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 - through advice and guidance shared via the school website
- 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 levels of support for pupil mental health to all students (for example through our contact system, remote mentoring and through the pastoral/tutor Google Classrooms). We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources, to support good mental health at this time.

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 adults and volunteers who work in our school are 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. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present original identity documents when they first arrive for work at our school.

We will continue to perform our usual checks on new volunteers, and undertake risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate security checks.

We will also use the DBS Update Service where 'on loan' staff have signed up to it to check for any new information.

14.3 Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our Child Protection Policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

14.4 Keeping records of who's on site

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

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.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (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 EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the child's social worker
- Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO cannot share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

As far as possible we will share this information before the child arrives; otherwise, as soon as possible afterwards.

16. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the three local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum we recommend every 3-4 weeks by Abigail Boddy. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

17. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child Protection Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy