Safeguarding During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

**[This appendix has been created in line with the DfE’s ‘Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers’ guidance. It meets our school’s circumstances, any local requirements and advice from the safeguarding partners.]**

**Statement of intent**

We understand that we face a time of great uncertainty and, as a school, we are doing all we can to provide clarity and safety to the school community. This appendix includes provisions which the school will have due regard for during the coronavirus pandemic. The information in this section is under constant review and is updated to reflect changes to government guidance as it is released.

# Key definitions

## For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will be utilised:

* **Children of keyworkers:** children of parents who work in the following industries:
	+ Health and social care, e.g. doctors and nurses
	+ Education and childcare, e.g. teachers and DSLs
	+ Local and national government, e.g. administrative occupations
	+ Food and essential goods retail, e.g. supermarket workers and grocers
	+ Public safety and national security, e.g. police and ministry of defence workers
	+ Transport, e.g. freight transport workers and train drivers
	+ Utilities, communication and financial services, e.g. bankers, oil workers, and telecommunications (999 and 111 critical services)
* **Vulnerable children:** those who have a social worker and those with EHC plans. Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the LA. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need.

During this uncertain period of time, here at Fens Primary School we will continue to adhere to, and follow, Government (including ‘Coronavirus (Covid-19) Safeguarding in Schools, Colleges and other Providers’) and Local Authority advice.

Hartlepool Borough Council - Children’s Hub, SEN team and LADO are all working as normal.

Staff will follow all usual procedures in relation to thresholds, reporting safeguarding concerns and making referrals.

Mechanisms (e.g. Skype meetings) have been put in place to ensure key meetings such as Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups can go ahead virtually.

Staff are aware of the lines of reporting within school, if they need to speak (DSL/DHT Chris Connor (in school all day Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings), DSL/AHT Craig Keen (in school Wednesday afternoon, all day Thursday and Friday), DSL/FSO Sam Pugh (working from home)).

DSL arrangements have been reviewed, and staff are clear about who they should speak to, or contact, if they have any concerns about a child. Any concerns are to be raised as normal, in line with school procedures.

During this period of time, health and safety requirements and safe staffing ratios will determine capacity to support children. The currently available provision will/may change if workforce capacity reduces. We are applying the social distancing criteria, in line with government guidance.

The way schools are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual; however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

* with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children will always continue to come first
* if anyone in school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
* a DSL or deputy will always be available
* unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce and/or gain access to children
* children will continue to be protected when they are online
* school will take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow school to ensure that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining our child protection policy

This revised child protection policy will reflect:

* any updated advice received from the local 3 safeguarding partners (HSSPC)
* any updated advice received from the local authority regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children’s social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need
* the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns
* DSL (and deputy) arrangements
* the continued importance for school staff to work with and support children’s social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
* peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools are operating in, a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform any revised approach)
* what staff should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns)
* any arrangements to support children the school or college are concerned about who do not meet the ‘vulnerable’ definition
* what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school safe, especially online, and how concerns about these children should be progressed
* how it is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

**Contact with Vulnerable Children during Covid-19**

School will remain open for all children who have a social worker (including those on either a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan). Parents and carers are encouraged to use school by Social Workers and school staff.

Any child who is on one of the above plans will be discussed by the Safeguarding Team and allocated a RAG rating (Red, Amber, Green). Telephone contact with family will then be carried out by Family Support Officer as follows:

Red - Telephone contact will be made with parents/carers and child at least three times per week.

Amber – Telephone contact will be made with parents/carers and child twice per week.

Green- Telephone contact will be made with parents/carers and child once per week.

RAG ratings are constantly reviewed and children can change rating if necessary.

A log of calls will be recorded.

All parents/carers have the mobile number of our Family Support Worker and they are able to use this number or the school’s telephone number should they require support. These numbers are available during normal working hours.

Social workers will be visiting children who are rated red and maintaining telephone contact with those rated amber and green. Where vulnerable children not in school, schools should let Jemma Nicolle know and she will maintain contact with social workers to ensure children are safe. Schools will be asked for a steer on vulnerable pupils not in school and will be asked to discuss concerns with the social worker to make informed decisions about what action, if necessary, is needed.

**Core Groups/Child Protection Meetings/LAC Meetings/PEPS Conferences/Child in Need**

School will continue to provide reports and attend all meetings relating to any child who is subject to any plan or who requires support for safeguarding reasons. All meetings are attended using video conferencing. Social Workers and the Children’s Hub are able to contact school where they will be able to speak to the DSL or be provided with the mobile number and an email address of a Deputy DSL.

# The role of the DSL and their deputies

## In the light of the current crisis, the school has additional measures in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its pupils – this approach is led by the DSL.

## During partial school closure, the DSL and their deputies are responsible for:

* Ensuring they or their deputies are available at all times, either in school or via telephone or online communication.
* Sharing their time and resources with other schools, where necessary.
* Being responsible for amending Appendix A (this section) in line with the continual changes to education policy released by the DfE and communicating all changes to staff and volunteers.
* Identifying vulnerable children and communicating additional safeguarding provisions to pupils and their families.
* Working with the VSH and wider LA to protect vulnerable children.
* Ensuring staff are aware of reporting channels for safeguarding concerns.
* Sharing their contact information with the school community.
* Ensuring there is a consistent approach to safeguarding children throughout the coronavirus pandemic.
* Continuing to maintain lines of communication between home and school so that any concerns can be reported, including reports of peer-on-peer abuse.
* Identifying a suitable member of the SLT to assume the role of temporary DSL should both themselves and their deputies become unable to work.
* Continuing to adhere to safer recruitment procedures.

## The DSL will report back to the governing board on all relevant safeguarding concerns experienced during partial school closure.

## The DSL will work with the local safeguarding partners to ensure pupils remain safe during partial school closure.

# Attendance

## The school will no longer use its regular attendance register to record attendance during partial school closure.

## The school will report to the DfE the number of pupils in school and whether they remain partially closed using [the online form](https://form.education.gov.uk/service/educational-setting-status). This form will be submitted by 12:00pm each weekday.

## The school will record and investigate any absences where it expected a child to attend school and did not.

## For LAC, any change will be organised and monitored by the VSH.

# Staff training and safeguarding induction

## The school have ensured that all existing school staff have read part one of ‘Keeping children safe in education’ (KCSIE) and are suitably trained in this policy and any local safeguarding arrangements.

## The school will continue to follow safer recruitment processes, in line with the relevant policy, when acquiring new staff.

## Anyone who has not undergone suitable DBS checks will not be left unattended with pupils.

## The school will report anyone to the TRA who they consider a safeguarding risk by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk – all referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered.

## The school will have a rota system which allows the Headteacher to be aware of who will be in school at any one given time.

## The school will keep a record of attendance for staff and pupils within school and any additional risk assessments made on staff in a secure file, e.g. the SCR.

Online safety and security

## All online programmes used will be checked by the school’s DPO and DSL to ensure they are reputable and GDPR compliant.

## Any online queries which require the ICT technician will be addressed over the phone or online as much as possible – face-to-face contact is kept to a minimum.

## The DSL will report back to the governing board how they are ensuring pupils remain safe online during partial school closure.

## Pupils will report any suspicious online activity they encounter to the DSL or Headteacher.

## Staff will adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct at all times if delivering education online.

## Staff will report concerns over a pupil’s safety online to the DSL.

## The school will collaborate with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of online safety.

# Mental health

## The school understands how the coronavirus pandemic can cause pupils and staff to feel anxious and concerned and will offer any essential support required to those in need.

## Pupils will be provided with different resources they can access to help them cope with their mental health.

## Face-to-face support will only be provided where necessary or unavoidable.

## The school will have due regard for the Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Policy when identifying early signs of mental health issues in pupils.

# Supporting pupils at home

## Lines of communication remain open for home to contact school regarding any safeguarding concerns.

## Pupils have been provided with online safety information.

## Pupils will be directed to practical online support, where they feel unsafe and require support outside of school.

## Parents are given a list of websites their child will be accessing during partial school closure.

HSSCP website contains up to date information for parents, carers, children and young people <https://www.hsscp.co.uk/>

# Peer-on-peer abuse

## The DSL will implement robust reporting procedures for peer-on-peer abuse during partial school closure and communicate these to all staff, pupils and parents, as appropriate.

## Reports made regarding peer-on-peer abuse will be risk assessed by the DSL on a case-by-case basis and, where required, investigated immediately and reported to the relevant authority, e.g. the police or CSCS where required.

## Both the alleged perpetrator and victim will be provided with support whilst the report is being investigated.

## Pupils will be provided with the contact details of relevant bodies who can provide support to them during this time, e.g. ChildLine.

## The DSL will keep the victim, the alleged perpetrator and their families up-to-date where necessary with details of the investigation, including the conclusion and how appeals can be made.

## Individuals will be given a copy of the school’s amended Complaints Procedures Policy to assist them with the appeals process.

## Communications will be made online or by telephone, unless face-to-face contact is unavoidable.

# Monitoring and review

## The DSL is responsible for continually monitoring DfE updates and updating this appendix in line with any government changes and guidance from the local safeguarding partners.

## Any changes to this appendix will be communicated to all staff, parents and relevant stakeholders.