

# Icknield High School

## COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection Addendum V4



Adopted on:  
Ratified by: Student Affairs Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

Addendum updates	
31 <sup>st</sup> March	V1
14 <sup>th</sup> May	V2
26 <sup>th</sup> May	V3
10 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	V4

## 1. Context

From Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for vulnerable children and those of workers critical to the COVID-19 response.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home, or those who are listed as vulnerable and have no access to an electronic device at home.

This addendum does not replace the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and should be read in conjunction with the main policy.

Schools should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole school approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

### Key safeguarding contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Deputy Head & DSL	Jacque Knighton	01582 576561	jknighton@icknield.beds.sch.uk
Assistant Headteacher & Deputy DSL	Graham Forbes	01582 576561	gforbes@icknield.beds.sch.uk

### Contingency safeguarding contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Headteacher	John Noble	01582 576561	jnoble@icknield.beds.sch.uk

### Safeguarding partners

With effect from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service within Luton will be convening **Virtual** Initial and Review Child Protection case conferences. All professionals must submit reports to the SQAS inbox and, wherever possible, be available for conference calls or any other telecommunication application that specialises in providing video calls. Where it is not possible to convene a virtual conference meeting the Child Protection Chair will determine whether a child should be subject to a Child Protection plan based on all of the information provided. This approach will enable Initial and Review case conferences to take place in line with the Council guidance regarding Covid-19.

### Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children are listed by definition as follows:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - other children and young people at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health
- Senior leaders, especially DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support
- School staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the COVID-19 period. Where there are concerns around disengagement and remote learning, the child's social worker should be notified.
- Contingency plans are in place for children who may not directly fall into the listed 'vulnerable group', but are children for whom the school has concern
- Icknield will accommodate children (where appropriate and where they cannot work safely at home) that are a child of a 'critical worker' to ensure they are able to work in response to Covid-19

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school 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.

Those who may be receiving support from external agencies, or are open to interventions such as Domestic Abuse Services, Channel Intervention/supports and Multi Agency Gang Panel service (this list is not exhaustive). In such circumstances, interim arrangements may be in place, and risk assessments will be undertaken as appropriate. Where a place is offered and the family do not wish to take this up, the circumstances for this will be explored by the most appropriate person involved with the family.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

The Senior leaders, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies know who the most vulnerable children are. The school will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support, when they cannot work safely at home.

The school 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. The staff member responsible for this is Jacquie Knighton.

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 the school will discuss the reasons for this directly with the parent. The school will share the names of those attending with allocated social workers to discuss their views on attendance/non-attendance. The school will put in place measures to ensure there is regular contact with non-attending children, this contact should be recorded and information shared as appropriate.

Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the school or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Children/families, who are shielding due to being defined as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) due to specified underlying health conditions (as per Government guidance), will not be in a position to attend school even if identified as vulnerable. Where this is the case, regular contact will be made to ensure the children/family receive appropriate educational support. This information will be shared with the assigned social worker if the family have one.

The school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including engagement with the schools remote offered if needed.(when they feel it is necessary)

### Attendance monitoring

#### Attendance

- School are not expected to complete their day-to-day attendance process to follow up on non-attendance during this specified period.
- School are using an daily online attendance form and this information is shared regularly with the local authority.
- School has agreed with families whether their children should be attending education provision – we will follow up on any child that they we are expecting to attend, who does not.

- School will follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children where they subsequently do not attend.
- School will offer places to children of critical workers, particularly where both parents are critical workers in response to COVID-19, in line with Government guidance, where they cannot work safely at home.
- School will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to 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, the school will notify their social worker.

The school will, when communicating with parents/carers, 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, the school will notify their social worker.

Ideally, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be on the school site. Where this is not possible, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video. Where a trained DSL is not on site a senior leader will be responsible for coordinating safeguarding on site, which will include accessing child protection files.

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of who is responsible for safeguarding and how to speak to them.

The DSL and safeguarding team will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Whilst schools must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR, this does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. However, schools must be mindful of how this information is shared. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children, they should continue to follow the school policy.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy).

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL should communicate with staff any new

local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. All school staff you have an understanding of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) as referenced in existing safeguarding policies.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This may be conducted remotely.

### **Online working practices**

For the period COVID-19, measures are in place DSL's and teaching staff will take due caution when conducting any form of virtual contact to the child, which may involve calling or video calling into the child's home.

DSL's and teaching staff will:

- Where possible, protect the identity and use of personal mobile numbers being used to contact children or families
- Ensure there is someone present within the room during the video call
- Any computers/devices used should be in appropriate areas for both child and staff, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.
- DSL's/teachers should log details/content of the contact and what type of device was used regarding contact made to the child. If the school are using personal devices to contact students for virtual contact a review of the user existing IT/user agreement should be explored.
- DSL's/teachers must not audio or video record the video call or share any content over social media.
- DSL's/teachers and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Should the child make a disclosure of any kind the same processes should be followed in regards to referral – please see **Reporting of Concern** for further information.

### **HOME SCHOOL**

The school will ensure that any change of school for looked-after children will be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The school will ensure that they provide relevant information to the hub school such as the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the hub school should, as appropriate, have access to a child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). The school should ensure that this ideally happens before a child is transferred to the hub school and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs coordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, senior leaders should take responsibility.



### **Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the school will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

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 the school are using 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.

The school 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.

The school 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](mailto: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 or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online safety in schools and colleges**

The school will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **Children and online safety away from school and college**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

### **Keeping children safe online**

Measures taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 mean most children will be at home and spending increasing amounts of time online. There is a risk that extremists may exploit this situation by sharing harmful misinformation and conspiracy theories and targeting vulnerable children and young people directly.

Counter-Terrorism Police have produced guidance for parents on some of these risks and how to seek further support, which can be found on the Let's Talk About It website.

If you come across online material promoting terrorism or extremism this can still be reported using the online tool.

The Department for Education's safeguarding guidance also includes advice and guidance on online harms that we encourage settings to share with parents. In addition, guidance for parents has been published which includes resources to help keep children safe online:

- NSPCC
- London Grid for Learning (LGFL)
- Parentzone
- Internet Matters
- Shout Out UK
- National Education Union

### **Extremist Narratives in Communities**

The impact of COVID-19 on communities may give individuals and extremist organisations opportunities to promote hateful or harmful narratives. In some cases, education leaders or designated safeguarding leads may be aware of graffiti, leafleting and stickering that is of an extremist nature that children and young people may be exposed to. Education settings should consider the impact this material may have and encourage pupils to share any concerns if they feel worried, upset or anxious.

You can report hate crime here <https://www.report-it.org.uk/home>

### **Further support**

If you are experiencing any difficulties obtaining advice and guidance or have concerns about the management of any children and young people receiving Channel support, please email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk).

The Department has also set up a helpline for queries about coronavirus in any education setting: 0800 046 8687 (Monday to Friday from 8am – 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm) – email [dfe.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:dfe.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

### **Mental health**

Staff will take due regard to mental health and the impact of negative experiences such as distressing life events during the lockdown/partial closure period.

Staff and DSL's will ensure that the appropriate support is in place for students in the current circumstances in school (virtually for those students that are not attending). Staff and DSL's should be aware of the impact the current circumstances may have on the mental health of those students (and parents) who are continuing to work from home.

### **Supporting children not in school**

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students



Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive support in school, they should ensure that a plan is in place for that child or young person.

### **Supporting children in school**

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The school 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, bubbles and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19 during the period of partial closure.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

The school recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where the 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 Child Protection Policy. School will apply appropriate referral processes, including completion of a Multi-Agency Submission form should information display as contextual risk.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

### **PEER ON PEER ABUSE - HUB SCHOOLS (where appropriate)**

The school will ensure that students are socialising with appropriate age ranged children whilst on the school site.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.