

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE FOR Katherine Semar schools SCHOOL

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS on 22nd May 2020.
(This may be done as a Chair action)

	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:	Julie Puxley	Via school office
DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:	Kathie Moy Rob Aiken Anthony Hull	01799 500835

During this period of closure, if it is not possible to always have a Designated Lead (or Deputy) on school site, there will always be access to a Designated Lead or Deputy (Level 3 trained), either from our school, or another school or from the Local Authority

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR KATHERINE SEMAR SCHOOL, DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID-19

1. Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and, in conjunction with other agencies, they play a vital role in safeguarding children during the current emergency arrangements. This policy is an addition to our existing Child Protection Policy and has been produced to cover arrangements in place during school closure due to Covid-19.

This Child Protection policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- the current Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- the school Behaviour policy;
- the school Staff Behaviour policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct);
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (*everyone under the age of 18*) is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2. Current context / statutory framework

Schools have been instructed to close, although are required to offer a place to [vulnerable children](#) and children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response. 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend provision, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want their child to attend, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will explore (with the social worker) the reasons for this and to agree an appropriate plan for that child.

We obviously want to support all our children during this time and will consider making a place available to other children with vulnerabilities, although this will be in discussion with other professionals involved and based on a risk assessment process.

3. Safeguarding procedures during the closure period

Clearly, we are working very differently during this period of closure. However, the principles within our existing Child Protection Policy still apply, as does the duty on all staff to safeguard children.

We have assessed the needs of all our pupils and put in place plans to support them and their families during this period of closure. These plans include an education offer (details of which have been shared separately with parents for their child) and arrangements to support pupils with their safety and wellbeing. These plans may include actions and interventions from other agencies, as we continue to work with partners to provide an appropriate level of support.

Welfare checks (method and frequency)

Mrs Moy is our school link to families that in pre -COVID times, we offered school based additional support for their child and/ or for the parent via school-based services or they were referred to and/or receiving support from other agencies. This group include children with EHC plans.

This is a wider group than the government and local authority definition of vulnerable families as it extends to families we know well and who are experiencing difficulties, but would not reach the government threshold of vulnerable family

Both the school offices direct enquires from multiagency partners and parents and carers to Mrs Moy, who continues to work as our link in this area.

Class teachers check they have weekly contact with all families and then they report to their designated member of SLT if they cannot contact a family Socially distanced home visits by two members of staff will be conducted if we are unduly concerned.

Welfare checks include

- having a conversation with parents and carers about how things are going based on knowledge of the child and family.
- answering any welfare questions and any other queries i.e.: how to apply for free school meals, accessing the Uttlesford foodbank,
- signposting parents to other agencies that can help i.e.: the school nurse service
- answering any questions about schoolwork set and discussing ways in which to support children at home.ie: for some children, Mrs Moy helps to reasonably adjust work set based on her assessment of the child's needs and in their current circumstances.
- Other members of staff may support this work, but Mrs Moy leads on this and is the link and keeps a weekly record on welfare support.

Risk assessment

Katherine Semar schools consider any child or family that may need welfare support through discussions based on the factual information we have. We continue to refer to the Essex .Safeguarding materials (see Pre – COVID 19 Child Protection policy).

Children and families can be moved on to the Welfare list depending on new information at any time. This may be due to a change in their circumstances and/or a request made by a family or member of staff with a concern or Mrs Moy's through work with a multi-agency partner such as the school nurse team.

Welfare checks mean that families are contacted at least once a week and if required, more than once a week. Families have a direct line telephone number to call Mrs Moy.

During COVID 19 period, Mrs Moy (Or in her absence another member of the safeguarding team) produce a weekly report showing contact with families. This report is sent to all safeguarding team members.

Risk assessment are carried out by the safeguarding team.

Public Health England, states all children with significant underlying medical conditions have been asked to stay at home from March 23rd 2020 onwards for a period of 12 weeks.

We are aware, that in some settings where children and young people have the most complex needs, a risk assessment will be necessary to make such decisions about where the child is safer at home or at school during this period and note that It is likely that in most cases education provision leaders and parent(s)/ carer(s) will be in agreement about where the child is safer, therefore removing the need to complete a written risk assessment.

Where there is **not** agreement, it is under these circumstances we will complete a risk assessment with appropriate medical professionals.

See appendix - COVID-19 Risk Assessment Template for Schools and settings: Is a specific pupil or student safer at the education provision or at home?

Making plans for vulnerable children

For vulnerable children, existing plans will be reviewed in conjunction with other relevant agencies and updated to ensure they reflect the current situation and meet need. Vulnerable children will be risk assessed with other professionals to decide whether children will be safer at home or in school and decisions will be made on individual cases. The school will work with the Virtual School Headteacher to support our children in care.

Children with an EHC plan will be assessed in consultation with the local authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. If it is felt they should remain at home, a plan will be agreed and this could include carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. It is recognised that many children with EHC plans can safely remain at home. During the closure period we will work with the local authority and parents / carers to produce a personalised plan that includes:

- Short term interim targets that have been agreed with the child and parent / carers
- Any agreed support to be provided by the team supporting the child (school, LA Education or SEND staff, Social Worker, Health professional)
- Regular reviews with the child and parent / carers

As always, all staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead).

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2019)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the [Essex Effective Support](#) portal. The school may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

4. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data

flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the pupil file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school / educational setting.

During this period, there may be occasions where we have children from another school attending our site, or where our pupils may have to attend another school. In these circumstances, relevant information will be shared between schools to ensure there is knowledge and an understanding of any safeguarding issues so that appropriate measures can be put in place to keep children safe. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a 'need to know' basis.

5. Interagency working

As before, it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions. During this closure period, there are temporary arrangements in place and meetings will take place virtually (online).

6. Staff conduct

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct and the principles in our Staff Code of Conduct still apply during this emergency period. We have adapted our policies to reflect the current arrangements to ensure they cover online / remote learning. The usual processes for reporting concerns about a member of staff apply.

7. Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils is always a priority and it is recognised that, without the protective factor of attending school, some of our children may be more vulnerable. This is a worrying and challenging time for everyone and we understand that families will be placed under

additional pressures and may be coping with issues such as increased anxiety, financial difficulties, caring for children at home all the time and bereavement.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

8. Online safety (for children away from school)

We recognise that the majority of children will not be physically attending school and that it is likely they will be spending longer periods of time online, which may increase their vulnerability. We have provided parents with information on how to keep their children safe online and resources to support them to do this.

- NSPCC advice for parents [online hub for parents / carers](#) – to provide advice and guidance for parents

Please see online safety on school website and in additional resources
Particularly useful websites are:

- [CEOP](#) (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
- [Childnet](#)
- [Internet Matters](#)
- [Net Aware](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Parent Info](#)
- [Safer Internet](#)

Staff are aware that children are vulnerable to being bullied or groomed for abuse or radicalisation online. Staff will be vigilant to any signs that that this may be occurring and report any concerns in the usual way.

It is important that parents make the school aware of any concerns they may have about the online activity of their child, or any particular vulnerability they may have in this respect.