

Annex to Child Protection policy – version 1.0

Child protection during the COVID-19 measures

Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This Annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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Version control and dissemination

This is version 1.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our DSL or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website here [\[insert link\]](#) and is made available to staff on the staff share/Policies

The DSL or Deputy DSL are on site daily, when children are in attendance. They can be spoken to directly if you are in school or by phone. If you do not receive an answer to your phone call please phone the DSL/Deputy DSL mobile phones.

Parents who are concerned about a Safeguarding matter should contact CHECS directly.

0300 123 5012

Cheshire East Consultation Service

(Mon–Thurs 8:30am–5:00pm Friday 8:30–4:30pm)

0300 123 5022

Emergency Duty Team

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online- regular reminders/support will be sent to parents/Carers

Current school position

Currently the school is only open for Key Worker children who attend St Anne's Catholic Primary School. Daily we have either the DSL or the Deputy DSL on site, a Teacher and a TA. The school cleaners and one cook are in daily for the hours required to do their roles. The school's Bursar attends school for a short period each week.

We currently do not have any staff or volunteers or children from other schools but if we do the DSL/Deputy DSL will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with Cheshire East Local Authority and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include information regarding supporting children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, information from the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need. The current advice is below.

LA advice/Information:

Covid-19 and safeguarding children

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership is clear that during the Covid-19 situation that safeguarding children remains a priority for all partners

In light of the current situation as a result of Coronavirus, the safeguarding partners have agreed measures and plans to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading of the virus to children, young people, and their families and within our multi agency workforce.

Following these discussions the safeguarding partners would like to update you all with an outline of the measures in place to achieve this. In doing so, we appreciate that individual agencies will be following their own arrangements and would not wish in any way to discourage partners following the advice of their own organisation.

In relation to multi-agency working;

Other than in exceptional circumstances, visits to children and families will be reduced to a frequency necessary to meet any statutory requirements and to keep children safe. Where this is felt to compromise safety, decisions will be made by

the Children's Social Care management on a case by case basis. It is important that we share the responsibility for face to face contact to minimize risk to staff as well as families.

All multi agency meetings, including strategy meetings, initial and review child protection conferences, core group and Cared for Child reviews will be arranged as telephone conferencing and all partners invited to join one line. More detailed guidance for families, children and professionals is available below.

Child safeguarding medical examinations would continue as normal, as per existing multiagency arrangements. The normal pathway for referrals to continue but the clinician at the receiving end would advise who needs to be contacted and how, as this could change on a day to day basis.

The partnerships website and online procedures will continue to be available to practitioners to consult.

Multi agency training planned for the foreseeable future is cancelled.

If you experience any difficulties with these arrangements please discuss with your manager and follow the escalation procedures

Child Protection Conferences and Cared for reviews

In light of the coronavirus outbreak, how the Cheshire East Council Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit facilitate the following meetings will change temporarily to ensure we are protecting the health of you and others as well as ensuring we look after the safety of your children.

During these challenging times, Children's Social Care would ask that Professionals attending virtual meetings such as Child in Need Meetings, Strategy Meetings, Core Groups and Care Planning meetings, use the Professionals Feedback - Signs of Safety (MS Word 60KB) document to bullet point the information they will be sharing verbally. This is not an alternative to attending the conference call/virtual meeting, more to assist the minute taker in the task of chairing the meeting and accurately recording information.

We have used the SOS 3 columns approach as this is familiar to you all.

You would then be expected to email this to the Chair of the meetings which would either be the allocated Social Worker or their Team Manager.

Child Protection conferences

[Guide to child protection conferences in response to COVID-19 - for parents \(PDF, 211KB\)](#)

[Guide to Child Protection Conferences in response to COVID-19 - For Professionals \(PDF, 218KB\)](#)

Children's Cared For Reviews

[Advice to parents in relation to Children's Cared for Reviews during Covid -19 restrictions \(PDF, 203KB\)](#)

[Procedure in relation to arranging cared for reviews during COVID-19 restrictions \(PDF, 168KB\)](#)

[Advice to professionals in relation to Children's Cared for Reviews during Covid -19 restrictions \(PDF, 202KB\)](#)

Covid-19 information

Covid-19: For health information and advice, read the NHS pages pages on [coronavirus](#)

Ofsted: coronavirus (COVID-19) rolling update is guidance and information relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) for schools, early years, children's social care and further education and skills providers.

[Coronavirus in 20 languages](#)

Cheshire East Council has [Covid-19 information](#) – which includes information and updates on changes to council services as a result of the pandemic.

Check the [CESCP etraining resource](#) regularly for new material.

Covid-19 Help for people who harm

We are aware that some of our service users are currently at risk of Domestic Abuse. We have always offered to work with perpetrators. This is a focus on offering support in a different way to them whilst we are unable to operate as we normally would. As part of our response to support behaviour management and change, the help and support available and some self-help tools have been developed to provide a virtual response whilst we are unable to respond directly. Please feel free to share and use appropriately.

[Bodymapping \(PDF, 387\)](#)

[Calm breathing \(PDF, 405\)](#)

[Time Out \(PDF, 384\)](#)

[Help for people who harm \(PDF, 608KB\)](#)

Homelessness or at risk of homelessness

See guidance [if you are homeless or at risk of homelessness \(PDF, 82KB\)](#)

Coronavirus: [Guidance on supporting families struggling to pay for their gas, electricity or water supplies \(PDF, 309KB\)](#)

Helpful aids to talk with children about Coronavirus

This short guide is aimed at supporting a conversation with a child/young person in school to ascertain information about their current home circumstance, This information is then to be emailed to the relevant Lead Professional/Social Worker.

[Guide for Professionals in speaking with children and young people \(PDF, 309KB\)](#)

[Coronavirus Social situation \(PDF, 1.5MB\)](#)

[Talking to children about Coronavirus](#)

Helping people experiencing domestic abuse at this time

Covid-19: **You are not alone**. Continued support for anyone affected by domestic abuse.

[Support for victims and their children and Support for people who harm \(MS Word, 436KB\)](#)

[Domestic Abuse offer and functioning during the COVID-19 restrictions \(MS Word, 72KB\)](#)

[The referral toolkit \(MS Word, 236KB\)](#) contains the tools and resources needed by professionals to understand the level of risk and needs of individuals and families affected by domestic abuse and to make a ‘whole family’ referral where possible.

Also in this section

Covid-19 and safeguarding children

[Our safeguarding and support offer during Covid-19 \(PDF, 435KB\)](#)r

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Child Protection Policy.

If possible, our DSL or the deputy DSL will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video; or
- ensure we have access to a trained DSL or deputy DSL from another school by phone and/or online video.

Where neither our DSL or our deputy DSL cannot be on site, then the provision in school will cease and the SMT will work with Cheshire East to organise alternative provision until a member of the SMT is available.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is _Hazel Brown_____

Contact details: email: _head@stannes.cheshire.sch.uk

The deputy designated lead(s) is Nuala Ferguson

Contact details: email:nferguson@gmail.com

Phone contact parents: 01270685353

Staff : use DSL/Deputy DSL mobile phone numbers

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 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 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 school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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.

We will contact our vulnerable children's families weekly or more often if required. We will provide learning support as needed as well as support and advice for the parent/carers.

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support. They will also, in consultation with each other and where appropriate with the class teacher, make decisions on whether the child needs to attend school daily or not.

Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff are aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

Attendance

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, FaceTime, Skype or by contact a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff and the family are not put at risk.

Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures (see [Safeguarding policy on website or on staff share/policies](#) and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Allegations Against Staff Policy (see [Allegations against staff policy on website or on staff share/policies](#)

Staff training and induction

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSL and deputy DSLs are unlikely to receive their refresher training. In line with government guidance, our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training. They will also be working with Cheshire east to ensure that e-training is carried out where necessary

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Re-training is due in May and will be replaced with an online training until a full training can be attended. If new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy [*See website or staffshare/policies*]

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.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Child Protection Policy.

Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Child Protection Policy.

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

The school will support Parent/carers at this time by continuing to send out advice regarding keeping children safe online.

New children at the school

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that 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).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

Likewise if there becomes a situation where our children attend another school or setting the DSL/Deputy DSL will ensure that the host school knows how to access that child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and knows who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). Written permission will be sought from the Parent/Carer before this information is shared and all information sharing will follow the GDPR protocol for both St Anne's and the host school. Where possible St Anne's staff members will also attend the host school setting.

Supporting children not in school

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that contact is made regularly – usually weekly. All records of contact are noted on CPOMS, including copies of emails and replies. These are shared between the DSL and Deputy DSL. Based on the information received the DSL/Deputy DSL may provide extra home-learning support or increase the contact with the family.