

## The PLACE Independent School

### Addendum

## COVID-19 Arrangements Safeguarding and Child Protection

Policy Owner: Cate Tumman

Date Published: 30.03.2020

#### Key contacts

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School Secretary	Wendy Brown	secretary@theplaceindependentschool.co.uk

#### Context

From 20th March 2020 parents and carers were asked by the government to keep their children at home, wherever possible.

The only children who should physically attend school following this date are those who are children of critical workers or those who are vulnerable and have been judged through careful risk assessment as needing to attend.

Despite this significant change, where many children will remain at home, our school remains open to all, including those physically attending school or attending remotely at home.

This addendum of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements applicable to this period.

### **Vulnerable children**

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.

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 an ongoing place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Our 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 lead person for this will be Cate Tumman.

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 does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and our team will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Our school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

With social workers, senior school leaders will agree with parents/carers whether vulnerable children should be attending school – the school will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

To support the above, the school will, when communicating with parents/carers and 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.

For those who are attending school remotely and learning from home, their attendance will also be monitored and the principles of following up non-engagement / non-attendance will be followed to ensure we are fulfilling our safeguarding obligations.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Our school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Cate Tumman

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Julia Whitesides and Emma Painter-Evans

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site whenever there are one or more children in attendance. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection management systems, and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

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

### **Reporting a concern**

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

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot use the usual reporting systems from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head Teacher. They must also gain confirmation via phone, Email reply or similar to confirm the concern has been received successfully.

If no confirmation of receipt is promptly forthcoming, the staff member should notify the allocated John Steward (School proprietor) without delay.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Head Teacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to

the Head Teacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Head Teacher should be directed to the proprietor John Steward.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus.

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) even if they miss their refresher training. A Me-learning module can be completed as interim training if any DSL's training expires during this period. DSL's must contact Wendy Brown for this to be added to their accounts.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers begin at the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction and should complete the Me-Learning Module relevant to the setting.

Safer recruitment/volunteers - 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, The PLACE Independent 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 is utilising volunteers, they 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**

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**

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.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the School's code of conduct.

The school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

The PLACE Independent School is developing a set of guidelines for remote teaching.

However, below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred where possible.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use pre-authorised methods and systems to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

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

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. Details of this plan must be recorded, as should a record of any contact made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Our school recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.

Teachers at our school need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Our school will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child.

### **Supporting children in school**

Our school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students and will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish, albeit in person or remotely.

The Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Our 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 and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

Our school will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Where our school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the Head Teacher Cate Tumman

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

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

Where a 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 the Child Protection Policy.

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.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

## **COVID-19 Arrangements**

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

I confirm I have read this policy and agree to abide by the contents

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_