

Addendum 2

COVID-19 Phased Re-opening Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at St. Mary's School



01/06/2020

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1.0 **Context**

From 1st June 2020, primary schools have been asked to re-open for children in Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six, and continue to provide *educare* for children who are classed as vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. From 15th June 2020, secondary schools have been asked to re-open for students in Y10 and Y12 to provide a limited amount of face to face teaching, and continue to provide for vulnerable students and the children of key workers. Schools have been closed to most children since the 23/03/2020.

The attendance of vulnerable children continues to be expected unless there are good reasons for them not doing so (shielding concerns for child or family member, risk assessment for EHCP children identifies significant unmitigated risks). Staff should work with senior leaders, the local authority and parents to ensure that vulnerable children from all year groups attend school.

This policy addendum is based on DfE guidance issued on 20th May [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#) and should be read and understood in conjunction with the school's safeguarding policy; the safeguarding addendum dated 30th March 2020; the school's phased opening of schools planning documents, risk assessments, health and safety requirements, code of conduct (including acceptable use of technology), Whistleblowing Policy, and the principles set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2019 Part 1.

This addendum and all linked policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the needs of our children during the coronavirus crisis.

The way our school is operating in response to coronavirus continues to be different to business as usual. However, as more children return, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- the school's DSL or deputy should be available at all times

- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

The safeguarding of children remains our priority and everyone's responsibility. Where an adult has concerns about a child they should report this immediately to the DSL or the Deputy DSL using the school's established system. As a greater number of children return to school having spent many weeks at home, children may:

- have anxieties that will cause them to be distressed at being back at school
- have mental health concerns
- have had significant changes in their routine and will struggle to adjust back to being at school
- have had access to materials on-line that are either age inappropriate or possibly have been exposed to other adults who wish to groom children for exploitive and/or abusive purposes
- have suffered abuse from the adults in their house
- have witnessed domestic abuse and violence or have been abusive to their parents/carers or siblings (peer on peer abuse)
- have experienced abuse (online, physical, emotional, sexual) from their siblings or their peers

It is the responsibility of everyone to be familiar with and act upon the specific risk assessments and plans that are in place to keep children and young people safe in school during the coronavirus crisis.

All staff must be familiar with, understand and act in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy, including the two Coronavirus addendums.

The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school or college. Where possible staff should try and speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff should make calls from the school site via school or college phones and devices. Where staff have to use personal phones to make calls, they should withhold their personal number and not store any child/student contact details on the phone.

2.0 Disclosures:

As a result of the above (not an exhaustive list), all adults must be vigilant to the likelihood that there will be a greater number of disclosures; some of these may not be verbal. If a child/student discloses to an adult in school, the adult must respond in line with the school's safeguarding policy:

The following key principles should be followed:

- Don't panic – remain calm and reassuring in your manner, listen.
- Give the child your full attention to demonstrate you are listening carefully and taking the information seriously.

- Let the child take his/her time, go at his/her own pace and use his/her own words.
- If he/she needs further encouragement remember TED (Tell me, Explain, Describe)
- Reassure him/her that he/she did the right thing by telling someone, and that he/she has been brave in doing so.
- Assure him/her that it is not his/her fault and you will do your best to help.
- Let him/her know that, to ensure that he/she will be safe, you will need to tell someone else.
- Let him/her know what you are going to do next at an age appropriate level.
- Don't make promises to keep a disclosure a secret

As soon as the child is safe, ensure the child's words (or actions) are recorded as accurately as possible and this is shared immediately with the DSL on site or senior member of staff who is responsible for safeguarding due to the DSL's absence (see section below about DSL on site). Ensure that the information is recorded according to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

3.0 Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Wherever possible, the DSL or Deputy DSL will be on site and can be accessed by all staff. He/she will be available to act on concerns as these become apparent, including to support partner agencies should information be required to be shared. Should it not be possible for the DSL or any deputies to be on site, he/she will be contactable by phone and email or similar virtual means.

DSL and DDSL will ensure that safeguarding systems including CPOMS have been updated with all relevant information since the start of school closures and will continue to ensure that this record keeping is kept up to date.

Currently, DSL refresher training is 'on-hold'; the DSL is expected to keep abreast of local and national changes and trends through their local authority, their local safeguarding board, partner agencies and national organisations such as the NSPCC and CEOPs.

The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers receive information that enables them to undertake their safeguarding role with diligence and curiosity. This is likely to be through the sharing of information, through email and other forms of communication. The DSL will also ensure that staff have enough information to enable them to fulfil their specific roles in school, (recognising this role may be different due to Covid 19). Staff will ensure that they seek further support if they feel that they need greater information or support. The school website <http://www.st-marys-fal.cornwall.sch.uk/web> will be updated to ensure that key documents, referenced in this addendum can be found.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. A copy of our up to date Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy including coronavirus addendums will support this process as will part 1 of [KCSIE](#).

The DSL will ensure that all staff are updated with relevant safeguarding information regarding individual children to enable them to effectively fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff at our school will be made aware on a daily basis of the arrangements for DSL contact, and the named senior member of staff. All staff are reminded of their *Whistleblowing* responsibilities should they have a concern about the behaviour of a colleague, including the Headteacher. This must be shared according to the current whistleblowing and safeguarding policies.

4.0 Safer Recruitment:

Leaders will ensure that any recruitment of staff still adheres to the requirement as detailed in Part 3 of KCSiE 2019. The school will ensure that all relevant checks are undertaken and detailed in the schools' Single Central Record (SCR) that can be accessed by the Headteacher. Induction of new staff will still conform to requirements as detailed in KCSiE despite this being likely to be through a virtual process rather than face to face.

Should staff from other schools be deployed to our school, the Headteacher will ensure that she/he can confirm the suitability of any individual to work with children from their 'host' school and can clarify the reason why this is necessary. Our school will record this information on our SCR

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason the headteacher has concerns about the individual, she/he may obtain a new check in the usual way.

Our school will continue to follow its 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.

Visiting contractors or agency staff will still be required to have demonstrated the appropriate levels of checks as detailed in KCSiE Part 3.

5.0 Transition of children:

DSL (or appropriate member of staff e.g. nominated key worker) will, prior to a vulnerable child returning to school, or as soon as possible after a period of prolonged absence, make contact with his/her family to identify any change in circumstance that has occurred since school closures.

Where children from our school are attending another setting, our staff must continue to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

Where children from our school are attending transition events at other schools, the DSL and appropriate senior leader will work with the host school to ensure that an

appropriate COVID-19 specific risk assessment and associated control measures are in place.

Where pre-school children, or children from other schools or providers are attending our school for transition events, the DSL and appropriate senior leader will liaise with the *home school/parents* to ensure that an appropriate COVID-19 specific risk assessment and associated control measures are in place.

Our school will continue to support and advise families on how to keep their children safe (e.g. online safety and mental health awareness) via a variety of different communications.

6.0 Summary of key points:

- The best interests of children must always continue to come first
- If any member of staff has a safeguarding concern about any child, or a concern about a colleague, they should continue to act, and act immediately, as per established procedures
- DSL or deputy should always be available or contactable and staff must know who this is on a daily basis and how to contact them
- It is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children.