

Addendum to Child Protection Policy due to the circumstances of COVID-19

Due to the current unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 virus it is necessary that all schools are prepared and have appropriate arrangements in place in relation to the management of any safeguarding or child protection concerns both on and off site during this time.

The DfE website page relating to safeguarding arrangements in schools during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic says, "Whilst acknowledging the pressure that schools and colleges are under, it remains essential that as far as possible they continue to be safe places for children."

Therefore, we have produced this cover note/addendum to our existing school's Child Protection Policy Template to ensure all staff, Trustees and parents/carers understand our protocols for managing child protection concerns during this time.

Overview and purpose of guidance

The document seeks to ensure that the responsibilities of senior leaders of the Beacon of Light School towards children and staff are discharged by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe, unprofessional and unwise behaviour.

The current pandemic with its associated closure of schools to most children is an example of a circumstance which had not been foreseen and where Government, local authorities, school leaders and staff are having to review and amend guidance rapidly.

Now more than ever before, professional judgements may need to be made in situations not covered by existing guidance, or which directly contravene the guidance given by the school. In such circumstances, staff will always advise the SLT of the justification for any such action they are proposing to take. Action should not be taken by staff without a conversation with SLT first.

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of systems within school which support safeguarding and any temporary amendment to these will be circulated via email by senior managers with the opportunity for staff to seek clarification around anything they feel unclear or unsure about. This includes the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy (sometimes called the code of conduct) and online e-safety / acceptable use policy.

The principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 continue to determine the expectations of schools and settings in keeping children safe in school at this time and include:

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

Staff should be aware of and understand the school child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy, whistle blowing procedure and the procedures of the relevant Multi-agency Partnerships (MAPs)

<https://www.safeguardingchildrensunderland.com/>

<https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/>

<https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9175/Gateshead-Safeguarding-Children-Partnership>

Roles and Responsibilities for all staff

All staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children.

All staff have a responsibility to keep pupils safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and contextual safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.

The safeguarding culture of a school is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by the adult that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

The public, local authorities, employers and parents/carers will have expectations about the nature of professional involvement in the lives of children. When individuals accept a role working in an education setting, they should understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust involved in that role.

Employers have duties towards their employees and others under Health and Safety legislation which requires them to take steps to provide a safe working environment for staff. During current circumstances, employees are working from home. It is therefore the responsibility of the employee to ensure their home environment is safe and suitable to work from. Employees unable to secure such an environment must report this to their line manager immediately.

Legislation also imposes a duty on employees to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings. An employer's Health and Safety duties and the adults' responsibilities towards children should not conflict.

Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies

Off Site: While our school site is closed during these unprecedented circumstances, the **Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are Denise Taylor and Lindsay Howells** and continue to be our Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy due to their level of training and skill. **Mrs Lynda Brown remains the named Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding.**

While we are closed our tutors will continue to remain in daily contact with those children who we deem are vulnerable or have a multi-agency statutory plan in place to safeguard them. The Beacon of Light School has made the decision to contact all student homes every day during the period of closure.

All staff will continue to follow child protection and safeguarding policies during school closure and ensure concerns are passed on immediately to either the DSL or DDSL named above.

However, if there is an IMMEDIATE safeguarding concern and the Designated Safeguarding Leads are unavailable please seek immediate support via the Integrated Contact and Referral Team (0191 520 5560) or 561 7007.

On Site: When school begins to reopen to students from 15th June 2020, a DSL and/or DDSL will be on site at all times.

All staff will continue to follow child protection and safeguarding policies during school closure and ensure concerns are passed on immediately to either the DSL or DDSL on site. A staff timetable will be shared during staff training prior to 15th June 2020.

Children moving across provisions due to school closures

Due to these unprecedented circumstances our school has chosen to close. There are plans for reopening to Y10 students from 15th June 2020 which are in the phase of approval from Trade Unions and Trustees

One of our students is attending Thornhill Academy full-time. They can be contacted on 0191 500 7981 and their Designated Safeguarding Lead is Ian Redford.

One of our students is attending Biddick Academy part-time (Thurs/Fri pm). They can be contacted on 0191 511 1600 and their Designated Safeguarding Lead is Kate Morris,

Information regarding both children has been shared between our school and theirs in the interests of safeguarding and protecting our children. This information has followed appropriate confidentiality protocols and is in line with the GDPR and Data Protection Act.

Attendance data for the Thornhill student is communicated daily via tutors contacting parent to ensure the child has left for school, and from Thornhill Academy (Kelly Neeson) contacting Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead confirming the student has arrived on site.

Attendance data for the Biddick student is communicated daily via tutors contacting parent to ensure the child is leaving for school that day, and from Biddick Academy (Amy Smith) contacting Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead confirming the student has arrived on site.

During the current school closures, the DfE suggests that if there is only one vulnerable child or child of a critical worker, the school should consider closing, and liaise with the local authority to identify alternative provision; e.g., at a hub school. If the school must remain open with only one or two children, there should be more than one member of staff to meet fire safety, first aid, supervision and other emergency procedures.

For those students who may require access to school in future due to a change in family/personal circumstances, a classroom space within The Link School, Springwell Dene, Sunderland is available for Beacon of Light School to use. The room will be staffed by 2 staff on a rota basis, including DSL/DDSL. Parents/carers have been informed to give 24-hours' notice so that staff and a school lunch can be provided for the following day.

Once school begins to reopen to students from 15th June 2020, the Y10 student attending Thornhill Academy will attend Beacon of Light School 1:1 provision Monday and Tuesday for face-to-face support and return to Thornhill Academy for the remainder of the week.

The Y9 student attending Biddick is currently shielding at home but will return after the period of shielding is over.

Arrangements for Contact with Vulnerable Children

During this period of closure, it is our intention to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students. We will contact the parent or carer each morning and if no response contact front door services immediately.

A rota has been produced for teaching staff to continue to contact vulnerable children and their families in the following timescales while school is closed or these children are not on site: children the subject of a Child Protection Plan (daily), children who have a Child in Need Plan (daily), Looked After Children (daily) or children with an Early Help Plan (daily). If there are any issues raised during this time regarding their care, safety or ability to be contacted then the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will follow their local safeguarding procedures and contact their local front door services immediately (as per our Child Protection Policy).

In the current situation, welfare visits will only be undertaken in an emergency, in line with the Home Visits policy, observing social distancing at all times

Due to the current circumstances, staff will not be working in one to one situation with pupils.

Should students wish to speak with a member of staff via phone/video call, to safeguard both pupils and adults, a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of this work will always be undertaken. Each assessment should take into account the individual needs of each pupil and will be reviewed regularly. At no point will a member of staff be expected to work one to one with a child. A second member of staff, from SLT and preferably DSL/DDSL, will always be present in the call/video call.

Once school begins to reopen to students from 15th June 2020, arrangements for bringing in Y10 students for face-to-face contact will be organised and communicated with parents/carers

Arrangements where home contact is not possible

All school parents/carers are receiving daily welfare phone calls from staff, with follow-up texts and Education5 support.

The procedure for this, all logged on Attendance spreadsheet, is:

1. 9:00am Contact by tutor using phone
2. 11:00am Contact by admin using Text2Parent
3. 2:00pm Contact by Education5 using phone

If contact is not made for 2 consecutive days in a row, on day 2, Education5 will attempt to make contact and send a letter home

If contact is not made for 3 consecutive days in a row, on day 3, the tutor will alert DSL/DDSL.

In the event that all strategies above have been employed and contact is still not possible, tutors can either:

- Undertake home visit
- Contact DSL/DDSL to contact police for welfare check

The protocol for the home visit is:

- print out Welfare Visit letter template (Appendix 1) to take to student home
- wear business dress
- maintain 2m social distance at all times
- wear protective gloves if possible
- inform DSL/DDSL the visit is taking place
- knock on door and retreat (as postal service) to 2m distance
- wear staff ID lanyard
- conversation with parent/carer around school duty of care and consequences of no contact (outlined in letter)
- visual on student if they are able to come to the door
- if there is no response at door, post Welfare Visit letter through door
- record visit outcome on attendance log and Isams
- contact DSL/DDSL to inform the visit has concluded and if contact with parent/carer has/has not been possible
- contact DSL/DDSL if the home visit raises concerns

Availability and contact arrangements for families and professionals who wish to make contact with the Designated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies

During these unprecedented circumstances the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will be available to be contacted by children, families and other services and agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of all our vulnerable children. They can be contacted via the school telephone number in the first instance and whether they are on or off site they will gain contact with any family or professional as soon as possible.

Alternatively they may be contacted via the school's mobile telephone number:

07464 680 824

Contact with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy should be within the hours of the school day 9.00am-3.30pm only. During scheduled school holidays, this arrangement will continue at all times.

Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy should remain the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns but cannot be responsible for not receiving calls and messages outside of these times. In the event that children or families need support immediately please contact our front door services immediately (as per the information within the Child Protection Policy) or contact the Police.

Expectations for Online meetings

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be managed with Government restrictions still in place, ways of working for all have had to move to a more digital, remote but live management system. To ensure the safety of all involved we have provided some expectations which can be used as joining instructions or protocols for online meetings or events to support a clear and effective safeguarding message.

Meeting invitation – meetings will vary and therefore the invitation to join should state the meeting type and its nature (confidential) and any caveats so that all attending are clear of purpose, content and potential outcome. The use of which platform for the meeting and its safety mechanisms should be explained prior to the meeting e.g. Teams, Skype, Zoom etc, use of passwords, waiting rooms to be let in.

Agenda for meetings – Agendas are important for meetings to allow participants to have an agreed expectation of what will be discussed or expected of participants. It is important that it is adhered to and that if notes are being made this is transparent and all participants are informed, including if the note taker will be off camera. Participants should be informed of how the meeting will be recorded (we would suggest that at all meetings it is declared that no official recordings are allowed to be taken and shared on any other platform)

Access and attendance at live session – Participants/delegates/members are asked to be logged into software at least 10 mins before the start time of the session with their camera's active. There will be a 'waiting room' available on Zoom/Teams (others may not have this) where the host will then proceed to allow delegates into the meeting.

If access is being shared by delegates in the same setting/building this should be declared at the beginning of the session/event/meeting for everyone to know and for the host to record on the attendance register.

All participants should be declared through their log in that they are present for the training/attendance register.

All participants by joining the meeting agree to the parameters of the session, this includes remaining logged on at all times, keeping their camera turned on (unless it's an agreed break) and participating in the tasks/chat using the agreed functions and if they have a contribution to make. By joining the meeting, participants are agreeing to a live session through the software and should connectivity fail, the handout will provide support but attempts to reconnect must be exhausted.

NO recording of this session can be allowed, and participants must ensure that they agree to this requirement.

If you do not have a camera or wish to be 'off-camera' you must discuss this with the host beforehand (with training the host would not be able to confirm that you were present).

For privacy, participants should place themselves on mute and unmute themselves at the request of the host. Participants may wish to wear headphones for privacy, but this would not protect confidentiality when the participant speaks (others in the vicinity would hear these views)

The chat function is a useful way of maintaining connectivity throughout a session/meeting/training.

Participant contribution- Participants are expected to reasonably contribute to the meeting/training as directed by the host. All contributions are welcomed but should be factual and purposeful. Argumentative or antagonistic behaviour towards the host or other participants is unacceptable and the participant may be asked to leave the meeting.

If as a participant you feel your contribution was not accepted, listened to or you disagreed with the content you should raise this independently with the host via the live chat or in a subsequent one to one.

If the disagreement in views concerns the safety and wellbeing of a child during a multi-agency meeting then you must gain assurances that your concerns have been raised and recorded and you must escalate this following the conclusion of the meeting.

Linked to Staff Behaviour Policy

Webcam usage would be expected in most sessions unless agreement reached –

This ensures confidentiality of the meeting to those invited.

Therefore, the following should be considered by all participants:

- Surroundings, (what is on view should be minimal and not personal.)
- Dress code (professional)
- Use of headsets to minimise noise (if interruptions occur then the mute button of the participant should be accessed and then email the host or use the chat function to share that you have left the meeting and why).

For certain meetings which occur virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic such as Strategy meetings, CP conferences or core groups, consideration must be given as to whether these meetings can be confidential if they are being accessed virtually from staff members home's and not from school sites. Staff participating in these confidential meetings would need to consider their personal situation whilst working away from school site, agree to this and declare their personal situation to the meeting host. While our school site is closed during these unprecedented circumstances, staff who require guidance around this must contact the **Designated Safeguarding Lead, Denise Taylor, or Designated Safeguarding Lead, Lindsay Howells.**

Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn't attend or stops attending. In these cases, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by phone
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

If school is open, we are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

Attendance will be logged in the Covid-19 Attendance Spreadsheet and also isams.

From Monday 1 June 2020) schools resumed taking their normal school registers once they reopened/extended their opening (e.g. on isams). Schools submit daily attendance figures directly to the DfE using the educational settings status form by midday each day, and to continue to send daily figures to Julie.Harrison@togetherforchildren.org.uk

If a student is not expected to be in school, they should be recorded as an X e.g. a student in Year 9 who is not expected to be in at this time due to government guidance.

Where a pupil is expected to attend but did not attend the session, the following codes should be used:

Y - where a pupil is shielding, self-isolating or the pupil has an EHC plan and their risk assessment says they can't safely return yet.

I (illness) – where a pupil cannot attend due to illness (this includes Coronavirus).

C (other authorised absence) - when a pupil does not attend school but is not shielding or self-isolating. All absences should be authorised at this time.

The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings/process-for-recording-attendance-and-using-the-educational-setting-status-form#register>

Attendance Procedures

Although attendance of children at school during this time is not statutory. Regular contact with children who are vulnerable should be maintained and actioned as stated above.

Contact Plans

Daily contact will be made with all families during term time, and vulnerable families during non-term time.

Staff to be allocated groups of students (usually their own tutor group) and make daily phone calls to every student parent/carer to discuss welfare and wellbeing of their child between 9.00-10.30am each day.

Clear direction and safeguarding in place for staff making home contact calls included in updated Business Contingency & Continuity Plan, shared with all staff.

Where home contact is not possible, Attendance Support, provided by Education5, will make contact via phone (call and/or text).

Where contact still not possible by Attendance Support, a text is to be sent to parents at 11.00am by school.

All communication with home will be logged daily by staff. Attendance concerns will be shared with commissioners by the DSL/DDSL.

Updated emails and mobile phone numbers will be obtained for all students' parents/carers.

Use of technology for online / virtual teaching

There has been a sharp increase in the use of technology for remote learning since March 2020 and this addendum provides guidelines for staff.

The Beacon of Light School has reviewed their online safety and acceptable use policies and amended these, ensuring that all staff involved in virtual teaching or the use of technology to contact students are briefed on best practice and any temporary changes to policy / procedures.

When selecting a platform for online / virtual teaching, school has checked that the provider has an appropriate level of security. The Government Oak National Academy has been recommended as a suitable platform for learning.

Staff are using school devices where possible and contacting parents via their personal emails. Staff will only contact students via the student school email address / log in, and this contact will have been pre-communicated to their parents. This ensures that the school's filtering and monitoring software is enabled.

If staff need to contact a student or parent by phone and do not have access to a work phone, they should discuss this with a senior member of staff and, if there is no alternative, always use 'caller withheld' (141) to ensure the student / parent is not able to identify the staff member's personal contact details.

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

Regular emails will be sent to parents/carers to update them around online risks and how to keep their child safe online

Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for student mental health for all students. A supportive counselling strategy is being investigated at present for students to refer into.

We will also signpost all students, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time through emails to parents/carers. Students are aware of our online service called 'Kooth' which they can access for one to one support.

When setting expectations for students learning remotely and not attending school, we remain mindful of the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health. This is monitored through daily welfare calls from tutors.

Response to safeguarding or child protection concerns

As always our school's duty of care is to keep children safe and while the arrangements of the physical care of children and physical presence of our Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy may be different during this time the school's response remains the same and follows the guidelines as set out in our school's Child Protection Policy.

Staff should recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies and that to not do so may result in charges of serious neglect on their part where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Upon the return of more children to school, staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children, for example disclosures of risk of harm, peer on peer abuse or any negative experiences during the time of lockdown and isolation. Staff and volunteers should be clear that they must continue to follow our school's Child Protection Policy and report concerns immediately regarding any child to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (following the on/off site arrangements in place). Once verbally reported this should be documented following our school's recording procedures. Every effort to gain accurate information from the parent and child on their return to school should be taken including, health, mental health, peer on peer abuse and any changes in circumstances. **See parent/child re-admission form.**

Response to safeguarding concerns regarding adults in school

As stated in our school's Child Protection Policy, any concerns that may be raised regarding any adult's behaviour in school towards a child should be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Staff should be reminded of the routes for raising concerns during school closure or part closure, including how to escalate their concern if the normal routes for whistleblowing are impeded by the absence / illness of senior managers.

Support for children who remain home schooled

Continued arrangements will remain in place for those children who are home schooled. Regular, agreed contact will remain in place for those children and their parents, including checking on their online activity and how they are supported and supervised at home.

This guidance was written 20th March 2020 and has since been revised:

- 27th April 2020 in light of the DfE issuing interim coronavirus (covid-19): safeguarding in schools colleges and other providers 27th April 2020
- 27th May 2020 in light of the DfE issuing guidance around reopening of schools
- 1st June 2020 in light of updated DfE guidance around reopening of schools

This addendum will be reviewed as guidance is updated by safeguarding partners, LAs/Together for Children or DfE, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks by Denise Taylor, Principal. At every review it will be directed to the Board of Trustees for approval.

This addendum links to the following policies and procedures

- Child Protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Staff Behaviour policy
- E-safety policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Health & Safety policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Home Visit policy
- Preventing radicalisation policy
- Lone working policy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>



Dear

As a school we have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child. During this difficult and unprecedented time, while your child is at home, it is therefore vitally important that we are able to make contact with you, to ensure your child is safe and well.

In order to this school have been making daily welfare calls, to confirm how everything is at home and discuss any issues you may have. However, as we have struggled to make contact this week, a member of school staff has visited to check everything is well with you and your family.

**As part of our continuing support to your child
visited your home today at but unfortunately there was no
response.**

As we have a duty of care to your child, if we were unable to make contact within the week, we may have to raise these issues with the police, who would be asked to carry out a welfare visit to your home. Hopefully, there is a simple explanation for the lack of contact, and we can resolve this issue today.

Please be aware of the following ways you can get in touch with school if you miss your daily welfare call. You can email either the Principal or Deputy Principals on any of the following email addresses:

- denise.taylor@beaconschool.org.uk
- lindsay.howells@beaconschool.org.uk
- ashleigh.fielding@beaconschool.org.uk

Alternatively, you can send a text message to 07464 680824, just to confirm you are all safe and well. Please discuss any issues with tutors during the daily calls and thank you for your understanding and support.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Taylor", written in a cursive style.

Denise Taylor

Principal