

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Hele's School

- Policy owner:
- Date ratified by Trustees:
- Date shared with staff:

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1.0 **Context**

This appendix has been developed in response to and aligned to DfE guidance <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> published 27th March 2020.

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers **critical to the COVID-19 response** - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children –

- **children who are vulnerable** (see para 2), and
- children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This appendix of the Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements during this period of time and is likely to be reviewed at regular intervals particularly when new advice is released by the LA. This appendix of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will also be reviewed should school play 'host' to a collapsed provision or direct pupils/staff to a 'cluster' school. The review will then consider any information about 'hub' working issued by the DfE, and consideration will be made on e.g. the sharing of vulnerable pupil information, the reporting of concerns and updating of safeguarding files.

It remains the case that **safeguarding is everybody's responsibility**, therefore this additional information needs to be shared with all staff and volunteers who in turn must read, digest and seek support from their DSL team or school leaders if further clarification is required. All staff should continue to have access to the Child Protection policy, Code of Conduct and KCSiE 2019 where further details and information can be found.

The schools' safeguarding team (DSL, Safeguarding Governor etc) and their contact details can be found in the main body of the Schools Safeguarding Policy. Changes to the DSL and DDSL during

these exceptional circumstances can be found in para 3 of this appendix. Any changes will be shared with all staff and volunteers of the school.

2.0 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 plans (EHCPs). 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 a school or college 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. Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) 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.

Hele's 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. If current plans and support packages exist for these pupils the school will continue to provide for these as best as possible in conjunction with the relevant agencies. The lead person for this will be: **Mrs Sandra Crawford.**

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. However, a thorough risk assessment of each vulnerable child, in conjunction with their social worker (and family, where appropriate), will determine the level of vulnerability and an informed decision made by the professionals who know the child best as to whether a child who would be able to remain safely at home should be supported to do so with regular contact from school and social worker at this time, so as not to compromise the current (April 2020) advice from the government around social distancing and remaining at home wherever possible to keep themselves and others safe. It is recognised that this situation is dynamic and as restrictions are relaxed by the government, the number of vulnerable children attending school will increase significantly. Hele's staff will respond to each child as an individual with bespoke needs and recommendations in the interim period.

In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable and risk assessed as needing to attend school, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Hele's School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed, where our risk assessment and information-sharing with a child's social worker suggests they would be safer in school provision.

2.1 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. Key staff and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need and those on CP should be attending school – we will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Hele's School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

School will complete a return online so the DfE can monitor who is in school and who isn't by midday everyday https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings?utm_source=15dbdd08-0355-41cd-a731-77d42d9cf9a9&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

The LA has a duty to monitor vulnerable children’s attendance and Hele’s School will be completing the necessary spreadsheets and returning to their respective LA daily, to the following address schoolorganisation@plymouth.gov.uk

2.2 How will this look in our school?

To support the above, Hele’s 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, when it has been made clear they are expected to attend, Hele’s School will notify their social worker.

2.3 Those vulnerable children not attending school

Those vulnerable children who are not attending school will be contacted on a regular basis so that school are satisfied that they are safe. School will follow LA guidance linked with the Vulnerable Pupil Risk Assessment and accompanying letter along with that from other agencies working with the pupil and family.

3.0 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Hele’s School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. During this extraordinary situation their contact details are as follows:

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sandra Crawford	crawfords@heles.plymouth.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Emma Clapham	clapham@heles.plymouth.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead complete/add if necessary	Kairn Stone	stoneka@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

3.1 DSL cover in school

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. 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 co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection records 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 or college.

3.2 Informing staff

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy), or the named school leader, Hele’s School will inform all staff and volunteers of changes to the details above.

Therefore, 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 attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely or seek support and liaise with Early Help professionals.

Any changes to the DSL on duty will also be shared with those staff working from home via email. School will also have a daily information board sharing the DSL and safeguarding contacts for the day for all staff working on site.

4.0 Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy which can be done remotely via email or through telephone. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access any electronic system from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher or Safeguarding contact. This will ensure that the concern is received. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. All staff should refresh themselves of the contact details for their local children's social care service (Plymouth Gateway : 01752 680000)

4.1 Reporting a concern about an adult/the HT

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher immediately.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed for the attention of the Director of Secondary/Primary School Improvement or the CEO care of admin@westst.org.uk

5.0 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 have or will miss their refresher training. All existing school staff who have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019), are similarly likely to not receive whole staff training during this time. DSLs should therefore communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. This should be achieved through emails and similar electronic means.

Where new staff or volunteers are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction (as identified in our safer recruitment policy/induction policy)

6.0 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, Hele's 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 Hele's School are utilising volunteers, we 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. Hele's 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. Hele's 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 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, Hele's School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Where staff are required to work in schools that are not their normal place of work, senior leaders take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children

- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

There is no requirement to list such individuals in the schools SCR, unless leaders choose to do so as long as such written confirmation is received. School will retain this evidence until such time as the current restrictions on schools are lifted and in line with our current data and information retention policies.

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Multi-Academy Trust or Federation HR Manager or equivalent senior leader that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training and all pre-employment safeguarding requirements are in place.

Upon arrival, they must have access to a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements and contact details.

7.0 Online safety in schools and colleges

Hele's 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.

7.1 Children and online safety away from school and college

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk or suffering abuse. 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, to the police. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct.

Hele's School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only, unless as a result of risk assessments confirmed with the Headteacher.
- 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.
- 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 platforms agreed by school leaders
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

7.2 Online safety at home

School will continue to support parents, sharing online safety information, websites and resources for them to utilise on the school website and in school communications and updates. E.g. links to CEOPs, ThinkUKnow.

8.0 Supporting children not in school

Hele's School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children. 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 contact have made. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits (if appropriately risk assessed). Other individualised contact methods should be carefully considered, ideally working with families, and recorded.

Hele's School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. Any such plan must be reviewed regularly (weekly) 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. Hele's 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 and carers

All staff at Hele's School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Hele's 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 and recorded. Hele's School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. Hele's School will continually refer to the most recent 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. Where staff have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – they discuss them immediately with senior leaders.

9.0 Peer on Peer Abuse

remov 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 of the Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.