



## **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

**Interim Safeguarding & Child Protection Arrangements for  
Schools & Colleges- Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

## Context

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that all schools and colleges are under as a result of the required responses to addressing coronavirus (Covid-19), we understand it remains essential that we continue to be a safe place for students.

This guidance is designed to support us a whole school community to ensure we continue to have appropriate regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education ([KCSIE 2019](#)) and promote the welfare of all our students.

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- With regard to safeguarding, 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 immediately in line with existing expectation
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Operational Safeguarding Lead (OSL) or deputy must be available.
- Safer working practices must be maintained - 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 safeguarded when they are online.

Schools are therefore being asked to continue to **provide care** for a limited number of children - children who are **vulnerable**, and children whose parents are **critical** to the Covid-19 response **and cannot be safely cared for at home**.

Vulnerable children include those who are supported by a social care (have a social worker), those with **safeguarding and welfare needs**, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).

Additional information is available by following the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

As well as safeguarding those children who are attending our setting, thought must be given to how we safeguard those children at home who are also deemed to be vulnerable. Safeguarding principles remain unchanged. How we escalate and manage them is communicated here and will be shared with all Governors and staff to ensure they are understood by the whole school community. This document is an annex to our more detailed safeguarding policy which still contains relevant details and

information on recognising and responding to abuse and continues to be a source of reference.

As a school and in line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) we are committed to working in partnership with Stockport Local Authority and Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all should make sure their approach remains child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. We work in a multi-agency way understanding no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

### **1 Safeguarding vulnerable\* Students remotely**

We remain committed to supporting our vulnerable students and will take the following steps:

- Where vulnerable students are not in school, we will ensure that phone contact is maintained by the school with all vulnerable pupils at least once per week.
- Where it is identified that a child or family are in need of additional support or guidance we will ensure that this is in place. This may include extra phone calls, signposting and referring to other services. All interactions will be recorded and stored confidentially.
- All vulnerable children and families should be provided with a point of contact for support this should be a school mobile/phone number or an actively monitored email account. Sharing of personal phone numbers and emails is to be avoided.

[\\*Described in appendix 1](#)

## **2 School provision for students currently supported at Team Around the Child (TAC) Level 3 or subject to a Child Protection Plan**

Children and families who have an allocated Social Worker will **continue** to be supported by them. A set of working principles has been devised and is included in the last section of this document.

Schools continue to be a potential key source of additional support to this group. The established relationships between school and family are of great value and may be key to them feeling confident in seeking and engaging with help when it is needed.

Going forward we recognise these children may need to **access school** and engage in the **daily care offer**. Where these children need to attend, we will work with Social Workers to offer such a placement. Where families inform us of a need for help, by way of a placement, we will work with them and Children's Social Care (as appropriate) to agree a plan of support. Where we believe a child is at risk of significant harm or danger, we will refer our concerns to Children's Social Care – as described in our full Safeguarding Policy.

Child protection referrals to the Multi-agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) will be made via telephone. (Online referrals will not be operating from 30.03.20 until further notice. All referrals must be made by phone).

We will ensure that a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Operational Safeguarding Lead (OSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is available\* to support staff where they have concerns about a child.

This includes:

- Children attending the setting.
- Those children and their families being contacted by school staff as part of a support package.
- Children who cause concern through other contact or interactions with staff e.g. through remote learning offers etc.

## **3 Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes completing and e-mailing a Note of Concern to the safeguarding team which will then be actioned.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access a Note of Concern from home, they should email Claire Gregory, Matthew Woodcock and

[safeguarding@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk) . This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 Headteacher. This should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Paul Cavanagh@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk.

The Headteacher will offer support in the process of managing allegations.

To contact the DSL, OSL & DDSL's please e mail:

[claire.gregory@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk](mailto:claire.gregory@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk)

[matthew.woodcock@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk](mailto:matthew.woodcock@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk)

[safeguarding@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk)

The full responsibilities of the DSL, OSL and their deputies are covered in our main Safeguarding Policy.

If staff cannot reach the DSL/OSL/DDSL, and they consider a child to be at immediate risk of harm they will contact the Multi-agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) tel. (0161) 217-6028 or 6024 or the Police -999 as they feel appropriate.

The DSL/OSL/DDSL & other pastoral staff will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

\*KCSiE 2019 states " Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what "available" means and whether **in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable.**"

## **4 Young carers**

We understand that at this current time students who are young carers may benefit from additional contact and support. We are committed to working with other agencies to support their wellbeing and will take the following steps:

- Once a week phone contact with the young person.
- Make sure the young carer knows how to access advice for the person they are caring for.
- Awareness of help and support through Stockport's website for guidance.
- Offer of food support if eligible for FSM
- Recorded and report concerns in the appropriate way.

If support and guidance are required, please contact: Katy Frankland - Signpost for Young Carers in Stockport. <https://www.signpostforcarers.org.uk/>

## **5 Children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)**

Marple Hall School will contact students with an EHCP once a week and provide differentiated work as necessary, being in contact with parents and the student to see how we can support them.

## **6 Supporting children in school**

Marple Hall 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.

We 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.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, appropriate support is in place for them. This will be tailored to each child as needed and recorded on CPOMS.

Where there are concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we work with Stockport Local Authority.

## 7 Safeguarding Children (off school site)

As a school, we recognise that our students may face challenges and be exposed to risks whilst away from school/college for this extended period. School staff will still have contact with students, and we will use this time as an opportunity to offer support, advice and guidance, applying the principles of the school environment to offer suitable pastoral support. Everyone has a role to play and we expect staff to be vigilant in their interactions with students. Staff should take steps to safeguard pupils by contacting the DSL/OSL/DDSL or by making a direct referral.

**(in line with usual expectations- see school safeguarding policy and as described in section 2 above).**

## 8 Online safety

It is likely many students are accessing internet enable devices more frequently whilst families follow the advice of the government to 'stay at home'. This is also currently our primary source of contact with most of our students. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we continue to create as many opportunities as we can to support and educate children on how to stay safe online. Staff should be mindful of existing polices and the details described by the DfE in KCSiE19 -[teaching-online-safety-in-schools](#) .

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

**No webcam sessions should be used at all and any phone conversations with students should be from a work telephone number and the nature of the conversation recorded and e-mailed to the relevant year team who will record it on the communication log**

**Further advice and guidance is available from:**

Claire Gregory - DSL

Matthew Woodcock - OSL

Matt Slatter – Network Manager

## 9 Peer Abuse

Marple Hall School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing students on and off site and providing support to any report of such abuse.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in the main safeguarding policy and in part 5 of KCSIE.

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 on SIMs and e-mailed to the year **team** and appropriate referrals made.

## **10 Attendance**

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

If Marple Hall School has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

## **11 Emotional wellbeing**

We recognise the complexities and challenges of the Covid-19 crisis and the potential impact it may have on the emotional wellbeing of our staff and pupils. We will continually review guidance and cascade information across our workforce. We ask staff to be vigilant for signs of distress and to respond to them in line with our usual working practice.

<https://www.gov.uk/education/health-safety-and-wellbeing-in-schools>

The Wellbeing Lead in school can be contacted with any concerns at:

[Bryony.Cook@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk](mailto:Bryony.Cook@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk).

## **12 Encompass**

As an Encompass school we received notifications from the Police informing us when there has been an incident of domestic abuse or violence at a child's home. This process is to continue, and we will actively monitor notifications, risk assess them in conjunction with other information we hold and escalate our concerns. We will make assessments on a case by case basis of the need to contact families following a notification.

## **13 Safer recruitment & safer working practice**

Any new staff, visitors or volunteers will be risk assessed and inducted in line with existing practice and in compliance with part 3 KCSiE.

Staff should continue to apply the principles of our safer working practice standards and general code of conduct.



It is particularly important that staff pay regard to previous advice and guidance on safer worker practice, **especially in relation to any online activity**.

Marple Hall School staff have taken part in face to face training on the topic of Safer Working Practice in the Spring Term 2020

#### **14 Staff training & safeguarding induction**

All existing school/college staff have completed statutory safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE, safer working practice and the school's safeguarding policy. Staff should adhere the principles of these key documents and this supplementary guide. Staff should also be aware that there may be further updates and guidance. Individuals will need to be vigilant and ensure that they read all new guidance and ask for clarity or support if required.

The existing Stockport school and college workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. Any staff arriving at this school/college from another establishment will be given a tailored induction and copies of the school safeguarding and safer working practice policy.

# Appendices

## **Definitions**

The DfE states “Attending education settings is known as a protective factor for children receiving the support of a social worker. It is right that we prioritise support for those who will benefit the most. We are balancing this carefully with the urgent need to reduce social contact right across society to support our work to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Leaders of educational settings and designated safeguarding leads know who their most vulnerable children are and will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children’s social care support.”

### Vulnerable children (DfE definition)

The definition of and information on vulnerable children can be found by following the link below.

Please pay particular regard to Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 6, 13 and 14

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>