Child protection during the COVID-19 measures

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. From 6th January 2021 parents have been asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for vulnerable children and those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers have been asked 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. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

This Annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

1. Context
2. Version control and dissemination
3. Safeguarding priority
4. Current school position
5. Safeguarding partners' advice
6. Roles and responsibilities
7. Vulnerable children
8. Increased vulnerability or risk
9. Attendance
10. Reporting concerns about children and staff
11. Safeguarding training and induction
12. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
13. Peer on peer abuse
14. Online safety
15. New children at the school
16. Supporting children not in school

Version control and dissemination

This is version 2 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our DSL or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website here https://www.st-whites.gloucs.sch.uk/web/policies/ and is made available to staff by email. Concerns will continue to be recorded using My Concern. Any visiting staff will be given a paper copy of the key information as part of their induction process (see document below this appendix).

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times, the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Current school position

Currently, St White's Primary School is partially open to support vulnerable pupils and those whose parents are critical workers on the days when they cannot be looked after at home, in line with government expectations.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952443/210114_School_national_restrictions_guidance_FINAL_14012021.pdf

Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting children with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) either in school or at home (depending on risk assessment) the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need. The current advice is below.

We adhere to the DFE advice outlined in https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are: **01452 426565 or by email childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk**

Further details can be found at Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children executive escalation procedure, available here: **Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive**

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Child Protection Policy.

If possible, our DSLs and/or at least one deputy DSL will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video (see staff information sheet); or
- ensure we have access to a trained DSL or deputy DSL from another school or college by phone and/or online video. (Arrangement in place with Soudley School – see staff information sheet)

Where our DSLs or a deputy DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) for child protection are Clare Tilling and Erica Fearn

Deputy designated lead Roz Hewitt

Deputy designated lead Fran Cinderey

Deputy designated lead Ione Haroun

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of their chid contracting Covid 19, a senior leader

from the school and/or the social worker will discuss these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the local authority and parents to decide whether they should continue to be offered a school 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.

We will encourage our vulnerable children to continue learning either at school or remotely using the resources provided by their teachers.

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSLs (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSLs or a deputy if they have any concerns.

Incidences of Domestic Abuse are expected to significantly increase during the period of isolation as perpetrators will use this time as a "tool of coercive and controlling behaviour", and victims and their children are consistently more vulnerable during periods of societal stress see government guidance.

Operation Encompass will continue as normal with notifications being sent to the school's email addresses.

The school will always follow up on Operation Encompass emails by adding them to My Concern and monitoring the family to ensure that the children are safeguarded.

Attendance

In line with government advice, the school will complete its usual attendance registers, marking pupils present who are at school and using X codes for children who are not expected to attend,

and appropriate codes for children who are expected but are absent. The school will not pursue non-attendance with fines. Key worker parents, who require care for their child/ren because they are working, and have no other way to safely care for their child, are asked to inform the school of their requirements in advance by Friday noon, so that the school can maintain a safe number of staff in school. The school will complete the DfE attendance email daily and submit before 2pm as required.

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSLs or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as email and telephone or by contacting a relative on their contact list in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSLs or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure that neither staff nor the family are not put at risk.

Attendance of vulnerable children
We will work closely with the social workers of vulnerable children to agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. School staff will then follow up on any pupil that we were expecting to attend, who does not.
In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or stops attending school, we will notify their social worker.

Additional Steps to support with Attendance.
To support the above, we will, when communicating with parents/carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. These will be recorded on the SIMS.

Reporting concerns about children or staff
The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures, available at https://www.st-whites.gloucs.sch.uk/web/policies/ and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school. This will continue to be done through a referral on My Concern, which can be accessed remotely. DSLs will confirm by email that they have received any new concerns raised by other members of staff.
In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their My Concern from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay
We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged and can be found at:
The role of the LADO and the allegations management process - Safeguarding Children in

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and Code of Conduct Policy and Whistleblowing Policy available at https://www.st-whites.gloucs.sch.uk/web/policies/336096

Staff training and induction

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSLs and deputy DSLSs will carry out any necessary training to maintain their certification, virtually.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training (January 2021) and have read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Teachers and TAs have also read Part 5 and Annex A. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

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, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy.

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.

Currently, volunteers are not allowed on site. When this changes, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on

those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Child Protection Policy, which can be accessed on our web site.

Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. We have also reminded parents about on-line safety and information is available on our website.

Parents/carers have information via the website about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access. Parents/carers are signposted to the following Internet Support Sites:

- Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- South West Grid for Learning - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

The school has a protocol for using Microsoft Teams which is available on the website. This outlines expectations for pupils, parents and staff and is designed to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Parents who have any concerns about what is taking place during the live on-line lessons should contact the school immediately.

New children at the school

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children, we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally, this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

Supporting children not in school

Where the DSLs have identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

All children not in school will be contacted daily through remote learning. If teachers have no contact with a family, they will send reminder emails at the end of the day offering support. On Thursdays, office staff with HT and FSW will review contact lists and get in touch with families through phone, text or email where no contact has been made that week. If, by Friday, school has been unable to contact a family, staff will visit the house to ensure that everyone is safe. If no contact can be established, the police will be called.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

If you have any concerns about any children or adults in school, you must follow normal safeguarding procedures and contact the school's DSL. There will always be a DSL on site during the time that children are on site, or available by phone. If you cannot find one of the DSLs on site, their phone numbers are available on the ring-round list or from the school office.

There are 5 DSLs:
Clare Tilling DSL
Erica Fearn DSL
Roz Hewitt DDSL
Fran Cinderey DDSL
Ione Haroun DDSL

In the unlikely event that all DSLs are unwell, and therefore unavailable for offering guidance and assistance, the school has a reciprocal arrangement with Soudley school and staff can call them to speak to their DSL.

Fire Alarm

In the case of a fire alarm, teachers, or the most senior member of staff caring for a group of children is the fire marshal. They will send the children out of the building by the nearest available fire exit (usually the classroom external door) and sweep the area to ensure that no one is left behind. They will then escort the children to the MUGA where they will line up underneath the class sign for the class where they were learning.
The most senior member of St White's staff will be responsible for communicating with the fire brigade.
The most senior member of St White's administration staff will be responsible for records of who should be in the building so that there can be an accurate account given to the Fire Brigade.

Lock Down

The lock down alarm is a single blast repeated three times. If you hear this sound, you must lock all the doors of your classroom, both internal, cloakroom and external, and draw down the blinds. You will be told that the lock down is over by two blasts of the alarm.
If you are outside the building and hear the alarm, you must return to the building in the way that you left and lock the door behind you. Admin staff will ensure that entrance doors and the gymnasium doors are locked. The library doors will not be open as no children or members of staff will be using this area.