Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Fox Wood School

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Approved by:	Lucinda Duffy Headteacher	**Date:** 1/4/2020
Last reviewed on:	1/4/2020	
Next review due by:	As required	

There have been significant changes within our setting and within the UK in response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments Fox Wood School is making in line with the changed arrangements and following advice from government and local agencies. https://www.warrington.gov.uk/education-schools-and-childcare-coronavirus-update

Fox Wood School's Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: the welfare of children and young people always comes first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and referrals should continue to be made in line with our established safeguarding procedure via CPOMS and the Safeguarding Team.

The pressures on children, young people and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures for a variety of reasons including through having to stay within the household, through financial hardship or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in terms of setting any work for pupils to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning and ability to access on line resources). Staff may be aware of the mental health of both pupils and their parents or carers, and should refer to the Safeguarding Team through CPOMS about any emerging concerns.

All pupils at Fox Wood School have an EHCP and if not in school, they will receive a Welfare Check phone call from the class teacher on a Wednesday (or other time as agreed with parent/carer)

For pupils subject to a Child Protection Plan and Child in Need Plan, and who have an allocated social worker: additional weekly contact will be made by the Safeguarding Team in agreement with the family and social worker.

For pupils who are Children in Care and pupils who are entitled to free school meals: additional weekly contact will be made by the Pastoral Support officer

Contact will be made via telephone calls and/or email as appropriate

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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lianne Buchanan	foxwood_school_deputy@warrington.gov.uk
Deputy DSL	Louise Messham	lmessham@foxwoodschool.org.uk
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Lucinda Duffy Jade Ashton	foxwood_school_head@warrington.gov.uk jashton@foxwoodschool.org.uk
Headteacher	Lucinda Duffy	foxwood_school_head@warrington.gov.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Beki Byron	**LADO@warrington.gov.uk**
Chair of governors	Trish Chapman	trish.chapman@ntlworld.com

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners and Warrington local authority (LA).

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers, and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

- Have a social worker, including children:
  - With a child protection plan
  - Assessed as being in need
  - Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

Staff and volunteers should still report concerns in the usual way to the Safeguarding Team via CPOMS.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

All of our senior leaders have completed DSL training. All senior staff are currently working and contactable via their usual email addresses and through CPOMS for school staff. When the school is open a senior member of staff with the appropriate DSL training will be on site. Details of these staff are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

We will ensure that all members of the Safeguarding Team, wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

The senior leader on site will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school
- Update and manage access to child protection files, through CPOMS
- Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners
- The Warrington local authority about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

6. 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 without a reasonable and communicated reason, or suddenly stops attending without any prior warning. In these cases, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by telephone and/or email
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

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

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately and report these via CPOMS.

8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately and raise these directly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns

We have the option to offer places in school to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10.1 below.

10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

10.1 Contact plans

We have contact plans for all children, and further contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or
- They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

These plans set out:

- How often the school will make contact
- Which staff member(s) will make contact
- How they will make contact

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them as often as necessary as changes occur and/or in line with national or local guidance

If we can't make contact, we will contact children's social care and/or the police as required.

10.2 Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately. In particular, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school. Our IT company UTL and the safeguarding team will monitor procedures accordingly.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online through Evidence for Learning or on the telephone, they will continue to follow our existing staff code of conduct. We are ensuring appropriate safeguarding practices in our approach to remote learning – for example, by uploading agreed tasks onto our online learning journal Evidence for Learning, pre-recording videos to share on our social media pages and telephoning parents/carers during weekly welfare calls. Staff may also ask to speak to the pupil with their parent.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

Staff can access further guidance here:

https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-10-safeguarding-rules-teachers-home

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely/

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/internet-connected-devices/

11.3 Working with parents and carers

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

This information will be provided on our school website and social media pages. Activities for pupils will be uploaded to our secure online learning journal, Evidence for Learning. Parents/carers have individual links and passwords to access activities for their child.

12. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

Restrictions to movement and contact with other people means pupils are more likely to be at risk of mental health problems. The Department for Education have produced guidance to support parents:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

The following organisations can also provide support:

www.kooth.com – Free online emotional wellbeing and counselling with self-help articles

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/

Calm Harm App – A phone app providing help for those who use self-harm as a coping strategy; https://calmharm.co.uk/

13. Staff recruitment, training and induction

13.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

If staff need to be 'loaned' from another school, the safeguarding team will fully risk assess staff members and complete our own enhanced safeguarding checks. We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

13.3 Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

13.4 Keeping records of who's on site

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

14. Children attending other settings

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the child's social worker
- Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO can't share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 weeks by Lianne Buchanan (DSL). At every review, it will be approved by the chair of governors who is also the safeguarding governor.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Staff code of conduct
- IT acceptable use policy

- Health and safety policy
- Online safety policy
- Whistleblowing policy