

### **Appendix 3 - Coronavirus (COVID - 19) - Safeguarding in a Pandemic**

This appendix has been written in March 2020 in line with the document from the Government -

**Coronavirus (COVID - 19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other provisions**  
**Published 27 March 2020**

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline, is available to answer questions.

Email [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk) Telephone 0800 046 8687

#### **Role of the local authority**

The department is working very closely with all local authorities to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend a school or college. The department will, via regional school commissioners, continue to support local authorities' crucial responsibilities in maintaining effective safeguarding and child protection services in this challenging time to ensure schools and colleges can access the support they need - for **Morden Primary School** this is **MASH** and the **Social Care Sector** via a named social worker when relevant.

#### **Safeguarding and clusters**

If our school and other schools collaborate and children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#) and this appendix continue to apply. In particular, the school or college that is acting as the hub in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required. Additional advice on clusters and safeguarding will be provided in due course by the department of education.

#### **Keeping children safe in schools and colleges**

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools should continue to have regard to as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements.

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that our school is under, it remains essential that as far as possible we continue to be a safe place for children. Morden Primary school has considered that our policy and process is now slightly different when compared to business as usual.

The way our school is 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 Morden Primary school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act immediately speaking directly to a DSL.
- a DSL or deputy should be available either onsite or contactable straight away at home if working from home.
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the school and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

Morden Primary school, as far as is reasonably possible, takes a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

### **Child protection policy**

Morden Primary has this effective child protection policy in place reflecting business as usual. This appendix has been written to reflect new arrangements in response to **COVID-19**. This appendix will be kept under review as circumstances continue to evolve.

This **COVID-19** addendum summarises any key **COVID-19** related changes which is more effective than re-writing and re-issuing the whole policy.

As a school we are adhering to;

- any updated advice from the local 3 safeguarding partners.
- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding 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.

**Merton LA responsibilities** - we have daily updates from Elizabeth Fitzpatrick regarding advice for schools. These are disseminated to Senior leads, DSL/ DDSL and other staff as needed. Our MEP, Ewan Morrison is in contact most days with new guidance and advice. The continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. If a member of staff is concerned they must follow the normal school protocols of contacting a **DSL/DDSLS IMMEDIATELY** if they have a concern. If you are working in the school building with critical workers' children, speak to the **DSL immediately. YOU MUST ACT TO SAFEGUARD** the child/children immediately.

### **Morden Primary School list of DSL/DDSLS**

**Anna Kira DSL, DHT**

**Peta Blow DDSL, HT**

**Jim Carrington DDSL, Inclusion Manager**

School staff all understand the importance of their duty for our staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances school is operating in, a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. All staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

If staff are aware or have a concern that any of the above is happening with a child in a family at our school whether they are attending or home learning it **MUST** be reported in the same way as normal by speaking **IMMEDIATELY** to a **DSL/DDSL**.

Staff must follow the normal procedures of speaking to a **DSL/DDSL** if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how Morden Primary School responds to any such concerns)

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then:

- this should be referred to the Headteacher or in her absence a DSL;
- where there are concerns/allegations about the Headteacher, this should be referred to the Chair of governors;

The **DSL/DDSL** have a list of children who do and do not meet the vulnerable definition and are not accessing the provision. Each member of this team will be contacting the families - the arrangements and time between the contact depend on the individual. If it is felt that there is a cause for concern then the **DSL/DDSL** will act in accordance with our normal reporting procedures.

Schools will inform parents to keep their children safe online and when accessing the Google Classrooms.

### **Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)**

The optimal scenario for our school when we are providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or DDSL on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case there are two options available to us:

1. a trained DSL or deputy from the school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home, this will be stated on the staff rota.

2. sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video) if all 3 DSLs are no longer available.

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained **DSL or DDSL** deputy and will know on any given day via the rota who that person is and how to speak to them.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored if all 3 DSL/DDSLS become unavailable). For the period **COVID-19** measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy DSL) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy DDSL) even if they miss their refresher training. Every school will face unique challenges at this time.

### **Vulnerable children**

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. Vulnerable children include those who have a **social worker** and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with **EHC plans**, read more in the [guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) for further information.

**Local authorities (Merton)** have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend provision, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.

The Social Worker Manager **MUST** agree to the child/children not accessing the provision not just the Social Worker working with the family (*Merton MEP guidance 27.3.20*). Morden Primary senior leaders know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support. We will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the **COVID-19** period.

### **Attendance**

Local authorities (Merton) and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. School and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, on the first day the children access the school provision or when communicating with parents and carers whose child hasn't accessed the onsite school provision to 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, school should notify their social worker.

The department has introduced a [daily online attendance form](#) to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places. The admin team **MUST** submit this to the by noon each day - even if the school has no children attending that day. Merton LA has also asked our school to submit an Excel spreadsheet via USOfx each day regarding the attendance of the 140+ critical workers, vulnerable and/or EHCP children. The admin team will be responsible for this.

### **Staff training and safeguarding induction**

All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read **part 1 of KCSIE 2019**. The important thing for these staff will be awareness that our reporting of disclosures is the same as normal via face to face/telephone conversation immediately with a **DSL/DDSL**.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This **child protection policy** will support this process as will **Part 1 of KCSIE**.

### **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. If schools and colleges are recruiting [guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking](#)

Morden Primary School is not utilising volunteers at present. If this were to change we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in **paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE 2019**. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

School should continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per **paragraph 166 of KCSIE 2019 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk). All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, school must continue to keep the **single central record (SCR) up to date** as outlined in **paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE 2019**. The SCR can, if school chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

## **Mental Health**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely.

Where they are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, school should ensure appropriate support is in place for them. The department's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone by the **Inclusion team members**) or from specialist staff or support services. See [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

## **Online safety in schools and colleges**

It will be more important than ever that schools and colleges provide a safe environment, including online. School have consulted our IT Technician in regards to continuing to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school or college's IT systems or recommended resources. School has a competent IT Technician in place with the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. School has also considered what their contingency arrangements are if their IT Technician becomes unavailable - we would work with the LA - Mark Hovell and Derek Crabtree.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. Local authorities may also be able to provide support.

## **Children and online safety away from school and college**

All schools and colleges should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the school or 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. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per this child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. It will set out 4 key areas that leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. This includes the use of technology. Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) could help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely. School should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct). This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student

relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

As with this child protection policy, in some cases an annex/addendum summarising key **COVID-19** related changes may be more effective than re-writing/re-issuing the whole policy.

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

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

School is in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies. In their communications with parents and carers, schools and colleges should emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London 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 carer

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of this addendum to our policy and are kept up to date as it is revised.

The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.