

Annex 1

Child Protection COVID-19 school closure arrangements

Annex Date: 23rd March 2020

Key contact details

This annex provides guidance to all adults working within the school whether paid or voluntary or directly employed by the school or by a third party.

Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory safeguarding guidance we will continue to have regard to as per our legislative duty. The government has provided additional guidance to support governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in order that they can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep their children safe. The additional guidance for the COVID-19 period can be found here:

<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>

This annex should be read alongside Bluebell Park's Child Protection policy, Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, and in conjunction with Part 1 of the School Improvement Liverpool Schools Safeguarding Handbook which is made available to all staff and volunteers.

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 the government asked parents to keep their children at home, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response where those workers have no other safe arrangements for the care of their child/ren.

Schools were also asked to provide care for additional children. These children were identified by the government as being vulnerable due to social care involvement, or as a result of Special Educational Needs or Disability. Further detail is specified in section 2 below.

During this time, Bluebell Park School will do what it reasonably can in order to keep all of our children safe. In most cases, the majority of our children will not physically be attending the school. It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk. Any such concerns will be dealt with in line with our main Child Protection policy and local safeguarding arrangements. Where appropriate, referrals will still be made to children's services and as required, the police, **without delay**.

Our school is open and offering childcare to pupils from our school who meet the criteria set out by the Government; in conjunction with parental decisions; in consultation with health and social care agencies where appropriate; and based on a risk assessment to ensure staff and pupils are able to be accommodated safely.

This addendum to our Child Protection policy specifies the details of our safeguarding arrangements during this time, until school is instructed it can safely fully open again.

2. Vulnerable Children

During school closures due to COVID-19, schools are required to provide care to children identified as being vulnerable.

The government defines vulnerable children as those who have a social worker and those children and young people up until the age of 25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).

Further information about vulnerable children can be found here:

<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>

Children who have a social worker include children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be considered vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children with an EHC Plan will be risk assessed to determine whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children with EHC Plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals is not a determining factor when assessing vulnerability.

The government expects that vulnerable children with a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions which put them at increased risk. Where a parent does not want to bring their child to a school or hub setting and the child is deemed vulnerable, the social worker will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Whilst Looked After Children are deemed vulnerable, many Looked After Children can safely remain at home. Decisions regarding attendance of Looked After Children should be made in conjunction with the Virtual School Headteacher for the Local Authority area. Schools have flexibility and are able to offer a place to those children they determine to be vulnerable, particularly those who are on the edge of receiving support or assessment from children's services.

Bluebell Park School will continue to work with and support children's services to help protect vulnerable children. This is especially important during the COVID-19 period.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Schools should attempt to ensure there is always a trained DSL or deputy available on site. All safeguarding concerns should be reported **without delay** to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. It is recognised however that this may not be possible and where this is the case, Bluebell Park School will consider the following options:

- A trained DSL or deputy is available to be contacted via phone, email or video call when working from home
- Sharing trained DSLs or deputies from other schools, who would be available to contact via phone, email or video call.

If it is not possible to have a trained DSL or deputy on site, we will ensure that there is a senior leader who takes responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site. This senior leader can also take advice from School Improvement Liverpool's School Improvement Officers for Safeguarding:

It is essential that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy and are made aware of the arrangements on a daily basis regarding who that named person is and how to speak to them.

Staff should follow the procedures set out in the main Child Protection policy for contacting and reporting concerns to the DSL and/or deputy. School staff can continue to raise concerns using the CPOMS system which will be regularly monitored.

Throughout the COVID-19 period, the safeguarding team will continue to engage with social workers and attend and contribute to all multi-agency meetings, as determined by the local procedures for remote meetings.

It is acknowledged by the government that face to face DSL training is unlikely to take place during the COVID-19 period. For the period these 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 missed their refresher training.

4. Safeguarding procedures

The Headteacher should follow the normal safeguarding operating procedures for managing an educational setting or school and should adhere to the school's own child protection, managing allegations policies and staff code of conduct. For example, everyone should be aware of children with specific safeguarding or health needs or disabilities. Medicines should be stored and administered safely. Everyone should be clear as to the setting's child protection and fire evacuation procedures. Everyone on site should know how to contact the Hub's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputies and First Aiders. If staff are working on a rota basis, there should always be appropriately trained key personnel on site. The names of these staff should be displayed and updated as required.

Each school must follow normal their Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures

Liverpool	www.liverpoolsbc.proceduresonline.com/
Halton	www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/halton/index.html
Knowsley	www.knowsleyscb.org.uk/professionals/multi-agency-procedures/
Sefton	www.seftonscb.safeguardingpolicies.org.uk/may-2017/procedures-manual/1-introductionlevel-of-need
St Helens	www.sthelensscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm
Warrington	www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/warrington/index.html
Wigan	www.wigan.gov.uk/WSCB/index.aspx
Wirral	www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/

All safeguarding concerns should be reported **without delay** to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

If any member of staff believes a child is at risk of harm then the Designated Safeguarding Lead should ring **children's services, without delay**. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is *unavailable* then **any** member of staff should ensure children's services is contacted without delay.

Liverpool Careline Hub 0151 233 3700
Halton Social Care Contact Centre 0151 907 8305 (Out of hours 0345 050 0148)
Knowsley MASH 0151 443 2600
Sefton 0345 140 0845 (Out of hours 0151 934 3555)
St Helens Contact Centre 01744 676 600
Warrington 01925 443322 (Out of hours 01925 444400)
Wigan Duty Team 01942 828300 (Emergency out of hours duty 0161 834 2436)
Wirral Integrated Front Door 0151 606 2008 (Out of hours 0151 677 6557)

If a child is in immediate/imminent danger then staff should ring the police.

Safeguarding-mate can provide additional key guidance to all staff regarding key safeguarding procedures www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk/safeguarding-mate/

If colleagues need further safeguarding guidance or support then they should email safeguarding@si.liverpool.gov.uk providing a mobile number for either Phil Cooper or Nicola Noon to contact them.

Concerns regarding the conduct of staff should be dealt with in line with the setting's managing allegations policy.

Where staff in school have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in our main Child Protection policy. This includes making a report via CPOMS. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

If a member of staff believes a child is at risk of harm then the Designated Safeguarding Lead should ring **children's services, without delay**. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is *unavailable* then **any** member of staff should ensure children's services is contacted without delay.

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If a child is in immediate/imminent danger then staff should ring the police.

[Safeguarding-mate](#) can provide additional key guidance to all staff regarding key safeguarding procedures www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk/safeguarding-mate/

Concerns regarding the conduct of a member of staff should continue to be dealt with in line with our managing allegations policy.

5. Attendance monitoring

Local Authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day to day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

The DfE have devised an online form and supporting spreadsheet for the COVID-19 period. It can be found here:

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

A daily online attendance form will be submitted to the DfE by 12 noon each day for all those children in attendance. This is to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows a record for safeguarding purposes and ensures schools provide accurate, up to date data to the Department for Education on the number of children taking up places. Pupil numbers are submitted to the local authority each day.

The school should follow up with any parents/carers or social workers who have arranged care for their child but their child subsequently does not attend. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up a place at a Hub/setting, and was expected to, the social worker should be informed.

6. Children moving between schools and Hubs

Where it is identified that a child from Bluebell Park School is attending another setting, we will share relevant welfare and child protection information with the DSL for that setting. The receiving setting should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and the arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, we will share the child's EHC Plan, Child in Need plan, Child Protection Plan or for looked after children, their personal education plan. The name of the child's social worker will also be shared. We intend that this will happen prior to the child arriving in the new setting but where that is not possible, we will share as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Schools must have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR, but this does not prevent sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

7. Safer Recruitment 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. Schools should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, set out in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Where schools are using volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (paragraphs 167 to 172). Bluebell Park School will ensure that there are no circumstances where a volunteer who has not been checked will be left unsupervised with children or allowed to work in regulated activity. If new staff or volunteers are recruited, the usual Safer Recruitment processes will be followed, and they will also be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Our school workforce may be asked to temporarily move to another school setting to support the care of children. There is no expectation that a new Enhanced DBS with Barred List check will be obtained by the new setting. As the current employer, Bluebell Park School can provide assurance to the new setting that the individual has been subject to the correct pre-employment checks (including an Enhanced DBS and Barred List check). If there are current concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children or there are ongoing disciplinary investigations relating to safeguarding involving that individual, they should not be deployed in an alternative setting.

In order to support the running of our school, members of staff from outside of our workforce may temporarily move to work within our setting. Where they engage in regulated activity as part of their normal work and they already have the appropriate Enhanced DBS with Barred List check, there is no expectation that a new check will be applied for. The type of setting on a DBS check, e.g. a specific category of school, is not a barrier. Similarly, the same principle applies if other workers move to temporarily work in a school setting. Our school will risk assess each situation and we will satisfy ourselves that each person in our setting has had the required level of checks. We will seek written assurance from the individual's current employer as opposed to undertaking new checks. The risk assessment will take into account the highly individualised needs of our pupils and the risks that bringing in unfamiliar staff may have for the pupils.

The Headteacher will ensure that:

Each member of staff presents with their employee photo ID and either one of the following:

1. Their original Enhanced DBS Certificate confirming a children's barred list check has been undertaken
2. Written confirmation from their employer that an Enhanced DBS Certificate with a children's barred list check has been undertaken.

Photo ID only is required for supervised visitors and also for Police, Health and Children's Services.

There is no statutory expectation for schools to renew their DBS certificates every three years. Most schools do not retain DBS numbers as there is no statutory requirement to do so. For members of staff who present their DBS certificate and are also part of the DBS Update Service, an online check can be undertaken to establish if their certificate is still valid <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

Any volunteers must be supervised and a risk assessment undertaken (see template in the School's Safeguarding Handbook).

Upon arrival at the school, new staff and volunteers will be given a copy of the setting's Child Protection policy, staff code of conduct, confirmation of DSL arrangements and the setting's [Safeguarding Induction Booklet](#).

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff or volunteers will be on site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out. As such, we will continue to keep our Single Central Record (SCR) up to date. We will use our SCR to record all those working or volunteering, including those who are temporarily working there from other settings. The SCR can also log details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere.

Bluebell Park 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 (as per paragraph 163 of Keeping Children Safe in Education)

Bluebell Park School will also continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (as per paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education). During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

8. Mental Health

It is acknowledged that the current circumstances surrounding COVID-19 are particularly stressful and may cause increased anxieties and stress for all members of our school community. When children and staff are away from their usual routine and social contact, this can become a negative and stressful experience. Bluebell Park School will ensure there is appropriate support available for the whole school community at this time. Support can include existing provision in the school, or from specialist staff or support services. Where children of critical workers and vulnerable children continue to attend the setting, appropriate support will be offered to them whilst on site.

The school community can also be signposted to the government's advice on supporting children and young people's mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak, available here:

<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](#)

Staff should also be aware of the mental health of their pupils and parents when setting expectations regarding pupil's work when they are at home.

9. Online safety in schools and Hubs

Where the site remains open, Bluebell Park School will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources. Measures will be put in place to ensure safe IT arrangements and Bluebell Park School will consider what the contingency arrangements are if the named IT staff become unavailable.

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

10. Online safety away from schools and Hubs

Please note: The Department for Education will provide separate guidance on providing education remotely, which will set out four key areas leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. It is recommended that schools review the following recently published guidance:

<https://coronavirus.lafl.net/safeguarding>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/working-remotely-advice-professionals-parents-posh-rhc>

<https://swfl.org.uk/resources/safe-remote-learning/>

Where children are not physically attending a school or hub, Bluebell Park School will consider the safety of our children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching remains the same as the principles set out in our school's staff code of conduct. This policy includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media. This policy applies equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which have been introduced. The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) should be adhered to by all staff.

Any online learning tools or systems recommended for use by Bluebell Park School, are be in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Due to the individualised learning needs of our pupils, we will be giving lists of suggested websites/apps that can support learning. We will use a section of our website for this and have alerted to parents the need for safe use of the internet at this time via our website.

Our school will also be in contact with parents and carers during this time. Communication with parents will reinforce the importance of children being safe online. Families will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and who their child is going to be interacting with online, including members of staff from our school.

Bluebell Park School acknowledges that some parents and carers may choose to supplement the school's online offer with support from online companies and in some cases, individual tutors. We will raise awareness with parents the importance of only accessing online support from a reputable organisation or individual who can provide evidence that they are a safe organisation and can be trusted to have access to children. We will signpost parents to support such as [Internet matters](#), [London Grid for Learning](#), [Net-aware](#), [Parent info](#), [Thinkuknow](#) and the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

11. Operation Encompass

When we receive an operation encompass notification relating to a pupil at our school, during the COVID-19 period, our response may be different to normal. If the subject of the notification remains in attendance at our Bluebell Park School, we will follow our usual procedures. If the child is in attendance at an alternative Hub/school, we will securely share the information with the DSL for that setting. If the child is not attending any setting and is being cared for at home, we will risk assess the situation taking into consideration the history of the child and family. This information will be used in order to determine our response to each individual case. In all situations we would always aim to speak to the child.

12. Peer on peer abuse

Bluebell Park School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within our main Child Protection policy. We 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 will be recorded using the agreed methods and appropriate referrals made.