

KWS Educational Services

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
COVID-19 school arrangements.
March 2020-July 2020

Amended throughout the pandemic and approved by trustees, following government guidance, and specifically the DfE update “Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers” published on 20/5/20.

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Covid-19 School Closure & Phased Return

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible and where it was safer to do so. Those students who were identified as vulnerable (EHCP or involvement from social care) were advised to continue to attend school. KWS closed for students on Tuesday 24th March due to parent decisions to keep their children safe at home. From May 11th we opened our doors to 4 students wishing to return and from June 1st this increased to 15 out of a possible 22. Priority will continue to be given to encouraging those children remaining at home to attend school, although as a school we respect that families will decide when it is right for their child to begin to enter society again.

As a school we have risk-assessed all our students and staff, identifying whether it is safe for the student to remain home. These have been shared with local authorities on a regular basis, and are completed fortnightly.

The wider phased return from June 1st has been carefully planned with reference to Department for Education guidance:

- Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1st June 2020
- Implementing Protective Measures in Education and Childcare Settings
- Covid-19 Safeguarding in Schools, Colleges and Other Providers

This addendum of the KWS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements during this time, to protect all children, whether attending school or remaining at home, from harm and abuse.

KWS is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its students and staff. The following safeguarding principles remain unchanged:

- Always consider the child first and what life is like for that child, maintaining a culture of vigilance
- Provide support and intervention at the earliest possible opportunity in the least intrusive way in accordance with LSCB Thresholds Framework
- Have conversations, build relationships and maintain professional curiosity
- Focus on securing improved outcomes for children
- Build a culture of openness and transparency where all staff are able to demonstrate an understanding of their role and their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Every child is entitled to a rich and rounded curriculum
- When issues arise, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should speak out, addressing them internally where possible and engaging in a multi-agency response when required in accordance with inter-agency procedures

Supporting Children In School

KWS is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its students.

KWS will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement protective COVID secure measures including social distancing; [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

The school continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing, small groups and teaching 'bubbles' and other measures to limit the risk of spread of Covid-19.

We recognise that for most of our children the return to school after an extended period of time at home will be challenging and staff will support children to adjust to the necessary changes to the school environment and routines. Supporting pupil well-being will be at the forefront of our approach and school staff will seek to provide reassurance to pupils as we manage the transition period. Staff will talk to the children about the changes to the school day in an age appropriate manner, acknowledge and listen to pupil anxieties and support children to understand the altered routines.

KWS recognises that the current circumstances may adversely affect the mental health of children and their parents. School staff have been briefed to look out for changes in behaviour or in a child's emotional state, which could range from being excessively clingy, fearful, withdrawn or aggressive as more children return to school. As always, pupil well-being is at the heart of our work, and school staff will seek to provide appropriate support for pupils both in school and where required from specialist services.

We recognise that for some children, home may not be a safe space, and there may be children who are relieved to return to school. School staff have been reminded of the need to respond sensitively to pupils' differing experiences during the period of school closure. School staff have been asked to be particularly vigilant, as more children return to school, for signs and indicators that a child may have experienced abuse or neglect. School staff have been trained about how to handle a disclosure from a child, and understand that any safeguarding concerns, including those that relate to the period of school closure, must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) in the usual way.

Prior to children returning to school, parents and carers will be asked to ensure that all personal details held by the school, such as emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. At this time, parents and carers will also be asked to advise the school if there are any changes regarding the child's welfare, health and well-being that it would help school to be made aware of. Where the school is aware of particular circumstances affecting a child or family, such as bereavement, a relationship breakdown, an incident of domestic violence, this will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis so that children can be best supported.

Supporting Children Not in School

During school closure, a robust timetable of contact arrangements will be devised to ensure that all families have at least weekly contact. Where appropriate the child may be spoken to directly. The DSL will maintain well-being contact with the families weekly, ensuring that any support needed, or advice requested is given.

For our students, routine is key, and so KWS have also devised a home timetable as an option for students to follow, and work will be sent home weekly that addressed the needs of each particular student. We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. All staff at KWS need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

KWS also recognises that some children may be too anxious to return to school on the dates started, and that some parents/carers of children eligible to attend may choose not to send them to school at this time. For all children remaining at home the schedule of contact and support will continue, with the DSL being the main point of contact.

Where the DSL has identified a child about whom there have been concerns but not currently open to social care, or who would normally receive extra pastoral support in school, a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. All communications are recorded onto SchoolPod and a tight schedule of communication with families is maintained by the DSL and shared with other agencies and trustees as appropriate.

If we are unable to contact a child about whom there have been concerns after a reasonable number of attempts, we will seek further support from other agencies.

The school will share safeguarding messages and updates on its website and social media pages.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Arrangements

KWS has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Susannah King

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s is/are: Sarah Nichols-Weaver

We will at all times have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where, for unforeseen circumstances this is not possible, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone (or email *or through our electronic recording system, SchoolPod*). Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to being contactable by phone, a senior leader will be the named person to be the first point of call on-site to liaise with the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Vulnerable children

All vulnerable children continue to be eligible to attend school during the period of phased opening. This applies regardless of whether their year group is due to return to school as part of the government's phased return, and regardless of whether they had chosen to access school provision prior to the phased return.

Vulnerable children include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the school and local authority's discretion

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those about whom there have been concerns but not currently open to Social Care. Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. However, as a school KWS will offer FoodBank vouchers to families on a regular basis.

KWS will continue to work with and support children's Social Workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's Social Workers and the Local Authority Virtual School Head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Any planned, or unplanned meetings, will be attended by the DSL either by telephone or video call.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a Social Worker will attend an education setting, unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the Social Worker and KWS will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Together we will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – KWS will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, school or the Social Worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. KWS will encourage all of our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the DSL will notify their Social Worker and local authority.

Online safety in schools and colleges

KWS will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Children and online safety away from school and 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 the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made by the DSL to children's social care and as required, the police.

School closures bring lots of challenges for both school staff and parents, and both are increasingly looking to the benefits of technology to continue delivering some form of learning experience for children. As always, there are huge benefits to be gained from the appropriate use of technology, and accessing learning resources whilst at home is a great example of this. However, parents (and school staff) need to be aware of the potential risks that go along with this.

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

Peer on Peer Abuse

KWS recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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 and appropriate referrals made.

Radicalisation

School staff have received training about Prevent. The school has a Prevent Lead: Susannah King. All school staff are aware of the need to treat concerns about radicalisation as safeguarding concerns, and immediately share them with their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). DSLs continue to refer concerns about radicalisation to partner agencies, including Channel Panel which remains operational, in line with usual procedures. The Department for Education has also published information: prevent management support for schools and colleges.

Children moving schools

As always, where children join our school from other settings, we will seek confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File and ensure we have a copy of their EHCP. This file must be provided securely before the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe.

In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed Social Worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head.

Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. KWS uses an electronic recording system, SchoolPod, which staff are able to access from home. However, in the first instance, staff should talk to the DSL on site where the concern presents imminent risk.

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 DSL or Headteacher; if there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, 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 Trustees: Magdalena Nichols.

Attendance monitoring

KWS will continue taking attendance registers from 1 June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending:

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

We are also sending this information to the Local Authority via a local survey to inform local planning for children in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire.

KWS will continue to follow up with any parent/carer if they were expecting the child to attend and they subsequently do not attend school. Non-attendance will be

followed up in line with the school's normal attendance protocols. In addition the social worker and local authority will continue to be informed if a child with a Social Worker does not attend school.

Safeguarding training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. In the interim, Designated Safeguarding Leads continue to keep themselves up to date with safeguarding developments through updates from parallel colleagues, The Key and DfE.

For the period COVID-19 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 miss their refresher training.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board is providing advice and guidance, where needed, to schools through a dedicated helpline and frequent emails.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). In addition, staff will complete further online safeguarding training via Educare as directed by the Headteacher during lockdown and throughout the period of the pandemic (March 2020-June 2020). The courses completed by staff will be logged and evidenced in our usual staff record keeping system.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter KWS, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, guidance on local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

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, KWS will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

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.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children

- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

In addition, we will expect all new staff/volunteers to complete our COVID 19 survey to ensure that they do not pose a risk to our staff and students with regard to COVID 19. Should any signs of the virus be evident we would expect them to immediately inform the school and isolate at home for the recommended number of days.

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason the school have concerns about an individual, new checks will be obtained in the usual way.

In the event that KWS are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

KWS 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. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

KWS will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE 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

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, KWS will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Whistleblowing

If at anytime throughout the pandemic, staff, volunteers or other agencies feel that there are concerns that need to be raised with regard to the practices of KWS, then they should refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.