

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Berkshire Schools Trust

School Name: New Town Primary School

Date: 10th April 2020

Date shared with staff: 10th April 2020

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were 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.

This addendum of the Berkshire Schools Trust (BST) Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Vulnerable children

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

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college 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.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

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 on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Berkshire Schools Trust schools 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.

The lead person for this at New Town Primary School is Polly Cornish.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. 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 the school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the school's DSL or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

All schools within the Trust will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend their school, the Trust hub (St John's) or another local school or hub in consultation with the LA. Where a child is attending a school that is not their usual school, it is the responsibility of the SENCo and the DSL for that school to make contact with the new setting and share relevant information (e.g. the child's EHCP, CP plan or PEP) about that child to ensure the necessary support is in place.

Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

Each Trust school, in consultation with social workers, will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. The school DSL will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) which does not include attending one of the suggested schools by the DSL.

How will this look in your school?

To support the above, if the child has chosen not to attend school or the Trust hub school, the New Town designated senior lead will be in contact with the vulnerable pupils as required via a school phone. The DSL will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. Head teacher and Interim head teacher will be kept up to date by the designated senior lead.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school DSL will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each Trust school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at New Town Primary School is Polly Cornish.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead at New Town Primary School is Penny Cornish.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone for example when working from home. Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

Where children are attending the Trust Hub school, any concerns should be reported direct to the DSL in the school that day. The DSL on duty that day will then report all concerns and any updates to the relevant DSL for each school via email as well as phone contact (see contact list above). This will include taking hand written notes and emailing these to the relevant DSL. These notes will then be uploaded onto CPOMs (or the currently embedded school system of reporting) by the DSL and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

It is important that all Berkshire Schools Trust staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on any of the school sites will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should immediately talk to the DSL onsite at the time, and then follow up with a written report using a form collected from the DSL. This will then be passed to the lead DSL at the relevant school for recording or filing as per local procedures.

If staff have safeguarding concerns when they are outside of school, they should immediately call the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the relevant school. This will ensure that the concern is received and can be acted upon with the required level of urgency. However, staff need to be mindful that DSLs who are informed of concerns about a child's welfare outside of school hours may have very limited abilities to deal with these straight away, and staff should make a professional judgement as to whether to call the police if it is a significant and urgent concern.

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 this face to face with the DSL and support this with a written log via CPOMS (or the currently embedded school system of reporting). 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. The LA LADO is available via the LADO email LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org or using his phone number 07841253871 and can support with any concerns as usual.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors:
Stewart Johnston: cognewtown@newtown.reading.sch.uk
Or the CEO: Angharad Brackstone: CEO@berkshireschoolstrust.org

The Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus.

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.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and were reminded of this at the start of April 2020. The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the Trust, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction by the DSL on duty that day as well as the headteacher remotely. All new staff will be given copies of the Child Protection policy, the relevant settings processes and who their school DSL is.

If staff are deployed from another BST school, this should not affect safeguarding as the trust share a child protection policy. For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Multi- Academy Trust (MAT) HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training. Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving 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, Berkshire Schools Trust 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.

Where BST decide to utilize 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.

BST 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.

BST 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, each of the Trust schools will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety in schools and colleges

New Town 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 Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the MAT code of conduct.

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

The Trust does not allow teachers to deliver live virtual lessons. Where Youtube clips of a teacher are made available for parents and children, the following guidance applies:

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred/ plain (not containing any personal items).
- Any session should be of a reasonable length (no longer than 30 minutes) which allows the family to 'get on with their day'.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms approved by New Town to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date of any video and must gain approval of any video from the headteacher before uploading it

Supporting children not in school

BST is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people. Where a concern is raised about a child who may be on the edge of social care support, the school will follow its usual procedures of making contact with that family and will consider any referrals as appropriate.

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

Berkshire Schools Trust recognises 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. Teachers at New Town need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

The Trust will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS (or the currently embedded school system of reporting) and reported to the DSL of the school the child attends.

Supporting children in school

Berkshire Schools Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. The Hub school (St John's) will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Berkshire Schools Trust will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

Where the Hub school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the Trust.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Berkshire Schools Trust 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 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 on CPOMS (or the currently embedded school system of reporting), and appropriate referrals made.

Support from Berkshire Schools Trust

BST Central Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively. This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

The Trust may also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions.

This may take the form of an online meeting.