



**DARWEN  
VALE**

An Aldridge Community Academy 

# Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Policy Title:	Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum
Version:	1.1
Approval Date:	30/11/2021
Date Of Next Review:	29/11/2022
Policy Upholder:	David Smalley

## Contents

Important contacts .....	2
1. Scope and definitions .....	3
2. Core safeguarding principles .....	3
3. Reporting concerns.....	3
4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements .....	3
5. Working with other agencies .....	4
6. Monitoring attendance .....	4
7. Peer-on-peer abuse.....	4
8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer .....	5
9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns .....	5
10. Contact plans .....	5
11. Safeguarding all children .....	7
12. Online safety .....	7
13. Mental health .....	8
14. Staff recruitment, training and induction .....	8
15. Children attending other settings.....	9
16. Monitoring arrangements.....	9
17. Links with other policies.....	9

---

## Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	David Smalley	DSmalley@darwenvale.com
Deputy DSL		
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Ruth Cull	Ruth.Cull@darwenvale.com
Principal	Matthew Little	Matthew.Little@darwenvale.com
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Megan Dumpleton	Megan.dumpleton@blackburn.gov.uk
Chair of governors	Ian Richardson	chair@darwenvale.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 [Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, NHS Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Lancashire Constabulary] and local authority (LA) Blackburn with Darwen.

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, both for children still attending school and those at home. **As pupils begin to return back to school, staff may identify new safeguarding concerns as they see them in person. All new concerns identified need to be reported in line with the school's procedure.**

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

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible, **and as more pupils return to school, the expectation will be that the DSL or deputy DSL will be on site every day.** Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important Contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be in school, they can be contacted remotely by: [DSmallley@darwenvale.com](mailto:DSmallley@darwenvale.com)

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed by email/website/ weekly briefings / school newsletter as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Ruth Cull, Vice Principal. You can contact them by: [Ruth.cull@darwenvale.com](mailto:Ruth.cull@darwenvale.com)

The senior leader 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, where necessary
- Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments
- Contact students and families where this is necessary

The DSL or deputy DSL will ensure that they are doing all they reasonably can to ask parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a child returns back to school

## 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 to ensure that they are supported in order to return back to school, so long as there are no shielding concerns. We will also ensure that we work with any other identified safeguarding or welfare partner to help protect children identified as vulnerable and encourage their attendance. This will be done in line with the following statutory guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

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

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners
- The 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

See School Safeguarding Policy for guidance

<http://www.darwenvale.com/policies>

## 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, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by contacting with a telephone call.
- 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, through regular interaction with parents/carers and other agencies.

## 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 – about both children attending school and those at home.

Staff will in the first instance contact DSL to outline concerns they have or concerns that have been brought to their attention.

## 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 – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

Staff should in the first instance raise any concerns they have with the School Principal who will immediately contact the LADO to seek advice on next steps before an investigation is deemed necessary or is initiated.

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](mailto: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. For example, children who have previously had a social worker, those families experiencing financial difficulties, or who haven't met the threshold for a referral but where staff have raised concerns. In particular children whose circumstances or behaviours have been discussed at schools weekly inclusion panel meetings.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

## 10. Contact plans

We have 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

Each child has an individual plan which sets out:

- How often the school will make contact – this will be at least once a week
- Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
- How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone, doorstep visits, or a combination of both
- Where details of this contact will be recorded on the schools system

We will share these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them every six weeks whilst school is closed.

If we can't make contact with a family, we will contact children's social care, or the police if we believe that there is an immediate risk of harm to the child(ren).

Details of the school's Contact Plan can be found below:-

## **EMERGENCY SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES DURING FULL SCHOOL CLOSURE**

### **Aim:**

- Ensure all students have contact from staff, at least once per week
- Where possible, learning can continue at home through work provided
- Staff continue to have an oversight of academic progress through regular monitoring
- All families identified as vulnerable have additional contact made, and support given, with any concerns reported and recorded in line with the schools safeguarding procedures

### **Families with Child Protection and Child in Need plans: (THESE CALLS SHOULD BE MADE BY THE DSL OR DEPUTY DSL)**

- DSL / Deputy DSL to ensure that they have accurate contact details for the allocated social worker, including a mobile phone number
- Phone contact made with family once a week. Where possible, also ask to speak to the student(s)
- Offer of food support through school
- Liaising with all necessary professionals, and updating them with details of contact made and also any concerns identified.
- Attending any planned review meetings, unless advised otherwise.
- Recording and reporting all information obtained and shared via CPOMS

### **Vulnerable families: (THESE CALLS SHOULD BE MADE BY THE DSL OR DEPUTY DSL)**

- Where applicable, DSL / Deputy DSL to ensure that they have accurate contact details for any support workers including a mobile phone number
- Phone contact made with family once a week. Where possible, also ask to speak to the student(s)
- Offer of food support through school.
- Liaising with any professionals working with the family, and updating them with details of contact made.
- Making referrals to social care where it has been identified that there are safeguarding concerns
- Recording and reporting all information obtained and shared via CPOMS

### **Families experiencing financial difficulties: (THESE CALLS SHOULD BE MADE BY THE DSL OR DEPUTY DSL)**

- Phone contact made with family once a week. Where possible, also ask to speak to the student(s)
- Offer of food support through school.
- If needed, food bank information to be provided.
- Making referrals to social care where it has been identified that there are safeguarding concerns
- Recording and reporting all information obtained and shared via CPOMS

### **Families not identified as vulnerable or at risk:**

- Phone contact made with family fortnightly
- Recording details of call onto SIMS
- Raising any safeguarding concerns identified via the school's reporting procedure

### **Logistics:**

- It is essential that there is maintained contact between school and all families
- If you are concerned about a student or their family always raise this concern in line with the schools safeguarding reporting procedure
- Personal numbers and emails **MUST NOT** be shared with parent/carers

- Details of all calls are to be recorded on CPOMS for students known to social care or identified as vulnerable
- Any safeguarding concerns that is identified during a call needs to be reported and recorded in line with the schools safeguarding procedures

## 11. 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 line with the procedures set out in section 3 above

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support pupils' mental health.

## 12. Online safety

### 12.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school. These are set to alert Principals automatically if there are any breaches of IT safeguarding in terms of usage / access.

If IT staff are unavailable, and you have a concern, you should contact your Principal or the CEO of the trust. Kit Lam (kit.lam@aldridgeeducation.org)

### 12.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing policies and procedures for staff code of conduct and IT acceptable use policy. Staff are reminded that they must adhere to these policies and procedures when liaising with students and their families, and any breach could result in disciplinary action. Staff should also continue to follow all trust and school protocols around online safety and behaviours at all times and acceptable use of IT personally, not just when they are in contact with children.

[During this time of remote learning it is vital that the following procedures put in place for this are adhered to. Staff should only use their work email address for interaction with students. Students should be using their school email addresses. Contact should only be made as agreed with the school's Principal. This will be via school email accounts, on school devices only, through either Teams or Google Classrooms for remote teaching and through Show My Homework for setting work to be done. All standards of conduct, modesty of dress, speech etc must be maintained in line with protocols expected within schools. Staff should remind themselves daily that they are at work when interacting with students, albeit from a different location to usual.

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.

### 12.3 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. Information relating to online safety is available 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. This will be communicated un school assemblies, through provided workbooks and Class Charts.

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 will be provided with government guidance on how to stay safe on line; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online>

## 13. Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Where there are children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children return to school, where possible we will ensure that there is appropriate support in place for them, via the existing internal support offer. The following guidance will be used to inform staff of the mental health issues that can cause changes in a child's behavior or emotional state, and to remind them that any changes should be reported in line with the school's procedures:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

We will continue to signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time, such as ChildLine, NSPCC, Papayrus and Young Minds.

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. This will include ensuring that wellbeing is maintained by setting realistic expectations for the completion of work.

## 14. Staff recruitment, training and induction

### 14.1 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, and will still be subject to a full safeguarding induction to ensure that they are clear of the current reporting and recording processes

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.

### 14.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools [Is this applicable to Aldridge]

We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks. [Add who will do these risk assessments.]

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.



### **14.3 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

### **14.4 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.

## **15. 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.

## **16. 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 6 weeks by the safeguarding consultant being used by the trust., who will make any recommendations or updates known to the CEO. At every review, it will be approved by the trust's safeguarding link trustee and their chair of the board,

## **17. 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

➤ Behaviour policy