

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at St Mary’s RC High School – with Appendix to reflect phased return to school for some students

School: St Mary’s RC High School

Policy owner: DSL/DDSL

Date: 30th March 2020

Revised: 29th May 2020

Date shared with staff: 30th March 2020

Date revision shared with staff: 1st June 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 St. Mary’s R C High School Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

1. Context
2. Vulnerable children
3. Attendance monitoring
4. Designated Safeguarding Lead
5. Reporting a concern
6. Safeguarding Training and induction
7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
8. Online safety in schools and colleges
9. Children and online safety away from school and college
10. Supporting children not in school

11. Supporting children in school
12. Peer on Peer Abuse
13. Appendix to reflect phased return to school.....

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email contact
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Wetson	01432 850416	Admin@st- maryshigh.hereford.sch.uk
DSL	Mr Adam Hawkesford- Johnson	01432 850416	AHJohnson@st- maryshigh.hereford.sch.uk
DDSL	Mrs Angela Leslie	01432 850416	ALeslie@st- maryshigh.hereford.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Mr Pat Burbidge	01432 850416	BFinlow@st- maryshigh.hereford.sch.uk

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. It may be the case that vulnerable pupils not listed in previous categories are deemed appropriate for a place due to emerging or existing needs.

St. Mary's R C High School 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 persons for this will be: Mr A Hawkesford-Johnson, Mrs A Leslie.

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 St. Mary's R C High School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

St. Mary's R C High School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

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.

St. Mary's R C High School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – St. Mary's R C High School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. St. Mary's R C High School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

HOW WILL THIS LOOK IN YOUR SCHOOL?

To support the above, St. Mary's R C High School 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.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, St. Mary's R C High School will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

St Mary's RC High school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr Adam Hawkesford-Johnson

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Angela Leslie

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 or online video - 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.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, **My Concern** and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) 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 or college.

It is important that all St. Mary's R C High School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site, and those working from home, will be made aware of 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 continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via My Concern, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their **My Concern** from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the deputy designated safeguarding lead. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally by phone and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mr Pat Burbidge

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 their existing certification expires during this enforced closure period.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). 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 St. Mary's R C High School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the school's child protection policy, confirmation of 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, St. Mary's R C High School 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 St. Mary's R C High School 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.

St. Mary's R C High 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. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

St. Mary's R C High School 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, St. Mary's R C High School 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

St. Mary's R C High School 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.

Key guidance and reminders for safer online use have been sent to all parents/carers.

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 school's code of conduct.

St. Mary's R C High School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Supporting children not in school

St. Mary's R C High School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on **the safeguarding log**, as should a record of any contact made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

St. Mary's R C High School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and via parentmail.

St. Mary's R C High School 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 St. Mary's R C High School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

St. Mary's R C High School 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 My Concern.

Supporting children in school

St. Mary's R C High School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

St. Mary's R C High School 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.

St. Mary's R C High School 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.

St. Mary's R C High School 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 **My Concern**.

Where St. Mary's R C High School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders.

Peer on Peer Abuse

St. Mary's R C High School 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 multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on **My Concern** and appropriate referrals made.

Appendix (June 1st 2020)

This appendix has been added to cater for the fact that there is to be a phased return to school for some students from June 15th 2020. This policy guidance is in conjunction with **DfE Guidance: Coronavirus (Covid-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers (Updated 20th May 2020)**

1. Possible Increase in safeguarding concerns

Staff should be aware of the increased likelihood of safeguarding and wellbeing concerns being raised by students as they have face-to-face contact with their teachers. Staff will also have an increased opportunity to notice sign of any abuse or changes to behaviour about which they have received training.

Staff should continue to raise any safeguarding concerns in the way outlined in **Reporting a Concern** above, ie. via MyConcern and / or by emailing Adam Hawkesford-Johnson or Angela Leslie.

A new dedicated area on Microsoft Teams for Safeguarding has been created, of which all staff are members. This will be a hub for sharing safeguarding updates and training opportunities remotely. **This should not be used for raising concerns.**

2. DSL and Deputy DSL Time and Availability

The DSL and Deputy DSL need to be mindful of the fact that there is likely to be an increase in disclosures made by students or concerns raised by staff. They should be prepared that they may be spending an increased proportion of their time on these issues. This would include liaising with parents and carers, supporting staff and students and liaising with outside agencies.

Either the DSL or DDSL will be on the school site during school hours and both are contactable via email, telephone or video call if working from home. It should also be noted that all of the Heads of Year have received DSL training.

3. Student Online Safety

Children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Parents have been sent information on internet safety via ParentMail and a new area has been created in Microsoft Teams, which all the students will join which, amongst other things, gives details on how to stay safe on line.

A Home-School agreement has been created and completed by parents and carers for the safe use of Microsoft Teams.

All staff have undertaken an e-Safety training refresher course online, so that they are reminded of the dangers children face online and how to report concerns.

4. Peer on Peer Abuse

Staff should continue to be mindful of peer on peer abuse and recognise the signs as set out in the training at the beginning of the academic year. They should remember that peer on peer abuse can and does take place outside of the school setting and can include, amongst other things, physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, as well as coercive control. If staff are concerned about a case of peer on peer abuse, or are made aware of such, they should report it in the usual manner.

5. Safeguarding children who are not physically in school

Staff should continue to look out for any safeguarding issues which may have arisen away from school in their communications with students. Signs which may indicate that students have a safeguarding or wellbeing issue may include (but is not limited to):

- A break or change to established contact patterns
- A change of tone in their communications
- Unusual times of the day at which communications are sent
- A change to the quality of work which is submitted
- A change of appearance when seen on Microsoft Teams (if and when we choose to allow students to be visible to teachers online)

Any concerns should be reported in the usual way as outlined above.

Students will be able to self-refer if they have their own safeguarding or wellbeing concerns via the MS Teams Safeguarding and Wellbeing team, which will be rolled out in early June.

6. Students' change of circumstances

The DSL will ask parents and carers to forward details of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing, which staff in school should be aware of before the students return to school.

7. Transition arrangements

The DSL, DDSL and Head of Year 7 will liaise with the relevant staff at our primary feeder schools to ensure that all safeguarding and SEND information concerning students moving to us in September is shared in a professional and timely manner. This may include the use of video conferencing via Microsoft Teams or similar platform.

Likewise, the DSL and DDSL will liaise with KS5 providers to share safeguarding and SEND information for students who have enrolled on courses in September.

8. Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents.

Arrangements have been made to support students who are currently in school.

For those who are working remotely, information and guidance on where support can be sought has been shared on the school's Twitter site and via ParentMail.

Students will be able to access mental health support via the MS Teams Safeguarding and Wellbeing team, which will be rolled out in early June.

9. Virtual Lessons and Live Streaming

The school is moving towards offering some lessons in some subjects via Microsoft Teams from June 8th 2020.

There is no compulsion that teachers should live stream or provide pre-recorded videos.

Guidance for teachers will be released on safe use of Microsoft Teams.

A Home-School agreement has been sent out to parents and carers in regard to students' safe and responsible use of MS Teams.

Teachers should recognise that teaching from home is different to teaching in the classroom. Teachers should try to find a quiet or private area to talk to pupils, parents or carers. When broadcasting a lesson or making a recording, they should also consider what will be in the background.

Teachers should remember that the usual safeguarding measures apply with regard to the use of social media and interaction with students.