

# Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy



## **Addendum: COVID-19 school arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

05/01/21 TO BE REVIEWED IN LINE WITH  
GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

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## Purpose

From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 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 Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements. We will follow updated Government advice and regularly review as and when necessary.

## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
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	Sunita Gilmore		<a href="mailto:wiahead@whitchurchinf.co.uk">wiahead@whitchurchinf.co.uk</a>
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Additional Contacts:  
Safeguarding Link Governor

Rob Knight	01948 662905	<a href="mailto:rknight@sbmat.org">rknight@sbmat.org</a>
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## What is the definition of vulnerable children in relation to this guidance?

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people 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
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:

- children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
- adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
- those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
- those living in temporary accommodation
- those who are young carers
- those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
- children with behaviour issues that may impact on their ability to engage with remote education or successfully reintegrate when schools re-open to all children.
- care leavers
- others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

## **1.Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy has both Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Sarah Cope and Sunita Gilmore

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Mandy Hughes, Alison Baines, Sarah Sparkes and Jane Sayers

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 records and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social care where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments.

It is important that all Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

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

The DSL (or deputy) should provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school or college. Where possible staff should try and speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff should be encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school or college site via school or college phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they should withhold their personal number.

## **2. Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

If a member of staff cannot access children's safeguarding records from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head of School. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Our Academy recognises that there will be challenges as children start to return to school after lockdown. Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will ensure that there are opportunities for staff members to have conversations with children to discuss their experience of being at home during lockdown. The school recognises that some children will have been exposed to further abuse and neglect and will therefore provide opportunities to enable children to talk about any worries they may have. Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will do this by through PSHE, CircleTime, Time to Talk activities as well as one to one conversations.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Head of School. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head of School or Executive Principal whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Head of School / Executive Principal.

Concerns around the Head of School or Executive Principal should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mr Rob Knight.

### **3. Safeguarding training and induction**

Shropshire Council will be delivering DSL training remotely, therefore there are still opportunities for DSL's to access their training should their certification expire. If another member of staff needs to take on the role of DSL they can access 'Newly Appointed DSL training'.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (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 Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

The DSLs (and deputies) at Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy, will continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnerships, newsletters and through St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust.

### **4. 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, Whitchurch CE Infant &

Nursery Academy will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS identification 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 all safer recruitment checks set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020, including an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- the individual has been subject to relevant child protection training
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

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 or college have concerns about the individual, they may obtain a new check in the usual way.

Where, Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSIE 2020. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy 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 in KCSIE 2020.

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as referred to in KCSIE 2020 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](mailto: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, Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in KCSIE 2020.

## **5. Managing contact with pupils and families**

### **5.1 Assessment of risk**

All vulnerable pupils have been identified based on potential risk and gradings have been given to those pupils in order of priority: Red, Amber, Green.

**Red** – most risk of harm or neglect and fewest protective factors (would include those with a child protection plan/LAC/identified as being at risk of Criminal Exploitation/identified as being at risk of exposure to Domestic Abuse within the household)

**Amber** – a moderate risk of harm, but with some protective factors (would include those identified as ‘Child in Need’; and those with a social worker)

**Green** – some concerns escalating or unmet needs; or have been red or amber and require monitoring.

Where a child has an allocated social worker, the academy will liaise with that person to ensure that they are aware of whether the child is attending school or not and to agree the level of contact required and how this is carried out.

Pupils can be moved between the categories, depending on the intelligence and information available to the academy. If schools need to close, risk factors may be higher and may warrant a higher grade than usual.

## 5.2 Suggested contact for vulnerable pupils

**RED** (children will be offered access to classroom learning in the first instance)

- Regular emails or text messages to all parents/carers to notify them of school updates and provide parents with information to signpost for support,
- plus, a weekly phone call with parents to ascertain if any further support is required and to ascertain that the pupil is safe.
- Any information or intelligence to support that a child may be at potential risk, to be reported to the designated social worker (CP/CIN), FSW (Early Help) or FPOC.

**AMBER** (children will be offered access to classroom learning in the first instance)

- Regular emails or text messages to all parents to notify them of school updates and provide parents with information to signpost for support
- plus, a weekly phone call to parents to ascertain if any further support is required and that the pupil is safe.
- Any information or intelligence to support that a child may be at potential risk, to be reported to the designated social worker (CP/CIN), FSW (Early Help) or FPOC.

**GREEN**

- Regular emails or text messages to all parents to notify them of school updates and provide parents with information to signpost for support. No further contact required.

## 5.3 Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

For the most vulnerable pupils, staff should attend CP and CIN meetings where possible. These are currently being held remotely. If you are unable to attend, it is vital that a report is submitted.

Strategy meetings also continue to be held and DSLs should undertake their duties in the same way as before, but meetings will be held virtually.

For advice relating to reporting procedures, please refer to the Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **5.6 Conducting 'Virtual' contact with children and their families**

A written record of all contact with vulnerable pupils and their parents/carers should be made using CPOMS and retained in accordance with current regulations. This record should include:

- Any concerns or worries raised by the child (speak directly to them.)
- Any concerns or worries raised by the parent/carer
- Summarise the situation as reported
- Note any actions that need to be undertaken

When contact is made using telephones or social media platforms or apps, where possible, please use school equipment, rather than personal devices.

Please ensure that children and parents/carers are appropriately dressed and in a communal area of their home. No interaction should take place if the child is in a bedroom or bathroom.

Staff should be mindful of confidentiality and, under no circumstances, should they carry out any conversations in the presence of their own family members at home.

Staff should be appropriately dressed following the same dress code that is implemented in their usual workplace.

Staff need to be aware of their surroundings and what can be viewed in their home environment. If possible, they should use the background 'dimming' facility on video links.

In the same way as home visits, if there are concerns around sole contact with a child or parent/carer, schools could consider having joint contact through call conferencing facilities.

## **6. School 'attendance' and engagement**

If a child is expected to attend school but does not arrive, normal procedures should be followed.

If school staff are not able to make contact with the parent/carer, keep trying for the rest of the school day. Follow usual Education Welfare procedures for children not in school and alert the DSL if you are a deputy DSL.



If children are being cared for and educated at home and routine contact is not maintained or a parent/carer does not engage, you should take all reasonable steps to speak to the parent/carer. If this is not successful, please inform the School's assigned Education Welfare Officer who will determine the appropriate intervention to be made in line with EAS procedures.

Education Welfare Officers will be in regular contact with schools to monitor engagement with distance learning arrangements and to review the attendance of vulnerable children.

If an individual pupil risk assessment determines that a child should be in school but a parent refuses to send them in, a referral should be made to your EWO.

Schools and colleges should continue to notify social workers where children with a social worker do not attend. They should also continue to follow non-attendance procedures with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't. To support the above, schools and colleges should take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Schools and colleges should resume taking their attendance register from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 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.

If you have concerns of significant harm report to the named Social Worker or contact FPOC on 0345 6789021. If you feel the child is at risk of immediate harm report to police. For non-urgent welfare concerns, with parental consent, you can email the MARF to [compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk)

## **7. Online safety in Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy**

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers or i-pads in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **Children and online safety away from Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy**

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 & Safeguarding 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.

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

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 will be referred to in order to help schools and colleges satisfy themselves that their staff behaviour policies are robust and effective.

There is **no expectation** that teachers should live stream or provide pre-recorded videos. Schools and colleges should consider the approaches that best suit the needs of their children and staff. Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- 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 bedrooms and if possible, the background should be blurred
- Any live classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager/provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Staff will only use work email addresses to communicate with others for professional communications. They will use established portals for sharing work and communicating, for example, Purple Mash and the home learning email account.

As more children return it will be important that schools and colleges continue to provide a safe online environment for those who remain at home. Information is included in letters / text messages to parents to remind parents to monitor children's online usage are sent.

We signpost parents/carers to the following websites for advice and guidance.

<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>

- ThinkUKnow
- [Childnet](#)

## **8. Supporting children in school**

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its students.

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head of School will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff-to-pupil ratios are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy 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.

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy 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 the child's safeguarding file via CPOMS.

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy has updated the current Behaviour policy with an addendum for use during the arrangements for education of students in school during the Covid-19 partial school closures. It is to be used in conjunction with, and read alongside, the Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and E-Safety Policy.

## **9. Peer-on-peer Abuse**

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy 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 the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partners required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on the child's safeguarding record and appropriate referrals made.

## **10. Supporting children's mental health and well-being**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Where they have children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children return to school, schools and colleges should ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

DfE guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#) will be used to help with identifying children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy will support children through ELSA activities and PSHE activities and may use Targeted Early Help services to support some pupils. Some pupils who may be still at home will be supported over the phone.

Teachers should be aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of those students/pupils (and their parents) who are continuing to work from home, including when setting expectations of children's' work. The department has provided separate [guidance on remote education practices](#) during the coronavirus outbreak.

For further information, please contact:

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If your query relates to Early Years settings, please contact Fiona Purslow  
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