

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ
Child protection and safeguarding:
COVID-19 addendum (UPDATED)



Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mr M. Anthony	manthony6.202@lgflmail.org
Deputy DSL	Ms G. Barrett	gbarrett@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Ms C. Bagnall Mr C. Coombes Ms S. Masud	sbagnall@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk ccoombes@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk smasud@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk
Headteacher	Mrs H. Gill	lmorris@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk
Children's Services	Camden MASH	LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk Phone: 020 7974 3317 Out of hours: 020 7974 4444
Chair of governors	Mr M. Tondelli	lmorris@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk

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 – Camden Council, Camden Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the North Central Borough Command Unit (BCU) of the London Metropolitan Police Service, along with Camden Learning.

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 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. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed 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, there will always be a member of the senior leadership on site, who will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL 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

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.

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

The following guidance is currently in place:

[Guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#)

6. Vulnerable children

Where there is a partial or full closure of the school, there is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker and children of parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk.

Vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care and those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including those with child in need plans or child protection plans, looked after children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans. The school leadership team may also want to include other children facing social difficulties.

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors.

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

The 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 for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

7. 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 children we expect to attend school during the closure does not attend, or stops attending. In these cases, we will contact their parents or carers, by telephone or email and 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.

8. 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.

Any concerns about peer on peer abuse should be referred to the DSL, who will decide how best to investigate the abuse and how to provide support for any victims of abuse.

9. 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.

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 for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

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

11. 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

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant.

If we cannot make contact, we will contact children's social care or the police.

12. 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

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

13. Online safety

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period. This section outlines our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

13.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school and our IT staff are contactable remotely if they are unavailable in school.

13.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing Code of Conduct and IT Acceptable Use Policy. All Google Classrooms set up within school have a linked monitoring account, so that all communications can be checked by a senior member of staff. Where lessons are filmed or streamed live, the following guidelines must be followed:

- No 1:1s, groups only

- 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, if possible.
- Any conferences (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype) must be set up with a password if possible, to reduce the chance of hacking.
- 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 approved platforms to communicate with pupils (eg LGfL, Google Classroom) • Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

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.

13.3 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
- 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
- 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 online

We will email parents with details of any updates and also post them on the school website.

14. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current mental health support for all students. We are working with the agencies and services who provide support and counselling for our students.

We will also signpost all children, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time via the wellbeing page on the school website.

When setting expectations for students' 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.

15. Staff recruitment, training and induction

15.1 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.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who are not in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

15.2 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)
- Our Safeguarding and Warning Signs leaflets
- 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

15.3 Keeping records of who is 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.

We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

16. 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 (SENDSCO) 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 SENDSCO cannot 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.

17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

18. 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

January 2021

Signed by Chair of Governors:.....
Modesto Tondelli

Date:.....

Date of Review:.....