

Annex to Early Help and Safeguarding Policy – Version 3.0

Keston Primary School

14/01/21

Child protection during the COVID-19 measures

Context

From 4th January 2021 Primary age 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 updated Annex within our existing PACE Early Help and Safeguarding policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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Current school position

As a school across our PACE Academy Trust, we are currently providing care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 front line response and cannot be safely cared for at home. All children remain at home until further notice and are being supported by their class teachers and online learning.

Version control and dissemination

This is version 3.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our trust DSLs on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on our school website and will be emailed to all staff to read.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff can speak to them. Staff should continue to log concerns on CPoms as usual.

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our PACE Early Help and Safeguarding Policy.

If possible, a DSL or DDSL will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and email

Where our DSL or a deputy DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL):

Mrs J Stevens j.stevens@keston.croydon.sch.uk

Mrs C Murphy head@keston.croydon.sch.uk

Mrs H Green headteacher@keston.croydon.sch.uk

The Deputy Designated Lead(s) (DDSL) are:

Mrs K Storey k.storey@keston.croydon.sch.uk

Mrs L Kirk l.kirk@keston.croydon.sch.uk

Miss L Sutton l.sutton@keston.croydon.sch.uk

Contact can also be made via safeguarding@keston.croydon.sch.uk

If we believe a family are putting the health of themselves or others at risk through not adhering to the Coronavirus Act 2020, we will contact the police. If families are not abiding by government guidelines in terms of social distancing, this may result in a school place being taken away, in order to effectively safeguard our staff and other children. The health and wellbeing of our school community is paramount.

Vulnerable children

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)
 - 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.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

The Safeguarding Team 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.

Keston Primary 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 person for this will be: Mrs J Stevens

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 increased 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 Mrs H Green/ Mrs J Stevens will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Keston will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed.

Attendance monitoring

In mainstream schools, all primary-age pupils who are not expected to be in school during the current lockdown, should be recorded as 'code X'.

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

Shielding advice is currently in place and so all children deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

Keston 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. Phone calls will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

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

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our existing Early Help and Safeguarding Policy and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Whistle Blowing Policy.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff can speak to them. Staff should continue to log concerns on CPoms as usual.

Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns. Links will be put onto our PACE school's websites and newsletters sent to signpost parents to further support during the pandemic.

Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting 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 current advice is below.

Staff training and induction

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSL and deputy DSLs are unlikely to receive their refresher training. In line with government guidance, our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

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, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy.

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.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. Staff will be required to sign in when they attend school and a register will be kept of each children attending school daily. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Early Help and Safeguarding Protection Policy.

Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Early Help and Safeguarding Protection Policy as well as our Online Safety Policy.

If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will report their concerns onto CPoms as usual.

Supporting children not in school

Where the safeguarding team has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, communication will continue with the family. They will receive regular phone calls from one of the DSLs. A record of these will be kept by the safeguarding team which will allow for a record of communication as well as communication between the safeguarding team.

These links have been added to the safeguarding area of the school website to access at any time:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

<http://croydonlcsb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-Safeguarding-Information.pdf>

Although the school is currently closed, we continue to CPoms and all staff emails, especially DSL emails.

Supporting Children in School

The school will continue to be a safe space for vulnerable children, children of key workers to attend and flourish. The Head teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Children will be supported whilst at home by their class teachers and through Microsoft Teams Well-being check-in sessions twice a week. This will provide pastoral support to the pupils and offer a safe space for them to share worries with a trusted adult. Anything of concern that comes from these sessions will be appropriately reported onto CPoms. It is important to note that most children will experience some worries during lockdown and not every worry will lead to a concern by adults.

We 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 COVID-19.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children onsite, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be be-spoke to each child and recorded on Cpoms where appropriate.

Where we have concerns about the impact of staff absence such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputies or First Aiders we will discuss them immediately with the Local Authority.

Enhanced Well-Being Support

The school will share relevant safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages to provide reassurance and support to parents and pupils when required. We recognise that the school is a protective factor for children and the current circumstances may have an impact on the mental health and well-being of pupils and their parents/carers. Members of staff need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work when they are at home.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children onsite, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be be-spoke to each child and details recorded on Cpoms where appropriate.

Immediate Changes to Croydon SPOC Reporting Procedures for DSLs:

Single Point of Contact (SPOC) – CONSULTATION LINE

Due to the current situation with Covid 19 and government advice to move to remote working as far as is possible, Croydon's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) will no longer be able to base social workers in Bernard Weatherill House to answer phone calls to the **Consultation Line**.

With immediate effect Croydon based trust DSLs should use the email address: childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk if contact is needed with a social worker at SPOC. The DSL should provide their contact details and a brief summary of the advice needed to allow a contact worker to remotely contact them.

If the DSL experiences any difficulties with this new service provision, they should contact **Jonathan Lung (Service Manager: Single Point of Contact - SPOC)** (Jonathan.Lung@croydon.gov.uk)

If a DSL has an **urgent safeguarding concern, please continue to call 0208 255 2888 between 09:00 – 17:00.**

If a DSL has an urgent safeguarding concern **outside of these hours, please contact our Emergency Duty Team on 0208 726 6400.**