



Alsager School
An Achieving School - A Caring Community

PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY – ADDITIONAL ANNEX

Prepared by Adele Snape, Assistant Headteacher
April 2020

Presented the Chair of Governors, Mr Lindsay Purcell
April 2020

Chair of Governors: Mr Lindsay Purcell

Signature: 

Date: April 13th 2020

**Note: Uncontrolled if copied or printed.
Alsager School is not liable for the content of this document.**

**Review Date: to be reviewed in the light of operating experience
and/or changes in legislation.**

Child protection during the COVID-19 measures

Annex 2 to Child Protection & Safeguarding policy Version 1

Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

1. Version control and dissemination
 2. Safeguarding priority
 3. Current school position
 4. Safeguarding partners' advice
 5. Roles and responsibilities
 6. Vulnerable children
 7. Increased vulnerability or risk
 8. Attendance
 9. Reporting concerns about children and staff
 10. Safeguarding training and induction
 11. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
 12. Peer on peer abuse
 13. Online safety
 14. New children at the school
 15. Supporting children not in school
 16. Mental Health
-

Version control and dissemination

This is version 1 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL on a regular basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website in the policies section and is made available to staff by email.

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 and volunteers can speak to them.

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.

Current school position

Currently we have 1-5 students in school on a daily basis. We have limited staff in and only the area close to reception and the staffroom is being used. We are currently not acting as a cluster school.

Should we become a cluster school:

All staff and volunteers attending on site from outside our school will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

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.

Our safeguarding partners are:

*Cheshire East Children's Consultation Service – ChECS 0300 123 5022 (Option 3)
Emergency out of hours: 0300 123 5022*

*Staffordshire County Council (First Response): 0800 1313 126
Emergency out of hours: 0345 604 2886*

*Allegation against an adult working with children
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01270 685904 / 01606 288931*

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Child Protection Policy.

Where it is not possible to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video; or
- ensure we have access to a trained DSL or deputy DSL from another school or college by phone and/or online video.

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 lead (DSL) for child protection is Adele Snape

Email: a.snape@alsagerschool.org

The deputy designated leads are:

Caryn Rawlins c.rawlins@alsagerschool.org

Gill Potts g.potts@alsagerschool.org

Jenny Broad j.broad@alsagerschool.org

Stewart Clegg s.clegg@alsagerschool.org

Clare Pass c.pass@alsagerschool.org

Ellen Walton e.walton@alsagerschool.org

Executive Headteacher: Richard Middlebrook r.middlebrook@alsagerschool.org

Head of School: Andrea O'Neill a.oneill@alsagerschool.org

Deputy Head: Liane Young l.young@alsagerschool.org

Assistant Head: Lianne Jardine: l.jardine@alsagerschool.org

Chair of Governors & Safeguarding Governor: Lindsay Purcell l.purcell@alsagerschool.org

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 or health 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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 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. We will continue to safeguard all SEND children through an allocated key worker.

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

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

If a member of staff notices that a child is not logging on to access work and we have had no contact from a family, the DSL will make contact with the family by phone and where necessary, a home visit will take place.

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.

Attendance

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, FaceTime, Skype or by contact a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff the family are not put at risk.

Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, we will notify their social worker.

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 Child Protection procedures [see Child Protection 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 or volunteers. 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 Whistleblowing Policy.

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 cause 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 Safer Recruitment

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. 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 Child Protection and Safeguarding 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 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

As part of delivering lessons through 'Home Learning' the principles set out by Ellen Walton (Deputy Head) will be followed. This includes no live streaming. Best practice would be embedding audio to Powerpoint slides or videos which focus on the modelling of an answer e.g. on a flipchart/ piece of paper. Care will be taken to ensure that videos are professional and do not show any personal belongings of a member of staff's home and are set in appropriate places. Please see 'Principles for Home Learning at Alsager School' appendix for staff and governors.

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.

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

The website has a comprehensive list of websites that can be used to obtain further support and information. Advice and support is shared on a regular basis with parents through parentmail or the school website.

New children at the school

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff needs to know the information.

Supporting children not in school

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

MENTAL HEALTH

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. Some students still have access to a counsellor over the phone. Our mental health lead, Arlene Preston, will continue to work with the DSL on supporting young people with their mental health and offering strategies and support by email or over the phone.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

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.