

## COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Heathfield Primary School



<b>School Name:</b>	<b>Heathfield Primary School</b>
<b>Policy owner:</b>	Helen Tarokh
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## Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Heathfield Primary School's Safeguarding, and Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## **1. 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.

Heathfield 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: Sue Wilson

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 Heathfield Primary School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

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

## **2. 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.

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

To support the above, Heathfield Primary 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, Heathfield Primary School will notify their social worker.

## **3. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Heathfield Primary School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and 3 Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Helen Tarokh

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Sue Wilson, Mark Dipple and Janine Lowther.

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, CPOMS 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 Heathfield Primary School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

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

#### **4. Children who attend other settings due to a school being closed**

Where children take up a coordinated offer of childcare at another school, due to their permanent school being fully closed, it is vital that the receiving school are fully aware of any vulnerabilities of children that should impact on their care in order to keep them safe. It is vital that information is shared with the temporary setting is **with the consent of parents/carers** and in line with the '**Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing**'.

Details can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721581/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

Information shared will include:

- **Any medical conditions or allergies** - including a copy of the health care plan. Importantly, if a child requires adults caring for them to have specialist training, and such adults are unavailable in the temporary school – and unable to be shared from the permanent school, then their childcare place will not be viable.
- **Any safeguarding information that is relevant**, for example:
  - If a child is subject to a Child Protection of Child in Need Plan – and proportionate details around this (Golden Rule Number 6)
  - The name and contact details of relevant social care professionals
  - Record on CPOMS the information that you have shared – and with whom (Golden Rule Number 7)
- **Any SEND issues which may impact on the childcare provided**. Whilst we do not expect other settings to be teaching our children bespoke lessons, there may be occasions when children's particular needs require sharing in order for the receiving setting to understand the child and their needs. Examples may include, where a child cannot read at an age appropriate level due to dyslexia, cannot cope with certain situations due to ASD, or when a child requires regular opportunities to be physically active in order to self-regulate behaviours.
- **Contact details for the child**. This will include all key contacts that school holds for the family.

If a parent refuses to allow consent to share safeguarding information, following a discussion as to why this is necessary to keep the child safe and exactly what will be shared, school must contact the child's social worker to plan the next steps. The social worker may

decide to share the information with the temporary school on the school's behalf, or direct the school share the information. Any discussions and actions must be recorded on CPOMS.

It is important that the receiving school also has direct access to the permanent school's DSL. Any concerns about a child, or disclosures should be reported to the relevant Children's Services by the receiving school whilst the child is in their care, but the permanent school DSL should be made aware of any such referrals or concerns. Conversations will be recorded on CPOMS.

## **5. 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 CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received. All new disclosures will be reported by the Headteacher to the Trust CEO by phone and email during the period of school closures.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. If you are reporting a safeguarding concern, please make sure you contact the DSL or deputy DSL verbally as well as putting it on CPOMS.

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 and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

## **6. 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 they miss their refresher training.

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 Heathfield Primary School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This can be done remotely if necessary.

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 by email 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

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Headteacher that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## **7. 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, Heathfield Primary 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 Heathfield Primary 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.**

Heathfield Primary 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.

Heathfield Primary 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](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, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Heathfield Primary School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **8. Online safety in schools and colleges**

Heathfield Primary School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

## **9. Children and online safety away from school**

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 Trust Code of Conduct.

Heathfield Primary School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

## **10. Supporting children not in school**

Heathfield Primary 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 CPOMS, as should a record of contact made.

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

Heathfield Primary School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be verbally 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 social media pages.

Heathfield Primary 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 Heathfield Primary School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Heathfield Primary 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 CPOMS.

## **11. Supporting children in school**

Heathfield Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Heathfield Primary 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.

Heathfield Primary 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.

Heathfield Primary 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.

Where Heathfield Primary School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the trust.

## **12. Peer on Peer Abuse**

Heathfield Primary 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 multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

## **13. Support from the Trust**

The Trust Central Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

The Trust will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.