

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy: COVID-19 addendum



Washwood Heath
Multi Academy Trust

Approved by:	Pete Anstey Chair of Trustees	Date: Friday 5 th June 2020
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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
WHMAT and TCA safeguarding lead	Russell Kennedy	r.kennedy@tilecrossacademy.com 0121 566 6400
Brownmead DSL	Wendy Carter	wcarte@brownmead.academy 0121 675 3102
Firs DSL	Wayne Harris	wharris@firs.academy 0121 464 3792
Gossey Lane DSL	Leanne McGuire	lmcguire@gosseylane.academy 0121 464 2909
Saltley DSL	Liz Wilson	stafflwl@saltley.bham.sch.uk 0121 566 6555
Topcliffe DSL	Laurie Taylor	ltaylor@topcliffe.academy 0121 675 6296
WHA primary academy DSL	Helen Lowe	hlowe@washwoodconnect.com 0121 464 7180
WHA secondary academy DSL	Steve Hobson	shobson@washwoodconnect.com 0121 675 7272
WHMAT Safeguarding Trustee	Aftab Chugthai MBE	asutheran@whmat.academy 0121 675 0536
CEO	Dr Bev Mabey	0121 675 0536 whmat@washwoodconnect.com
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	LADO Team	Ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk 0121 675 1669

This addendum reflects the most up-to-date advice received from our 3 local safeguarding partners, and from BCT including information 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.

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of phased return following school closure due to COVID-19. It reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners: local authority, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups.

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, WHMAT's normal child protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

- Are assessed as being in need, including children:
 - With a child protection plan
 - With a child in need plan
 - Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or LAs, for example those who are:
 - On the edge of receiving support from children's social care services
 - Adopted
 - At risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - Living in temporary accommodation
 - Young carers
 - Considered vulnerable at the provider and LA's discretion

2. Core safeguarding principles

WHMAT 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 continuing to attend or returning to 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

Each academy will 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.

Individual academies will keep all school staff and volunteers informed by email 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 their academy are.

Should there ever be an occasion where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. In this situation the academy affected will identify a DSL to be available by telephone to the senior leader.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) 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

WHMAT will continue to work with children's social care and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

WHMAT 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

6. Monitoring attendance

WHMAT academies will resume taking our attendance register. Our academies will also continue to submit the Department for Education's daily online attendance form, until no longer asked to do so.

Where any child we expect to attend school doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by telephoning, emailing and/or a Home Visit
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

Each academy will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. The measures we will take could include telephone, text, email, using students online learning platforms or a home visit exceptional circumstances.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

WHMAT 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.

Concerns should be discussed in person/via telephone with a DSL and recorded according to each individual academy procedures. Information may then be recorded on CPOMS/MyConcern. A decision will then be taken by the academy as to how investigations will be carried out and how we will support victims during school closure.

8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

WHMAT 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.

WHMAT 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).

WHMAT 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.

9. Contact plans

WHMAT academies have contact plans for children with a social worker, and other 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 (twice per week for children on a CP Plan).
- › 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, and will review them every 4 weeks or sooner if a need is identified.

If we can't make contact, the affected academy will:

- › Contact the named social worker and agree next steps
- › Contact our police school liaison officer to arrange for a safe and well check

10. 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.

10.1 Children returning to school

Each WHMAT Academy DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before the child returns.

The DSL (and deputy) will be given more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more children return to school.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see pupils in person.

10.2 Children at home

WHMAT academies will maintain contact with children who are not yet returning to school. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home. Or, if necessary they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.

Staff and volunteers 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

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

WHMAT academies will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

If IT staff are unavailable, our contingency plan will involve utilising the support of the WHMAT Director of IT, James Wigley.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow the WHMAT Code of Conduct, E Safety and Social Media policies.

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.

WHMAT academies will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to their academy, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

WHMAT academies 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

WHMAT academies will do this through regular communication to parents including letters, direct texts, email or via the child's academy website.

12. Mental health

12.1 Children returning to school

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupils' mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed.

Support for children will be provided within each WHMAT academy through their pastoral system. Where the needs of a child are identified to be at a higher threshold, the academy will seek further support either from specialist staff and/or additional support services.

12.2 Children at home

Where possible, WHMAT academies will continue to offer their current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. This recognizes that the usual approach has had to be modified by offering counseling/mentoring over the phone or virtually instead of face-to-face.

WHMAT academies will also signpost all pupils, parents/carers 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.

13. Staff recruitment

13.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

WHMAT 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.

WHMAT 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, WHMAT 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 one of our academies..

Similarly, temporary measures allow right to work checks to be carried out by verifying scanned documents on a video call. If WHMAT needs to take this approach, we will follow [Home Office and Immigration Enforcement guidance](#).

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

13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

WHMAT will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks. In the highly unlikely event that staff are working on loan from outside WHMAT, the academy affected will identify the senior members of staff who will undertake this assessment.

WHMAT will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

14. Safeguarding induction and training

WHMAT will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

14.1 New and 'on loan' staff induction

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of the children protection policy (and addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

Each academy 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 the individual academy child protection policy and addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

14.2 DSL training

WHMAT DSLs (and other DSL trained staff) may not be able to take part in training during this period. If this is the case, the DSL (and other DSL trained staff) will continue to be classed as a trained DSL even if they miss their refresher training.

WHMAT DSLs (and other DSL trained staff) will do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.

15. Keeping records of who's on site

Each academy will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on their site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

WHMAT academies will continue to keep their single central record up to date.

WHMAT academies will create a separate log to identify:

- Everyone working or volunteering in their academy 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, WHMAT academies will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

For each academy, wherever possible, the senior DSL, those with DSL responsibilities and/or the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) 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 senior DSL, those with DSL responsibilities and/or the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) cannot share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

WHMAT academies 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 three local safeguarding partners, the LA or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum on a half-termly basis by Russell Kennedy (WHMAT Safeguarding Lead). At every review, it will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

18. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding and Child protection policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- E Safety Policy
- Health and safety policy
- Social Media policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Anti-Bullying policy