COVID 19 Safeguarding Policy Addendum – Spring 2021

Date: January 2021 and updated for 8/3/2021

Review date: As required

Introduction

Whitgreave Primary School has created this Safeguarding Covid-19 Addendum to support our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and to address ongoing issues as a result of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. The following safeguarding information, intentions and commitments can be applied to all eventualities where appropriate to include the following scenarios: full re-opening, partial re-opening, phased return of pupils and full closure of schools.

All staff will continue to act in the best interests of all children. If anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern about any child, they will act immediately and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, either in person, by phone, e-mail, MS Teams or other appropriate channels of communication.

Our school will continue to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education - Statutory Guidance, in particular, Part 1, Part 3 - Safer Recruitment, Part 4- Management of Allegations and Part 5 - Dealing with Peer on Peer Abuse, Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, Online Safety and other forms of peer on peer abuse and the safeguarding and welfare sections of the EYFS Foundation Framework, if relevant.

As children return to school on 8th March 2021, our school will try to ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies are allocated more time to:

- support staff and pupils with new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals to Children's Social Care and other agencies, where appropriate

All staff understand the continued importance of acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns, including new concerns where children are returning to school or continue to work at home e.g. for the purposes of shielding. Our school is aware that some families may have experienced and continue to experience challenging circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic, we will continue to support families and children making appropriate referrals through the well-establish referral systems in place. Our school will make every effort to encourage parents and carers to advise us of any changes, that they are aware of, regarding: academic progress, welfare, health and wellbeing, whilst their child(ren) work(s) at home or return(s) to school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will ensure all relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children remains accurate and up to date.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputies or Senior Leaders will continue to follow all local procedures, we will continue to refer all concerns through the well-established channels e.g. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Channel Panel etc.

As children return to school, our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies will continue to co-ordinate with Children's Social Care, the three local safeguarding partners and other agencies and services to identify harm and ensure children are appropriately supported. They will also continue to speak to school nurses who have continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in school.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will continue to work closely with and inform the Virtual School Headteacher if we have any concerns regarding our children and young people in care and children and young people who were previously in care.

In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent, and help to resolve any concerns or difficulties wherever possible. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the

child contracting the virus, our school or social workers will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Role of the Designated, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Leaders

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jody Dingley - jody.dingley@whitgreaveprimary.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Angie Cox – angie.cox@whitgreaveprimary.co.uk

<p style="color:red; text-align:center">Laura Russell – laura.russell@whitgreaveprimary.co.uk</p>

Keeping children Safe in Education states: During term time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy) will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) is expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools, working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to define what "available" means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Teams or other such media is acceptable. It is a matter for individual schools and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

The optimal scenario for our school providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or Deputy available on site. This may not always be possible, and where this is the case there are 2 options we will consider:

- a trained DSL or Deputy from our school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs or Deputies with other schools (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

If our DSL or Deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, our school will require a Senior Leader to take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to Child Protection files, 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 our school.

Attendance

We understand that school attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from 8th March 2021 and that the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age)
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

We will record attendance, follow up absence and report children missing in education to the local authority.

Our school will continue to record and report attendance in accordance with any directives from the government, in particular, 'Schools' coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance' (February 2021, pages 32-36) and our local authority. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows our school to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the local authority and the DfE on attendance and the number of children taking up places, if required.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Our school will continue to encourage parents/carers to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable. We understand that EHE does not automatically put children at greater risk of harm and we will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home, gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school. If we feel there is additional cause for concern, we will follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Headteacher will then notify and liaise with the local authority, in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as we become aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

Our school will liaise with the City of Wolverhampton Inclusion Support Service and other relevant departments and agencies to ascertain if any vulnerable children are attending school or not, they will then inform the allocated Social Worker or Early Help Worker.

Our school has processes in place (e.g. phone calls, e-mails, text messaging, virtual meetings, etc.) to check on the welfare and attendance of any vulnerable child. We keep a record of all calls and contact with families and colleagues.

The Wolverhampton MASH is fully operational and continues to accept all levels of referral. If we are experiencing any issues in getting in touch with Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) our school will contact Helen Patten - helen.patten@wolverhampton.gov.uk

The safeguarding service are also continuing to hold initial and review Child Protection Conferences; however, these will be done virtually or by submission of a report. Our school will continue to contribute to these meetings. If we have any issues, our school will contact Nicola Hale - nicola.hale@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Health and safety risk assessment

Our school has completed a Health and Safety Risk Assessment with the support of the LA to ensure a safe return of children to school. This risk assessment is under constant review.

Training

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partners continue to provide DSL training virtually, however the number of places available for DSL training has been reduced due to the nature of the virtual training. Our 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, until they are able to secure a place on the DSL refresher training.

All existing school staff already have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of KCSIE and our school's Safeguarding Policy. This appendix will be made available to all existing staff, governors and volunteers to ensure they are aware of the current arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

If new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter our school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up-to-date Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy (described above) will support this process, as will Part 1 of KCSIE.

Our existing school staff may move between schools on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing staff will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Our school will continue to seek advice from the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together training co-ordinator and use the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together website to keep up to date with any local training offer and information.

https://www.wolverhamptonsafeguarding.org.uk/

If a child must attend another setting:

If a child is attending another school because they are unable to attend their own school, the Designated Safeguarding Leads at the home school should liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Leads at the host school to share information about children attending the host school. The host should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, the host school should, <u>as appropriate</u>, have access to a vulnerable 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). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or Deputy) level, and likewise between Special Educational Needs Coordinators/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 Senior Leaders should take responsibility. Host schools should also obtain information regarding emergency contact information and an additional emergency contact number, any medical needs or allergies for each child and any other relevant information regarding those children. If the host school has any concerns about children attending their school from a home school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will raise and share their concerns with the home school immediately and liaise with the Social Worker, if required.

Whilst our school will continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR we will not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Safer Recruitment/Volunteers and Movement of Staff

At Whitgreave Primary School we understand it is essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. If our school must recruit new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of KCSIE. In response to COVID-19, we will consider and implement safe and appropriate processes to reduce the need for face-to-face contact, if required. We will consider a flexible approach to interviews, with alternative options to face-to-face interviews offered where possible. Where face-to-face meetings are necessary, we will share the school's control measures in advance and make it clear to candidates that they must follow the system of controls that we have in place. This includes any requirements for wearing face coverings, where social distancing cannot be managed safely.

During this current period, if our school uses volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSIE. Under no circumstances would we allow a volunteer who has not been checked to be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Existing staff engaging in regulated activity already have the appropriate DBS check; we understand there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the staff temporarily moves to another school to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example, a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. If we are a host school, we will risk assess as we would for a volunteer (see above). Our school understands the onus remains on us to satisfy ourselves that someone in our setting has the required checks, including as required those set out in Part 3 of KCSIE. In the above scenario, this can be achieved, if the host school chooses to, via seeking assurance from the home school rather than requiring new checks.

Our school will continue to follow our legal duty to refer anyone to the DBS, who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found in KCSIE.

Our school will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as outlined in KCSIE and the TRA's Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral. During the COVID-19 period, all referrals will be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so, consideration will be given as to whether an Interim Prohibition Order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that our 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, our school must continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up-to-date, as outlined in KCSIE. The SCR can, if a school chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in our school on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other settings. The SCR can also, if a school chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Mental health and Well-Being

At Whitgreave Primary School we understand that some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a Social Worker and Young Carers. We will endeavour to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation.

We will consider using pastoral and extra-curricular activities to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID19)
- support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

Our school will ensure appropriate support is in place for all pupils. Our school will have regard to the DfE guidance on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, which sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state. These changes can be displayed in a range of different ways and can be an indication of an underlying problem. Our support for pupils in the current circumstances may include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services.

We recognise that we may need to provide more focused pastoral support for pupils' individual issues, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. Where we identify a concern that a pupil is in need, suffering or is likely to suffer harm, we will follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. We will make referrals to statutory services (and the Police) as appropriate and work with School Nurses, where they are in place, to:

- ensure delivery of the healthy child programme (which includes immunisation)
- identify health and well-being needs
- provide support for resilience, mental health and well-being (including anxiety, bereavement and sleep issues)
- support pupils with additional and complex health needs

Helpful guidance and links:

mental health and behaviour in schools.

https://www.minded.org.uk/

https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/

https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/mental-wellbeing/overview

https://www.childbereavementuk.org/

http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19.aspx

https://www.barnardos.org.uk/c19

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/

£8m programme to boost pupil and teacher well-being - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Online Safety in Our School and Remote Learning

E-safety IT lead: Nichola Parker

We understand that attendance will be mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age from 8th March 2021. We may continue to be affected by the Remote Education Temporary Continuity Direction and we understand that we will still be required to provide remote education to pupils covered by the direction, where their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes, for example, where such guidance means that a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate or that clinically extremely vulnerable children are to shield. All such pupils not physically unwell will have access to remote education as soon as reasonably practicable, which may be the next school day.

At Whitgreave Primary School we continue to understand that it is more important than ever that our school provides a safe environment, including online. Our school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read guidance on what "appropriate" looks like) are in place to protect children when they are online on our school IT systems or recommended resources. Our school will consider who in our institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements, review our E-Safety Policy, Acceptable Use of Technology and Computing Policy if required and to communicate any amendments. Our school published our remote learning provision by the 25th January 2021, we will also consider what our contingency arrangements are if our IT/E-safety staff become unavailable.

The UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. We will also contact out IT provider for assistance if required.

Children and Online Safety Away from School.

At Whitgreave Primary School we are doing what we reasonably can to keep all our children safe. We understand that 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 will be dealt with as per our Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and where appropriate, referrals will be made to children's Social Care and as required, the Police.

We understand that the DfE publishes separate guidance on providing education remotely, we will use the guidance to inform our Remote Learning provision. Recently published guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and from the London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming may be used to help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.

Our school will consider the safety of our children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in our school's Staff Behaviour Policy (sometimes known as a Code of Conduct) our Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and staff, parent, pupil agreements. This policy should, amongst other things, include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy will apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced. Our school will, as much as is reasonably possible, consider if our existing policies adequately reflect the new reality of so many children (and in some cases staff) working remotely online. If required, we may add an annex/addendum summarising key COVID-19 issues to our Code of Conduct, Acceptable

Use of Technology Policy and our parent/pupil staff agreements regarding changes. We may seek support from our Local Authority or independent consultant when planning online lessons/activities and considering online safety.

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

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place, so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to our school, this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- Childline - for support
- UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse

When our school has contact with parents/carers (E.g. via phone calls, e-mails, text messaging, website etc), we can reinforce the importance of children being safe online. We feel it is especially important for parents/carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from our school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents/carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents/carers, our school will make every effort to emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- Internet matters - for support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online
- London Grid for Learning - for support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online
- Net-aware - for support for parents/carers from the NSPCC
- Parent info - for support for parents/ carers to keep their children safe online
- Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents/carers

Our school will continue to provide contact information and supportive information on our website for parents/carers by signposting to statutory agencies - Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Website, MASH contact numbers and third sector agencies and other partners.