COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Policy owner: Miss P Jordan, Chair of Governors Mrs J Monaghan

Date: 08.06.2020 updated

Date shared with staff: 10.06.2020

Signed: PJORDAN

Context

From 20th 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 St Mary's Catholic Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our Trust-wide safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

This is version 2 of the addendum. It is reviewed by the Director of Safeguarding as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. This review takes account of the increase in pupil numbers due to wider opening of schools and reflects the need for staff to have a heightened awareness of new safeguarding concerns as children and young people return to school after 10 weeks in lockdown. It is available on the school website, and a copy is made available to all staff.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Priscilla Jordan	01509 212621	office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Eimear Davis	01509 212621	office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Priscilla Jordan	01509 212621	office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk
Headteacher/ Principal	Priscilla Jordan	01509 212621	office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Jane Monaghan	01509 212621	jmonaghan@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor / Trustee	Jane Monaghan	01509 212621	jmonaghan@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

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. This definition has been stated by the DFE and LCC.

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. Schools have also been allowed to make judgements on whether children are vulnerable.

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) at St Mary's Catholic Primary School know who our most vulnerable children are. We have put in place protocols to assess the level of risk using a red, amber, blue model, factoring in the additional impact of school closure on vulnerability. Therefore, our vulnerable children include those on the edge of receiving children's social care support. There is a plan in place to support children at each level of vulnerability, which have been monitored and reviewed using the Trust's *Covid-19 Vulnerable Child Re-Assessment of Risk Tool*. Safeguarding Update training given to staff highlights that, as children and young people return to school, they may identify new safeguarding concerns, including for children and families who were not on the school's radar before lockdown.

St Mary's Catholic 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: the Headteacher: Miss P Jordan.

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 St Mary's School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, St Mary's or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School will continue to encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed. For those vulnerable children and young people not attending school, St Mary's School will continue to take reasonable measures to work with parents (and where appropriate, social workers) to encourage their return to school, in keeping with the latest government guidance that vulnerable children, where attendance is appropriate, are expected and should be encouraged to attend.

Attendance

St Mary's will resume taking the attendance register from 1 June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

If St Mary's Catholic Primary School have any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings

Vulnerable children attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending. Vulnerable children – regardless of year group – that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to early years or school provision where this would now be appropriate for them to do so. St Mary's School (and where appropriate, with social worker) will work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school, where attendance is appropriate. A brief summary of attendance expectations across the different groups of vulnerable children is as follows:

- for vulnerable children who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on households with possible coronavirus infection and shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable
- for vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- for vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school's discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable.

St Mary's School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. St Mary's will implement the attendance procedures outlined in the Trust's school closure safeguarding protocols to follow up any pupil that we were expecting to, but did not attend. St Mary's 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.

To support the above, St Mary's will, when communicating with parents/carers, confirm current emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where these are available.

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

Designated Safeguarding Lead

St Mary's school's Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Miss Jordan
The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Davis

As more children return, it is expected that schools will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, for example if the DSL (and deputy) is working from home, the school's DSL (or deputy) can be available to be contacted via phone or online video.
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 the school's child protection secure files 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.

It is important that all St Mary's staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school. Where possible staff will try and speak directly to children (as far as possible from the school site, using school's phones or devices) to help identify any concerns. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they will withhold their personal number.

DSLs (and deputies) will continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and updates from the Trust's Safeguarding Director.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, where these can be done remotely. Every school faces unique challenges at this time, including as we welcome back more children. Where reasonably possible and where relevant, the DSL (or deputy) will consider these challenges in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection addendum as appropriate.

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 can be done remotely by sending a report to the DSL, Deputy DSL or Senior Leader in the absence of the DSL. sending a password protected email to the DSL, Deputy DSL or Senior Leader in the absence of the DSL.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern without delay.
In the Safeguarding Update training, Staff at St Mary's school, have been reminded about their duty, to refer immediately, concerns or allegations from a child about a member of staff's behaviour, as set out below.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher/Principal without delay. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher/Principal whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with a password protected email to the Headteacher/Principal.

Concerns around the Headteacher/Principal should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Jane Monaghan

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

Safeguarding Training and induction

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. To increase DSL and safer recruitment capacity whilst the threat of the COVID-19 remains, Initial DSL and Safer Recruitment training will be delivered on Microsoft Teams, booked via LCTSA-Admin.
All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL will communicate with staff should any new local arrangements be introduced, as well as any changes to safeguarding process and procedure, especially if they are being changed as a result of more children returning, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter St Mary's School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction including an up to date child protection policy, Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and other relevant documentation identified in the Trust's Mid-Year induction checklist.
 However to maintain the safety of staff and children visitors and volunteers will be kept to a minimum and only for essential visits during this period of social distancing.

For movement within the Trust, schools will seek assurance from their current employer that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training. On a case-by- case basis, the DSL will judge, upon arrival, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the staff member will have already received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of St Mary's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

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. If recruitment is necessary during this period, St Mary's will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

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. The Home Office and Immigration Enforcement have also temporarily adjusted the right to work checks for the same reason.

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 DBS portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing 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.

Where a member of staff already engaging in regulated activity and who already has the appropriate DBS check, moves temporarily from another school to support the response to coronavirus, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained. Following the guidance, St Mary's School will carry out a risk assessment (as we would for a volunteer) and seek assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closure. If for any reason St Mary's School has concerns about the individual, we will obtain a check in the usual way.

Where St Mary's is 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.

St Mary's 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.

St Mary's 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 such referrals should be made by emailing
Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that St Mary's School is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, St Mary's will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety in school

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.
St Mary's will continue to provide a safe environment, including online.
Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. To aid parents keep their children safe online where they are working at home, online safety guidance is shared with parents. St Mary's School will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems. The lead person with the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements is Simon Cooper. SLT will consider contingency arrangements in the event IT staff become unavailable.
 Laptops will be allocated individually to a child so there is not sharing.

Children and online safety away from school
St Mary's School will continue to do all that we reasonably can to keep all our children safe. Whilst more children return to school, others will continue to stay at home and, in many cases, will be continuing to engage with school online. St Mary's School will continue to provide a safe online environment for those who remain at home.

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 principles as set out in the Trust's Remote Learning Protocols for 'Live Teaching' Online.

St Mary's will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Online Safety

St Mary's School considers the safety of our children when they are asked to work online, following the same principles as set out in the school's code of conduct. These include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The practices apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

An essential part of our online planning process is 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 the 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

 St Mary's School will continue to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It is especially important for parents and 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 the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school's online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In our communications with parents and carers, we will 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.

In line with the recommendation from the DfE, we will inform parents/carers about specific support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online which includes:

- Thinkuknow provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- Parent info is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- Childnet offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- Internet Matters provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- London Grid for Learning has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- Net-aware has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- Let's Talk About It has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- UK Safer Internet Centre has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

The Government has also provided:

- support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online harms, includes advice about specific harms such as online child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying
- support to stay safe online includes security and privacy settings, blocking unsuitable content, and parental controls.

Supporting children not in school

St Mary's 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 will ensure that a robust communication plan, based on the school closure safeguarding protocols, is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on school safeguarding forms, as well as a record of all contact made.

St Mary's and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly in line with any emerging concerns about the child, 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.

Children's Mental Health

St Mary's recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people. Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. St Mary's 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.

Supporting children in school

St Mary's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students and will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher/Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and more children returning to school, and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.
St Mary's 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.

The DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools recognises that mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example, being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or excessive clinginess.
St Mary's 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 risk assessment/ cause for concern forms.

Where St Mary's has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss this immediately with the Trust, by contacting the CEO, Director of Safeguarding Director of Business Services.

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. 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.

St Mary's recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and as outlined within the Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen to 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 the school safeguarding forms and appropriate referrals made.

Support from St Thomas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

The Director of Safeguarding, Marcella Gillespie, is available for support and guidance, and can be contacted by mobile phone: 07552245172 or email: mgillespie@aquinas-cmat.org.

Additionally, to provide capacity for any school whose DSL/Deputy DSL is incapacitated during this period, Allison James, DSL from Sacred Heart Catholic Academy, Leicester, can be contacted by email: ajames@sacredheart.leicester.sch.uk

The safeguarding Director will continue to update the school closure protocols in line with any emerging measures or government guidance. In addition, individual or group supervision will be offered via Microsoft Teams to DSLs and staff on the frontline of safeguarding.