



**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
COVID-19 school arrangements for
Saffron Walden County High School**

Policy owner: Matt Blayney

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This revised addendum of the SWCHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements when school needs to close due to a lockdown, to protect all children, whether attending school or remaining at home, from harm and abuse.

SWCHS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils and will ensure compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2020) which remains in force throughout the response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

The following safeguarding principles therefore remain unchanged:

- The best interests of children must always continue to come first;
- If anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act immediately;
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy should be available on school site at all times;
- It is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce and/or gain access to children;
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online.

In addition to this, the SWCHS key safeguarding principles remain extant:

- Safeguarding is the ‘Golden Thread’ than runs through all of our work with children and young people.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns do happen and have happened here on a daily basis. Be vigilant!
- All systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at heart.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Matt Blayney	01799 513030	mblayney@swchs.net
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Sharon McCormick	07714 560393 01799 513030	smccormick@swchs.net
Headteacher	Polly Lankester	01799 513030	plankester@swchs.net
Chair of Governors	Sarah Dignasse	01799 513030	
Safeguarding Governor / Trustee	Barbara Calland	01799 513030	
Designated Teacher – Looked After Children	Katie Pieri	01799 513030	kpieri@swchs.net

Supporting children in school

SWCHS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

SWCHS will refer to the government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement protective measures including social distancing: implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings. The school continues to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of Covid-19.

SWCHS will continue to be a safe space for children to attend and flourish. We recognise that the return to school for vulnerable children or the children of critical workers will be challenging and staff will support children to adjust to the necessary changes to the school environment and routines. Supporting pupil wellbeing will be at the forefront of our approach and school staff will seek to provide reassurance to pupils as we manage the transition period. Staff will talk to the children about the changes to the school day in an age appropriate manner, acknowledge and listen to pupil anxieties and support children to understand the altered routines.

SWCHS recognises that the current circumstances may adversely affect the mental health of children and their parents. School staff have been briefed to look out for changes in behaviour or in a child's emotional state, which could range from being excessively clingy, fearful, withdrawn or aggressive as more children return to school. As always, pupil wellbeing is at the heart of our work, and school staff will seek to provide appropriate support for pupils both in school and where required from specialist services.

SWCHS recognises that for some children, home may not be a safe space, and there may be children who are relieved to return to school. School staff have been reminded of the need to respond sensitively to pupils' differing experiences. School staff have been asked to be particularly vigilant for signs and indicators that a child may have experienced/be experiencing abuse or neglect. School staff have been trained about how to handle a disclosure from a child, and understand that any safeguarding concerns, including those that relate to the period of school closure, must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputies) in the usual way.

SWCHS will ask parents and carers to ensure that all personal details held by the school, such as emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. At this time, parents and carers will also be asked to advise the school if there are any changes regarding the child's welfare, health and wellbeing that it would help school to be made aware of. Where the school is aware of particular circumstances affecting a child or family, such as bereavement, a relationship breakdown, an incident of domestic violence, this will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis so that children can be best supported.

Supporting children not in school

SWCHS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

SWCHS 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 SWCHS need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home using Microsoft Teams or the school email system.

Where the DSL has identified a child about whom there have been concerns but not currently open to social care, 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 will be recorded, as should a record of all contact made.

SWCHS and its DSL/Deputy DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL/Deputy DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

If we are unable to contact a child about whom there have been concerns after a reasonable number of attempts, we may need to seek further advice about safe and well checks. This may involve a home visit (garden gate) or liaison with Essex Police.

Vulnerable children

All vulnerable children continue to be eligible to attend school full time during the period of lockdown.

Vulnerable children include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a Child in Need (CIN) plan, a Child Protection (CP) plan or who are a looked-after child.
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and it is determined, following risk assessment ([risk assessment guidance](#)), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment. The SENDCO will make decisions regarding the attendance of EHCP pupils in school in tandem with their parents to ensure that the best possible package of support is arranged. In some cases it may be more appropriate for children with EHCPs to work from home with Teaching Assistant (TA) support being offered virtually.
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the school and local authority's discretion

Senior leaders, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those about whom there have been concerns but not currently open to social care. Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

SWCHS 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: Katie Pieri.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable. 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 SWCHS will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. SWCHS and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – SWCHS will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

Where a child has access to a social worker or is deemed as extremely vulnerable; they will be assigned Priority 1 status. Priority 1 pupils will receive daily contact, either directly, or through their parents/social workers. We will also assign 'Priority 2' status to pupils who are vulnerable but not deemed to be our most vulnerable or under the care of a social worker. These pupils will receive weekly contact from their year team or a member of the safeguarding team.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, SWCHS or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. SWCHS will encourage our vulnerable children and young

people to attend a school, including remotely if needed. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, SWCHS will notify their social worker.

Attendance monitoring

SWCHS will continue to follow up with any parent/carer if they were expecting the child to attend and they subsequently do not attend school. Non-attendance will be followed up in line with the school's normal attendance protocols.

Non-attendance for pupils *in school* will be followed up using existing protocols by staff who are working in school. Non-attendance or non-engagement for pupils working *at home* will be followed up using the protocol outlined below:

1. For a non-engager/non-attender in virtual learning the teacher will attempt to raise contact with the child using the chat function on Microsoft Teams.
2. If the child does not respond within 24 hours, the teacher will email the parents of the child highlighting non-attendance or non-engagement.
3. If the parents does not respond within 24 hours, the teacher will telephone the parents of the child.
4. If the parents do not respond, then the teacher will refer the non-attendance or non-engagement with virtual learning to the child's Year Achievement Co-ordinator for follow up.

SWCHS will continue to inform Children's social care if a child with a social worker does not attend school either in person or remotely. SWCHS will also liaise closely with the Attendance Officer for West Essex in the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership (BAP) meetings to ensure that we can do everything possible to engage learners who are working from home where we are concerned about attendance within virtual schooling.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Arrangements

SWCHS has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The DSL is: Matt Blayney

The Deputy DSL: Sharon McCormick

Additional staff who have completed the DSL training package are: Polly Lankester, Paul Singh, Katie Pieri, Jo Chapman, Anna Bendell and Daniel Crittenden.

We will endeavour to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site at all times. Where this is not possible, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or email.

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.

It is important that all SWCHS staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). All staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL/ Deputy DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which are being held remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

For staff working *in school* the normal child protection reporting protocols apply as outlined in the training for staff in September 2020. For staff working *at home* the following protocol for reporting a child protection concern has been shared;

Submitting a virtual pink form

If you do have a concern that you need to bring to the attention of the safeguarding team, please submit a virtual pink form using the following protocol:

1. Draft your concern in an email including as much information as possible. Please ensure that you include direct quotes, screenshots, or evidence where appropriate.
2. Write 'VIRTUAL PINK FORM' in the subject line box and send the email to Matt Blayney (DSL) and Sharon McCormick (Deputy DSL). Any Sixth Form issues please send to Jo Chapman.
3. We will reply confirming receipt of the virtual pink form and then move to action. If you do not receive a receipt from us within 24 hours, please re-send.
4. We will feedback to you where appropriate, however, due to the nature of some concerns this may not always be possible.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher according to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. 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 Chair of Governors: Sarah Dignasse.

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, SWCHS 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 (DfE, 2020).

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.

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 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

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 closures. If for any reason the school have concerns about an individual, new checks will be obtained in the usual way.

Where SWCHS are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 183 to 188 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

SWCHS 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 179 of KCSIE.

SWCHS will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 143 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

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 or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, SWCHS will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 – 171 in KCSIE.

Online safety in school

SWCHS 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.

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 Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

School closures bring lots of challenges for both school staff and parents, and both are increasingly looking to the benefits of technology to continue delivering some form of learning experience for children.

As always, there are huge benefits to be gained from the appropriate use of technology, and accessing learning resources whilst at home is a great example of this. However, parents (and teachers) need to be aware of the potential risks that go along with this.

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

Peer on Peer Abuse

SWCHS recognises that during any 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 Safeguarding and 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 and appropriate referrals made.

Radicalisation

School staff have received training about Prevent. The school has a Prevent Lead: Matt Blayney. All school staff are aware of the need to treat concerns about radicalisation as safeguarding concerns, and immediately share them with their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputies). DSLs continue to refer concerns about radicalisation to partner agencies, including Channel Panel which remains operational, in line with usual procedures.

The Department for Education has also published information here on [prevent management support for schools and colleges](#).

Children moving schools

As always, where children join our school from other settings we will seek confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely before the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe.

In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head.

Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on 8th January 2021 and is available on the school website.