

Child Protection & Safeguarding: COVID-19 Addendum

Saint Martin's Catholic Academy



Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Dane Carton	dcarton@saint-martins.net 01455212386
Deputy DSL	Tony Del Busso Caroline Abela Faye Hunt	tdelbusso@saint-martins.net cabela@saint-martins.net fhunt@saint-martins.net
Designated member of Senior Leadership Team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Rachel Thompson	rthompson@saint-martins.net
Headteacher	Clive Wright	cwright@saint-martins.net
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Mark Goddard	0116 305 7597
Chair of Governors	Jim Connolly	Jim.Connolly@booker.co.uk

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 executive, the accountable officer of the local clinical commissioning group, the chief officer of police and local authority (LA) Leicestershire.

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, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

This addendum is subject to change, in response to any new or updated guidance the government may publish. We will keep it under review as set out in section 15 below.

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 by the school and/or LA

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will follow the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

We will always have regard for these important safeguarding principles:

- › The best interests of children must come first
- › If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should 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

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSLs on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be on site, they can be contacted remotely by phone via SLT.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be the Headteacher and Deputy Head. You can contact them through the school office on 01455212386. The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with our 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

We will continue to work with children's social care, with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children, and with any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners, to help keep children safe.

We 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

The following guidance is currently in place:

6. Monitoring attendance

We will resume taking our attendance register. We will also follow [guidance](#) from the Department for Education on how to record attendance and what data to submit until no longer asked to do so.

All pupils of compulsory school age will be expected to attend school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health advice, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

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 sending parent mail messages to notify pupil absence and to request a reason. If we do not receive a response then a telephone call is made. If we feel the child is at risk or is a persistent absentee then a home visit may be completed
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. This will be done via Parent mail and our SIMS parent app.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We 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.

A risk assessment will be carried out and the pupils involved will be kept apart where possible. Parents/carers will be informed and if any abuse has taken place online then we would suggest that the young person does not have access to internet enabled devices on their own/ out of sight of parents/carers. And that this activity is monitored closely by parents/carers

8. Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher or volunteer

We 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/supply teachers/volunteers working on site or remotely; following the procedures in the school's safeguarding policy and explain during induction/staff training.

We 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).

We 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

We 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

- What are the risks to them attending school currently
- How often the school will make contact – this will be at least once a week
- 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 regularly.

If we can't make contact, we will contact the child's social worker or if the child doesn't have a social worker we will contact children's social care team.

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

The DSL (or deputies) 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 children return.

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

The school will maintain contact with children who are at home. 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

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

If IT staff are unavailable, our contingency plan will be to utilise IT support through our Trust.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff code of conduct/IT acceptable use policy.

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.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

We 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, where relevant, 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 teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

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.

Saint Martin's Catholic Academy has an outstanding pastoral team and our first week back at school will allow pupils to return through a phased approach (Bootcamp). There will be a focus on pastoral care, emotional health and wellbeing in everything we do during this period.

12.2 Children at home

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils.

We 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.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to mental health concerns in children who are at home, and act on these immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

13. Staff and volunteer recruitment

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that staff and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

When carrying out DBS checks and right to work checks, we will follow the latest guidance from the DBS, Home Office and Immigration Enforcement as appropriate (for example, with regards to the process for verifying documents). We will inform candidates about the intended process as soon as reasonably practicable.

We 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 183-188 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14. Safeguarding induction and training

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

New staff, on loan staff and volunteers will continue to receive a safeguarding induction in line with the expectations of Keeping Children Safe in Education, they will receive:

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

We 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 our child protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

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

The DSL (and deputies) will do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups. Online training may be attended instead of face to face.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks] by Dane Carton, Vice Principal. At every review, it will be approved by a member of the Governing body and Headteacher.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- › Child protection policy
- › Staff code of conduct
- › IT acceptable use policy
- › Health and safety policy
- › Online safety policy