

COVID-19 Interim Child Protection and Safeguarding Guidance

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1. Introduction

St Mark's Academy continues to have appropriate regard to KCSIE 2019 as statutory safeguarding guidance, as this contains our legislative duty. Anthem Trust supports its schools to be safe environments, providing continuity of care and support, ensuring the well-being of children, families and staff. Due regard should be made to regularly updated Government, Public Health England and Department for Education advice.

This is version 1.0 of this addendum which will outline our considerations, evaluative approach and strategic processes, when compared to business as usual. We will be keeping this under review, as circumstances continue to change and evolve, while our schools are operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19.) The government has asked members of the to follow the key principles:

**Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home must be.*

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they must be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents must also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They must observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

***Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision Published 19 March 2020**

2. Key principles

The following are the foundation, upon which the safety of children continues to be supported and monitored:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available daily – this can be remotely
- safer recruitment and checking practices are fulfilled, as 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
- effective joint working practices with external agencies and local authority partners
- adherence to GDPR and sharing information principles, is important, but must not get the way of protecting a child.

3. Role of the local authority

Local authorities are working closely with the DfE to support children of critical workers and vulnerable children, ensuring where possible educational provision is accessible and available. Regional school commissioners are providing support to local authorities to maintain effective child protection and safeguarding practices and services, in order for schools, 6th forms and colleges to run efficiently.

Add local authority advice and contacts for MASH team and LADO

4. Whole school approach

In response to COVID-19, the development of new whole school policies and process at St Mark's Academy will include safeguarding considerations. This is to ensure the safety of pupils and staff remains at the forefront of planning and delivery, thus not compromising or weakening our approach. Where possible, the DSL will be consulted and involved in the development, planning and implementation of:

- new remote learning platform
- Add other examples to suit your school context

5. Designated safeguarding lead arrangements

The DSL is responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare in this school:

Ms Dionne Jude - djude@stmarksacademy.org.uk

In their absence, these matters will be dealt with by the Deputy DSL:

Nicola Van Zyl - nvanzyl@stmarksacademy.org.uk and Sara Gomez sgomez@stmarksacademy.org.uk

A DSL or deputy will be available on site each day, however, where this is not possible, the following will be implemented:

- a trained DSL or deputy will be contactable via phone or online video – at a remote location e.g. home
- support from trained DSLs or deputies from other schools can be consulted (who will be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

When the DSL is not on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding:

This might include:

- logging initial concerns
- updating and managing access to child protection files
- liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy)
- liaising with children's social workers where they require access to information about children in need; the school or college add other examples to suit your school context

The senior leader is expected to work with the DSLs, rather than replacing them, so that staff always have access to information, advice and guidance from a trained DSL or deputy.

6. Reporting concerns about a child or member of staff

The reporting of child protection and safeguarding concerns remains as before. The details of DSLs have been shared with staff, agencies and families. It is the responsibility of all adults in and outside of school to ensure that any safeguarding concerns, are reported to the Designated Safeguarding lead. All concerns can be reported to Dionne Jude, djude@stmarksacademy.org.uk, in the case of an emergency 999 should be called.

The DSL should be informed of all urgent concerns and child protection matters directly, where a child might be at risk of harm, then report this in writing on CPOMS. All reports will include complete details of the child, any others involved and of the incident. All names will be written in full and all people mentioned will be given their designation (i.e. "Fred, father of...") Non-urgent concerns or observations about a child would be report on CPOMS.

Peer on Peer Abuse

St Mark's Academy recognises that during the 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.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Allegations Against Staff Policy

<https://www.stmarksacademy.com/page/?title=Policies+%26amp%3B+Reports&pid=22>

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Ms Rachel Norman

7. Support for pupils; vulnerable, EHCP, LAC, Critical worker families

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans. 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.

At St Mark's Academy, we have identified vulnerable pupils in the following way, using three different categories:

- Red - most risk of harm or neglect and fewest protective factors (would include those with a child protection plan)
- Amber - a moderate risk of harm, but with some protective factors (would include those identified as 'Child in Need'; and those with a social worker)
- Blue - some concerns escalating or unmet needs; or have been red or amber and need monitoring.

The children of critical workers are also being supported, this includes children whose parents are NHS staff, police, school staff, farmers and food retail workers, who need to be able to go out to work

[Here is a link for who the DfE define as critical workers click here](#)

Staff will support pupils who are considered vulnerable in the following ways:

Add details to suit your context here including, but not limited to, Social Workers, Local Authority Virtual School Head

- school is open for students to attend from 8.30am to 2.45pm
- weekly or bi-weekly phone calls
- home visits
- vouchers for local food banks
- food hampers or e-vouchers

8. Attendance considerations and reporting

School are not expected to follow their usual attendance policy and practices to record and follow up on non-attendance. The DfE are recording the number of children who are attending school and has introduced daily attendance reporting, to keep a record the attendance of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. We use this grid to collate and monitor attendance in house and upload it to the DfE - [daily online attendance form](#) This attendance return must be completed by 12 pm.

Any lists of pupils shared online, will be transferred securely.

Based on the agreed ways of working relating to pupils within different groups, at St Mark's Academy we:

- agree with social workers, who are working with families, whether children in need should be attending education provision – the school will then follow up on any child that does not attend whom we are expecting to. Our local authorities have asked us to share this information with them via secure email transfer
- immediately inform social workers, where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues
- contact parents/carers whose child has been identified as being in one of the vulnerable groups, to confirm if they will be attending school. If the parent has requested a place, a process is implemented to follow up with any parent, if a child does not attend school as agreed.
- inform virtual school heads of the attendance of LAC
- contact commissioners of provision to inform the attendance status of pupils

9. Remote and online learning

KCSIE 2019 advises schools to have in place appropriate monitoring and filtering ICT systems, this prevents pupils from accessing harmful or inappropriate content within school. With remote learning this is a harder task as the school has no control over the systems families have or do not have within their homes. Where remote learning is taking place, the following conditions apply:

- Online home learning consent forms to be sent to parent/carers to agree to online learning

- Students will be encouraged to share the online timetable with parents/carers, so they know when sessions are due to take place
- Students will be asked to sign a 'responsible user agreement'
- All lessons should take place in an environment that is quiet and free from distraction, and where possible be against a neutral background (should not be a bedroom)
- Suitable clothing should always be worn, e.g. dressed as if going in to public. Other members of the household should also be appropriately clothed.
- Students should be informed that all online learning is monitored, with their engagement being logged and shared with progress leaders and SLT
- Passwords and usernames are personal to each student and should not be shared
- No one-to-one teaching will take place, and learning will only take place in groups
- School rules and the behaviour code of conduct applies to online home learning and communication is expected to be responsible and sensible to other learners and peers
- Inappropriate, offensive and illegal material, including images, video and documents must not be uploaded and if seen must be reported to a teacher, coach or parent/carer
- Sessions should not be recorded by students; teachers will send all presentations and documents to students as requested
- Where video is being used to deliver a lesson, (live or recorded) the option to blackout or blur the background should be used by the teacher
- Students should be asked to turn off video cameras and mute audio, while teaching is taking place, or if otherwise instructed
- All live classes should be recorded (by the teacher) and backed up elsewhere, so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background
- ICT support will be available on site or online to help staff and to maintain safe IT arrangements. Schools may have to share these resources if IT staff become unavailable

10. Safeguarding and clusters

Schools may be required to pool resources or develop clusters, bringing together staff and children from multiple schools, in a safe environment. The host school will be known as the 'hub' and is expected to maintain child protection and safeguarding principles and practices, especially as this involves staff and volunteers moving between schools. The receiving school has a responsibility to ensure the appropriate employment-related checks have been completed, not assuming this has been fulfilled by their school of origin. For example, contacting HR to consult the SCR would be an appropriate measure.

Where risk assessments have been completed by the school of origin, an assessment to suit the new context should be undertaken. For example, if a member of staff is awaiting DBS clearance and has been supported by a chaperone, this will need to continue in the hub school. Schools should agree on the following...

- Start and finishing times for staff
- Recording staff attendance and absence reporting
- Allocated tasks and expectations from the school of origin and hub

- Break and lunchtime arrangements (some schools provide free lunches for all)

Where children join our school from other settings, we will gather information about them to cater for their needs/welfare, especially if they are vulnerable or if they have an EHC plan. This might include receiving child protection and safeguarding information. Ideally this will happen before a child arrives, but where this is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable. The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

11. Contextual safeguarding

During the time that children are away from schools, peer on peer abuse may still take place, especially online. Children and families can report such abuse to the police or school Dionne Jude and Nicola Van Zyl – the DSLs, who will endeavor to support victims working with our partners. Families are encouraged to monitor the online activity of children, ensuring parental consent is provided where required. Increased time spent accessing social media, potentially raises the risk of children being exposed to unsuitable content and individuals.

Resources for parents/carers:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and 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 and carers

12. Staff training and safer recruitment

All existing school and college staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE 2019. We are keeping staff updated of any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school or college, they will be expected to undertake a safeguarding induction. An up to date child protection policy (described above) will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE 2019.

It is essential that safer recruitment processes continue to be followed when recruiting staff and volunteers, as directed in part 3 of KCSIE 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.

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

Where St Mark's Academy are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

St Mark'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 2019.

St Mark's will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE 2019 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, St Mark's Academy will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE 2019.

13. Mental health and well-being

Under the current conditions, we acknowledge that some children, families and members of staff may experience an increase in stress, anxiety and frustration, affecting their mental health and well-being. We are providing as much support as possible and we continue to use DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools - [mental health and behaviour in schools](#). The only difference is that this assistance may be delivered remotely, via IT or on the phone and may include external specialists.

14. Local contacts

- **Merton Local Authority – Social Care MASH* Team**
Children, Schools and Families Department, 12th Floor, Merton Civic Centre, London Road Morden, SM4 5DX. Telephone: **020 8545 4226** or **020 8545 4227** (out of hours: 020 8770 5000)
You do not have to give your name and your conversation will be treated confidentially. You may also contact us by email: mash@merton.gov.uk
- **Merton LADO Support at:** LADO@merton.gov.uk and on: 020 8545 3179
- **DfE coronavirus helpline - Email:** DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk
Telephone: 0800 046 8687

If you have a query about coronavirus (COVID-19), relating to schools and other educational establishments in England contact our helpline.

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.