

Longridge Towers School Covid-19 Appendix to Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy

This Policy applies to the whole school and is published on the school website for pupils, parents, staff colleagues and for prospective pupils

Author: IJC

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Next review date: July 2021

Ratified: A Birkett; E Miller; Headmaster

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Whilst most pupils and staff, if not all, are expected to return at the beginning of September, it should be noted that school closure may also be re-imposed as part of a local lockdown being put in place in response to an increasing R number.

As such, the School will return to remote learning, being aware that pupils at home and staff may be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

During these ongoing challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our School – whether they are at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we will continue to make in line with any changed arrangements in the School and following Government and local agencies' advice.

The school position and local advice as of 23rd March 2020

It should be noted that as lockdown has eased, some of these measures may have changed. However, they may also be re-imposed with the event of a local lockdown being put in place.

Arrangements for children's social care

The following measures were implemented in children's social care with immediate effect following the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 23rd March 2020.

- Social care work focussed on the following priorities:
 - Children at risk of significant harm or where safeguarding issues are raised
 - Children whose placement was at risk of breakdown (this included home, care, independent or supported living)

Children's Services staff from areas which did not provide services solely within the priority categories above were, where possible, supporting work in those priority areas. Staff at NAS (Northumberland Adolescent Services) were providing a range of support to vulnerable young people within the priority groups.

- Children were no longer being referred to centres or youth provision. This followed a national direction where children's centres were closed and universal youth provision ceased.
- Technology was used to meet rather than face-to-face meetings. While it was crucially important that the Local Authority supported family time for children who were categorised as looked after, given the inherent risks in direct face to face contact, this was being facilitated through the use of technology such as Skype and Google Hangout. The temporary ceasing of face to face contact was supported by the local family court. This change in practice may have impacted on some young people's emotional wellbeing and all were mindful of the changes.
The LA and NSSP made further adjustments and changes to the working arrangements of all staff to ensure priority areas of work are covered. Schools were kept up to date with changes through social workers and on a case by case basis.
- From 24th March all face to face Child Protection Conferences and looked after reviews were suspended. Independent Reviewing Officers are continuing to use technology to hold virtual meetings with Google Meet or Hangout. The meetings are being led by the IROs and joining instructions are being sent prior to the conference either by the admin team or the conference Chair. If these fail the Chair will undertake a call round to gather the views of everyone and the information will be recorded and distributed accordingly.

Reporting arrangements

The School's arrangements will continue in line with our Child Protection (Safeguarding) policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Isabel J Cheer, tel: 07707 527666 or 01289 307584 (school number), email: icheer@lts.org.uk**

In the event that the DSL is not available due to illness, the deputy designated as the on-duty safeguarding contact, will be contactable on 07707 527666.

The Deputy DSLs are: **Sandra Bullen email: sbullen@lts.org.uk; Krysia Westthorp email: kwestthorp@lts.org.uk; Sally Douglas email: sdouglas@lts.org.uk; Steve Wilkinson email: swilkinson@lts.org.uk; Allie Ireland email: aireland@lts.org.uk.**

In the event of an emergency the following colleagues from neighbouring schools can also be contacted to provide advice.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at **The Grove School** is: **Penny Derries, 01289 306390, email: Penelope.derries@thegrove.northumberland.sch.uk**.

The School's approach continues to be one which ensures the DSL or a deputy is always available while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible the DSL or Deputy DSL will be contactable and the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will email all staff by 9am to advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role together with contact details for the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the DSL or duty deputy immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting children's services are:

Report your concerns to OneCall in the usual way on 01670 536400 or Scottish Borders Child Protection Unit on 01896 662787.

Should a child, in the School's view, be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the School will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure.

Identifying Vulnerability

Based on our knowledge of the children and young people in school and their individual vulnerabilities we have identified the most vulnerable children.

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children – Looked After Children have access to Mrs Cheer, who is the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. LAC children are currently entitled to attend school during any closure period, including holidays. They are not compelled to attend, and it may be decided through discussion with carers and the LAC child's social worker that the safest place for the LAC child is at home. The Designated Teacher will check in regularly with the LAC child via email, or if requested by the child, by phone. This will happen at the beginning of each week. Frequency may be increased if it is felt such contact is in the best interest of the child. As at 1st September 2020, we have one LAC child.
- Previously Looked After Children – children in this category will be supported through regular contact via email, or if requested by the child, by phone. Their parents/carers will also be contacted a minimum of once a week, again by email or if preferred, by a telephone call. As at 1st September 2020, we have two previously looked after children.
- Children subject to a child protection plan – children in this category are expected to attend school during any closure period, including holidays. As at 1st September 2020, we have no children subject to a child protection plan.
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker – this includes any child on a Child in Need plan. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. As at 1st April 2020, we have four children who have or have previously had a social worker.
- Children with an EHCP – these children would be entitled to attend school during any closure period, including holidays. However, this is likely only to be utilized if it were agreed by parents/carers and the School that this would be necessary for the child. As at 1st September 2020, we have no children with an EHCP.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker - Where required these children will be offered a place at school (or another school by arrangement). As at 1st September 2020, we have one child on the edge of social care involvement.
- Other children the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required. As at 1st September 2020, we have two children that we consider to be vulnerable.

Where appropriate, these children will have an individual plan which will be shared with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for

Looked After and previously Looked After Children. The plans in respect of each child should state how often they are to be reviewed.

In addition, the following groups will continue, if necessary, to have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school in event of closure:

- Children of key workers who are eligible to attend school – places will be available during normal school hours for those children whose parents are **both** key workers, and for whom it is not possible to put in place alternative child care arrangements. In the event of school closure, the School will be in contact with this group of parents regularly to ensure that appropriate provision is made for their children to attend school safely.
- Children at home – All Form Tutors will make contact via Google Classroom with their tutees. Phone contact will also be provided if requested.

Holiday arrangements

Longridge Towers School will, if required, continue to provide places for children over any holiday breaks as directed by the Government.

Attendance on site in the event of lockdown procedures being re-imposed

The School will follow any attendance guidance issued by the government. Where a child is expected on site and does not arrive, the School will follow our own attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact has not been achieved by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (telephone, email) but if necessary arrange a home visit by the School or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider and manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the School to ensure children and young people are safe.

On a daily basis, the DSL will know who to expect at the School provision for that day.

The School will also follow the following procedure if contact proves impossible with children at home:

- Where an expected child doesn't arrive as agreed, contact will be made with home immediately to ascertain the reason why.
- If contact cannot be established, the School will contact any alternative emergency numbers provided.
- Where a child has an allocated social worker, the social worker will be contacted if contact is still not established.

If there are any significant concerns about a child who is expected to attend or who is currently at home, contact should be made using the procedures set out in the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy – the contact number for OneCall is 01670 636400, and for Scottish Borders Child Protection Unit 01896 662787.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, and financial or health anxiety and the stresses that re-imposition of lockdown is likely to produce. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns. They should also share any concerns regarding a colleague's mental health and wellbeing.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer on peer abuse. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar.

We also address the issue of peer-on-peer abuse in our remote learning curriculum. Pupils and their parents have been reminded of the School's Acceptable Use of Mobile Phone and Portable Communication Devices, and Senior pupils have access to their Tootoot accounts.

Risk online

We will share the Government's most recent advice about online risk with our parents and pupils.

Young people will be using the internet more during any period of lockdown. The School may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other online risks and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children are learning at the School.

- The School continues will ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place on all equipment accessing the internet through the School's systems
- The Governors with delegated authority for Safeguarding governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and guidance for safer working practice from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the Staff Handbook and Acceptable Use Policy in light of this.
- Staff have been made aware that professional boundaries should be maintained during this exceptional period and been reminded of the School's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Staff have read the 20 safeguarding considerations for live streaming issued by LGfL prior to delivering any live-streamed sessions and will follow School advice contained within the School's Remote Teaching and Learning Policy when using different online teaching methods.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning will receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the School, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP and via Tootoot.

Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the School, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community, and further updates will be shared as appropriate. We have set out the School's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the School (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:

- 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 carers 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
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that ‘it could happen here’ and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the DSL.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed that the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged, and remain:

Adam Hall

Independent Reviewing Officer (LADO)

Direct Line: 01670 623979 General Line: 01670 624888

Email: - adam.hall01@northumberland.gov.uk

If necessary, the School will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction with the DSL or a deputy before starting or on their first morning. They must read the School’s Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy, and the Staff Code of Conduct which includes the Staff Behaviour Policy. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- The School will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff(including supply staff) and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with DBS guidance.
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to initially check these documents online through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by the Bursar who is working in the school each day.

Ratification

The Governing Body ensures that the school has a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with Local Authority guidance and/or locally agreed inter-agency procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Partnership. Accordingly, this addendum has been ratified by the governing body remotely.