



8th March 2021

COVID-19 LOWER FARM SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY UPDATE/APPENDIX

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Schools Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#)
- Schools Attendance policy

On Monday 22nd February 2021, The Prime Minister announced the government's roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England. This included a direction that from 8 March 2021, all pupils should attend school.

SCHOOL NAME will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (as amended, Jan 2021).

We 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 coronavirus.

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Walsall Safeguarding Partnership

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership continue to provide informed and effective leadership. As a reminder, they would like to reiterate the Government and NHS guidelines about maintaining good hygiene: only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work, and stay two metres away from other people outside of your household.

Purpose

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remains ***everyone's responsibility***. Consequently, everyone who comes into contact with our children, whether it is those in our settings during this period of lockdown or those students learning remotely, has a role to play in safeguarding and child protection. In doing so, all staff and volunteers should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, ***what is in the best interests of the child***.

Vulnerable children and young people

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially our Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

LOWER FARM 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 Lead Lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk for children who are looked after and previously looked after. The lead person for this will in school will be Sarah Milner (Headteacher).

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/carer does not want to bring their child to LOWER FARM and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and LOWER FARM will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent/carer.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, LOWER FARM or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England/Public Health Walsall.

LOWER FARM will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school.

Procedures for managing child concerns

Despite the emergency nature of the current situation everyone in school has a role of recognising and responding to potential indicators of abuse and neglect, all action should be taken by those with statutory powers to help the child. Early contact and close liaison with such agencies are therefore regarded as essential by our school.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that children are identified, and the appropriate agency involved if there are actual or suspected case of child abuse by adults, parents, or any other adult.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend any reviews called by the Local Authority by Skype or other means of social distancing and may call on appropriate members of staff for reports.

Attendance and monitoring

We expect all pupils to attend school.

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of the illness and inform us of the reason for absence so that the correct attendance codes can be used in every case of absence. We expect parents or carers to make contact to make us aware of the status of any COVID-19 tests that have become necessary and to update the school on the welfare of the pupil.

From 8th March 2021, we will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)¹ for all pupils.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents/made>

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

For children self-isolating or quarantining or shielding – we will use code X.

In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction² will provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

Also, we will offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating
- shielding
- vulnerable (and off-school)

The Department for Education expects schools to grant applications for leave in exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be penalised.

To support the above, we will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

We will encourage parents to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Where an application is made by parents to electively home educate, we will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school.

Where we feel that there is additional cause for concern the DSL will then consider consulting with Walsall Early Help Hub and/or MASH using guidance within Walsall Right Help, Right Time Continuum of Need. This will happen as soon as we are aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923539/Remote_Education_Temporary_Continuity_Direction_-_Explanatory_Note.pdf

We will work with Walsall Access team and, where possible, coordinate meetings with parents to seek to ensure EHE is being provided in the best interests of the child.

If a parent wants to admit their child to our school, we will follow our normal processes for in-year admissions applications.

Supporting children not in school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Where our DSL has identified a child to need the right help at the right time, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan will be recorded on our safeguarding records system, as will a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods will be considered and recorded.

Our school will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

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

We recognise 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 in our school will be made aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Children learning remotely and Online Safety

Staff in our school Teachers understand how to maintain effective safeguarding arrangements whilst also providing high-quality remote education and supporting pupil wellbeing.

There are clear safeguarding protocols in place to ensure pupils are safe during remote education. It is essential to have and communicate clear reporting routes so that children, teachers, parents and carers can raise any safeguarding concerns in relation to remote education.

Our procedures for ensuring safety are developed alongside Government guidance [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

When we provide remote education using live streaming and pre-recorded videos, teachers understand how to keep children safe whilst they are online alongside Government guidance [Teaching online safety in schools](#). **SCHOOL NAME** will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Online teaching will follow the same principles as set out in our Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour policy.

Below are some things we consider if there are virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded 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.
- Staff will only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff will record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held

It is essential that our pupils are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate communications and online material. As such, our school ensure appropriate procedures, filters and monitoring systems are in place in accordance with the following policies:

- E-Safety
- Web Filtering and Device Monitoring.

Where pupils are using school equipment at home, the ability to filter access is limited. Filtering will be provided to the extent that is possible within the technological constraints the current crisis allows.

Pupils should be reminded of Internet Safety rules and parents will be expected to manage their children's safety whilst at home.

Staff delivering teaching online will listen for any cues that indicate a safeguarding concern and report these to the DSL as soon as possible. These cues might include:

- Comments or questions about child abuse or neglect
- Inadequate supervision at home
- The impact of food poverty
- The health status in a family and any young caring responsibilities children have

Our remote learning process ensures children who are being asked to learn remotely 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 will 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

Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy DSL

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.

Our school knows that whatever the scenario, it is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy. **On each day, staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them if the DSL or DDSL is not on site.**

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 and will contact Seona Baker (Child Safeguarding Coordinator) or failing that, contact the Local Authority. The senior leader will liaise with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaise with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments in school.

Concerns about an adult

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in school, they should continue to refer their concern to the head. Concerns about the head should be directed to the Chair of Governors. If any of these people are unavailable due to the Covid-19 context then colleagues must refer the matter to Tina Cooper (LADO) lado@walsall.gov.uk. The matter will then follow usual safeguarding procedures.

We 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.

We will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per Government guidance.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Safeguarding Training and Induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff 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 LOWER FARM, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Safer recruitment

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, SCHOOL NAME 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 (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021).

Where LOWER FARM are 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

As such, we will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020.

Volunteers

LOWER FARM may use volunteers to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to students and staff members. Other duties may be required such as building test kits, cleaning down areas and directing people.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis in LOWER FARM will be in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer is administering a COVID-19 test whilst un-supervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, the school will follow safer recruitment processes.

Mental Health

Negative experiences and traumatic life events can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff are aware of this when considering the setting and expectations of pupils' work where they are learning remotely.

The DfE's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services. You can read the [guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools here](#).

Staff and safeguarding policies are aligned to Government guidance:-

[Mental health related to the Covid-19](#)

[Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

Peer on Peer Abuse

LOWER FARM recognises that during lockdown revised processes 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 of those outlined within of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We 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.

Domestic Abuse

Our school staff are aware and stay alert to domestic abuse, and that the potential for domestic abuse and violence to go unseen is high. We know that many victims will have reduced or limited opportunities to share what is happening to them. We are mindful that some children, whether returning to school, or remaining at home, will have suffered the impact of domestic abuse and we will be vigilant in our professional curiosity and ask those additional questions.

There are a range of resources available to support victims and those working with victims, Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website is being updated regularly and has lots of information on [domestic abuse](#)

Key Contacts for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Head: Sarah Milner

Contact email: smilner@lower-farm.walsall.sch.uk

Telephone: 01922 710479

Designated safeguarding lead: Sarah Milner

Contact email: smilner@lower-farm.walsall.sch.uk

Telephone: 01922 710479

Deputy designated safeguarding lead: Leah Holford

Contact email: lholford@lower-farm.walsall.sch.uk

Telephone: 01922 710479

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Tina Cooper

Contact email: lado@walsall.gov.uk

Telephone: 07432 422205

Local Authority Social (MASH):

Contact email: MASH@walsall.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 555 2866
0300 555 2836 (out of hours service)

Virtual Head: Lorraine Thompson

Contact email: Lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk

Telephone: 07825 860581

Helpline numbers

NSPCC Adults Helpline	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Refuge 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247	
NSPCC Childline	0800 1111	https://www.childline.org.uk/
Find your nearest foodbank		Trussell Trust

Links to associated school policies and procedures

Links to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy• Staff Code of Conduct• Behaviour Policy• Safer Recruitment/DBS policy• E-safety Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEND policy• Allegations Against Staff (Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures)• Anti-Bullying Policy• Acceptable Use Policy