



COVID-19 Safeguarding Policy Statement

March 2020

Statement

The schools within St. Martin's Multi Academy Trust (St. Martin's CE Primary and Field View Primary) will remain closed until further notice. Grove Primary school will remain open for children of key/critical workers and vulnerable children only, as part of the country's ongoing response to coronavirus. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.

The Government's expectation is that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, unless, in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child or it is not safe for them to do so. In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent, and help to resolve any concerns or difficulties wherever possible. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, our school or social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

All staff will continue to act in the best interests of all children so if anyone in our Trust has a safeguarding concern about any child they will act immediately and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in person or by phone or e-mail.

Our Trust will continue to have regard to the Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019 Guidance in particular, part 1, part 3 - safer recruitment, part 4- management of allegations and part 5 -dealing with peer on peer abuse, child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, online safety and other forms of peer on peer abuse.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads will continue to follow all local procedures, we will continue to refer all concerns through the well- established channels e.g. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Channel Panel etc.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads will continue to work closely with and inform the Virtual School Headteacher, if we have any concerns regarding our children and young people in care and children and young people who were previously in care.

Our senior leaders, especially DSLs, know who our most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.

For children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, we will undertake a risk assessment in liaison with parents/carers and the local authority to determine whether children should continue to attend school or not. The purpose of this is both to identify those children who should continue to attend in order that their EHC needs are met and to identify what support a child may require if they are remaining at home. The Trust will use the risk assessment tool developed by the local authority for all children and young people with an EHC Plan, the risk assessment will also be completed for children and young people who do not have an EHC Plan, but are either undergoing a needs assessment, or receive additional high needs funding to support them in a setting.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Leaders

Designated Safeguarding Leads available during school closure:

Lisa Martin - Headteacher

Jenny Curry – Head of School

Louise Birt – Pastoral Officer

Katie Shaw – Pastoral Officer

Nicolina Alaimo – Pastoral Officer

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019 states, 'During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns.'

Whilst providing care for children there will be a trained DSL available on site. If a DSL is not on site, the senior leader on duty will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at our school.

Attendance

Our Trust will complete the daily online attendance form introduced by the DfE to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows our Trust to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

Staff from the City of Wolverhampton Inclusion Support Service will contact schools to ascertain if identified vulnerable children are attending school or not, they will then inform the allocated social worker or early help worker.

Our Trust has a process in place to check on the welfare and attendance of any vulnerable child. We keep a record of all calls and contact with families and external agencies. We will follow the City of Wolverhampton advice, therefore, we will not make home visits.

The Wolverhampton MASH is still fully operational and, at the current time, continues to accept all levels of referral. If we are experiencing any issues in getting in touch with Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) our school will contact Helen Patten - helen.patten@wolverhampton.gov.uk

The safeguarding service are also continuing to hold initial and review child protection conferences; however, these will be done virtually or by submission of a report, our school will continue to contribute to these meetings. If we have any issues, our school will contact Nicola Hale - nicola.hale@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

Training

We understand that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training may be explored). For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, our DSLs who have been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing Trust staff already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE and our school's safeguarding policy. This appendix will be made available to all existing staff to ensure they are aware of the new arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

If new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter our Trust they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up to date safeguarding/child protection policy will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE.

Our existing Trust staff may move between schools on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The receiving school should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing staff will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

If a child must attend another setting

If a child is attending another school because they are unable to attend their own school, the Designated Safeguarding Leads at the home school should liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Leads at the host school to share information about children attending the host school. The host should be aware of the reason the child

is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the host school should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL level, and likewise between special educational needs coordinators for children with EHC Plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our senior leaders will take responsibility. Host schools should also obtain information regarding emergency contact information and an additional emergency contact number, any medical needs or allergies for each child and any other relevant information regarding those children. If the host school has any concerns about children attending their school from a home school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will raise and share their concerns with the home school immediately and liaise with the social worker if required.

Whilst our Trust will continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR we will not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

At St. Martin's Multi Academy Trust, we understand it is essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. If our Trust must recruit new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. 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.

During this current period, if our Trust uses 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 would we allow a volunteer who has not been checked to be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Existing staff engaging in regulated activity already have the appropriate DBS check, we understand there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the staff temporarily moves to another school to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. If we are a host school, we will risk assess as we would for a volunteer. Our Trust understands the onus remains on us to satisfy ourselves that someone in our setting has the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the host school chooses to, via seeking assurance from the home school rather than requiring new checks.

Our Trust will continue to follow our legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

Our Trust will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral. During the COVID-19 period all referrals will be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that our Trust is 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, our Trust must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

We will continue to liaise and seek advice from our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if we have any concerns – Paul Cooper 01902 550661.

Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Our school is aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Our Trust will have regard to the DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools which 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. Our support for pupils in the current circumstances may include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services.

Guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

Online Safety

At St. Martin's Multi Academy Trust, we understand that it will be more important than ever that our schools provide a safe environment, including online. Our Trust will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online in school.

Children and online safety away from school and college

We are doing what we reasonably can to keep all our children safe. In most cases, the majority of our children are not physically attending our school/college.

Our Trust will consider the safety of our children when they are asked to work online. We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place, so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to our Trust this should 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

When our Trust has contact with parents/carers (e.g. via phone calls, e-mails, text messaging, website etc) we can reinforce the importance of children being safe online. We feel it is especially important for parents/carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access.

Parents/carers may choose to supplement the Trust's online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents/carers, our Trust will make every effort to emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online includes:

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

Our school will continue to provide contact information and supportive information on their websites for parents/carers by signposting to statutory agencies -Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Website, MASH contact numbers and third sector agencies and other partners.