

**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for  
Safeguarding and Child Protection at St  
Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

This additional Appendix of **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School** Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas

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## 1. Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

### Key contacts

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Wendy D'Arcy	<a href="mailto:head@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk">head@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Deputy DSL	Clare Howells Natalie Jones	<a href="mailto:chowells@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk">chowells@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:njones@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk">njones@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Chair of Governors	Gabriella Tiley Syd Gwyer	<a href="mailto:foundationgovernor3@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk">foundationgovernor3@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:chair@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk">chair@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk</a>

Whilst the partial closure is in place, the school site will remain open for vulnerable children and those whose parents are key workers when requested

## 2. Vulnerable children

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.

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.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are and will ensure provision is offered to them whilst the school is in partial closure.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School 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. The lead person for this will be: Paula Freckleton – Pastoral Support Worker (PSA).

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker can attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and St Joseph's will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School leaders will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **3. Attendance monitoring**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School leaders and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether any will be attending school and then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, we will notify their social worker.

The Department for Education has introduced a daily online attendance form 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 schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places. This attendance record will also be shared with the local authority hub lead.

### **4. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

When St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is partially opened, a DSL or Deputy will be on site.

It is important that all staff 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.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Wendy D'Arcy**

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: **Clare Howells and Natalie Jones**

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## **5. Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot have a direct conversation with the DSL or a Deputy DSL, they should email them to ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Co-Chair of Governors: Gabriella Tiley ([foundationgovernor3@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:foundationgovernor3@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk)) or Syd Gwyer ([Chair@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:Chair@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk))

## **6. Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. All staff are expected to read and understand this annex and have signed that they have done so. Where this is not possible, staff will provide confirmation via email that they have read the new annex to the policy.

It is recognised that DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

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 they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## **7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

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, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School 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 (2019) (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.

St Joseph's catholic Primary School 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.

If we are utilising volunteers, we should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. It is noted that **under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.**

Regarding members of the school workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce 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. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in another school setting.

If St Joseph's is the receiving school, a risk assessment will be carried out as it would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on the school to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving school chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks

We 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. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

We 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](mailto: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.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, we must

continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **8. Online safety in schools and colleges**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

## **9. Children and online safety away from school**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School 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 the school, we will 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

School staff are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school their child is going to be interacting with online.

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- 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



### **Virtual Learning**

Below are some things to consider when delivering 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 must only use platforms agreed by the Senior Leadership Team to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

### **10. Supporting children not in school**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

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

St Joseph's Catholic Primary school and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises 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 at the St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

## **11. Supporting children in school**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School 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 COVID19.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Where St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the trust.

## **12. Peer on peer Abuse**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Children who are in school during partial closure will be supervised at all times, to ensure they feel safe.

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 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required ensuring the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

## **13. The Role of the Local Authority**

The school will continue to work very closely with Gloucestershire Safeguarding Executive Board to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend school.

## **14. Safeguarding and Clustering of Schools**

If we need to cluster with another school where children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) continue to apply. In particular, the school that is acting as the hub in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required.