Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum
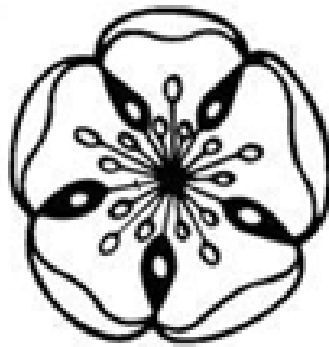
Orchard Way Primary School

Approved by:	Full Governing Board	**Date:** April 2020
Last reviewed on:	21.01.2021	
Next review due by:	21.02.2021	

Contents

Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and Headteacher	Stacey Taylor	head@orchardway.croydon.sch.uk 07971876353
Deputy DSL and Assistant Headteacher	Cherry Bartholomew	cbartholomew1.306@lgflmail.org 07860636434
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site or on call.	Georgina Clifton	gclifton.306@orchardwayprimary.school
Local authority designated officer (LADO) Assistant LADO	Steve Hall Jane Parr	steve.hall@croydon.gov.uk 07825 830328 jane.parr@croydon.gov.uk 07985 590505
Chair of governors	Sharon Oliver	sharon@sharonoliverconsultancy.co.uk 07495090778

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership and the local authority (LA) London Borough of Croydon.

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

> Have a social worker, including children:
>
> - With a child protection plan
> - Assessed as being in need
> - Looked after by the local authority
>
> Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

> The best interests of children must come first
>
> If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
>
> A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
>
> It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
>
> Children should continue to be protected when they are online

3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

Where a staff member has a safeguarding concern, they must call the DSL, of deputy DSL if unavailable, to discuss their concerns then follow it up with a written record of their concern in hard copy or by e-mail.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site or on call at all times. Details of all-important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be in school, they can be contacted remotely by telephone.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

Where there is no DSL or deputy on site, the teacher on site will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding; they will contact the DSL immediately if there are any concerns. They will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

> Identify the most vulnerable children in school

> Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary

> Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

If a member of staff and pupils are attending another school site as part of a hub arrangement, then the school's own DSL or deputy DSL will be available on call. They will be given knowledge of any current or historic safeguarding risks in regard to those children attending and will continue to be available to respond to queries from either the school's own staff members, the DSL on site or from SPOC.

Where pupils are attending a different setting, whatever is reasonably possible should be done to provide the receiving school's DSL with appropriate welfare and child protection information.

All staff members will be made aware of the DSL arrangements that the school has put in place and how they can contact them.

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

> Our 3 local safeguarding partners

> The local authority about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our attendance registers as usual or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance. Where children are being kept safe at home they will be marked as a x on the register. Children attending the critical worker/vulnerable pupils' provision will be marked as present unless it has been agreed they will not attend school and they will me marked as "other authorised leave of absence".

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn't attend, or stops attending. In these cases, we will:

> Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by contacting them directly by telephone to verify the whereabout of the child and reasons for non-attendance

> Notify their social worker, where they have one

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. Parents and carers will be asked to confirm the contact details we currently hold to ensure they are correct.

Children who do not resume attendance when schools return

Once a year group resumes attendance at school if pupils do not attend schools should follow their absence procedures, including a resumption of first day calling protocols.

During this period, we will establish:
- First day contact via text and Google Forms to establish the reason why the child is not attending;
- Telephone contact for families who have not responded by 10.30am.
- The whereabouts of the pupil;
- The safety and wellbeing of the pupil;
- An anticipated date when the pupil will resume attendance.

A pupil is absent for 10 or more days

If after 10 days the child has not resumed attendance at school then the school is required by regulations to notify the council. This usually done by means of a "children missing from education" referral.

In anticipation of the number of pupils not immediately resuming attendance the notification procedure will change, with different routes depending on whether or not the school is seeking to remove a child from the school roll. The purpose for this is to prevent the existing CME referral pathway from being overwhelmed with individual referrals from schools of pupils who have not resumed attendance after 10 days.

Even after 10 days absence and notification to the council we will continue to check in with the child to ensure their whereabouts and safety; and to continue to work with parents/carers to secure a return to school attendance.

Notifications to Croydon Council

Where a pupil has a social worker or has an EHCP then the relevant officer at the council will be advised by email that the child has not resumed attendance. The contact for children with a social worker should be the named social worker.

If after 10 days, children who also fall into one of the following categories have not returned to school then Croydon Council will be notified. These categories are:

- school does not know the whereabouts of the pupil;
- school is unable to contact the pupil's parents/carers;
- child has a social worker;
- child has an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP); or
- child is otherwise considered vulnerable.

We will complete the Covid-19 Pupil Absence Notification Workbook on weekly basis with details for all pupils in the above categories. This will be sent by secure email by 5pm every Thursday during term time to EWS.admin@croydon.gov.uk.

Should we have immediate concerns regarding pupil's whereabouts, safety or wellbeing the matter should be discussed with the school's designated safeguarding lead and consideration given as to whether a referral to SPOC would also be appropriate.

Even after notifying the council we will continue to work with parents/carers to secure a return to school attendance for the child and ensure they are safe and well.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have, contacting the Headteacher (DSL) immediately. The Headteacher will contact Steve Hall, the Local Area Designated Officer, or Jane Parr, Assistant LADO. They will then advise how to conduct any investigation in the time of closure.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns

Children will be prioritised as follows:

- **Priority 1**- Without continued regular contact with this child they will be at significant risk of harm.
- **Priority 2**- Active contact needs to be maintained with this family on a regular/weekly basis to monitor how the family are coping and to escalate if necessary.
- **Priority 3**- Less frequent contact can be maintained due to stability in this child's safety network.

All Child Protection & Children in Need cases are categorised as Priority 1.

We have the option to offer places in school to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable' but are considered Priority 2. We will work with parents/carers to do this. These may be children who have had social workers in the past or those who have raised concerns in the past that did not reach the threshold for referral to the Single Point of Contact.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10.1 below.

10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

10.1 Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

> They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or

> They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

These plans set out:

> How often the school will make contact

> Which staff member(s) will make contact

> How they will make contact

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant and will review them on a fortnightly basis].

If we can't make contact with a child, we may visit the child's home to conduct a wellbeing check. We will contact the social worker if the child has one. If not, we will refer to Single Point of Contact or the Police if needed.

10.2 Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately. In particular, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing code of conduct and IT acceptable use policy.

Staff will not use their personal e-mail addresses to interact with children but will be able to use secure systems such as our learning platform Google Classroom. Telephone calls to families by teaching staff will be made using the school telephones on their contact days. Staff will not contact children on the child's mobile phones. Telephone welfare checks must be made via the parents/carers contact numbers. The DSL/Headteacher will use their own phone but ensure that the caller identification is turned off. Staff will not email pupils from personal email address or email pupils at personal email addresses. Any email between staff and children must be from/to email addresses within the school's email system.

Where video conferencing is used, either by Zoom or Google Meet, there will always be at least one member of teaching staff to moderate and the background must be blurred or non-identifiable. A password must be used on Zoom to ensure the call cannot be entered by unknown persons. The conference call will not be recorded or screen captured and children, parents and carers will be agree not to record or screen-capture.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

> Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online

> Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school

> Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides

> Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

We will share resources from the LGFL DigiSafe Team and other agencies concerned with safeguarding children online.

12. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. Our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant will be available to speak to at school once a week during term time. Parents and carers will be informed by an e-mail weekly to confirm the day she is available.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

13. Staff recruitment, training and induction

13.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school, and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks. The Headteacher will complete these risk assessments.

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

13.3 Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

13.4 Keeping records of who's on site

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date. We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

14. Children attending other settings

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the child's social worker
- Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO can't share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every four weeks by Stacey Taylor, Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Staff code of conduct
- IT acceptable use policy

> Health and safety policy

> Online safety policy

> Whistleblowing policy

> Anti-bullying policy