



**George Stephenson**  
High School

**COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURE  
ADDENDUM TO THE  
SAFEGUARDING AND  
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY  
AT GEORGE STEPHENSON  
HIGH SCHOOL**

<b>Governance</b>	George Stephenson High School Governing Body
<b>Policy Officer</b>	Mrs Williams, Deputy Headteacher
<b>Review Date</b>	July 2021
<b>Committee Adoption Date</b>	March 2021
<b>Next Review Date</b>	TBC

## **Addendum-North Tyneside School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy-March 2021**

### **Introduction**

This document provides the third addendum to our School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy during the Covid-19 pandemic as recommended in the DfE safeguarding guidance for schools issued at the beginning of the pandemic.

We are currently operating different to business as usual. However, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE) is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools and colleges should continue to have regard to as required by legislation and/or their funding agreements.
- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should act immediately to report concerns when they arise including completing written records where necessary
- know that information a child/young person discloses regarding harm/abuse of themselves or another child/young person must be shared as appropriate, and cannot be kept secret
- staff must understand they have a professional responsibility to report concerns ensuring confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared
- children should continue to be protected when they are online
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children

### **Staff training and induction**

All school staff have accessed child protection training within the last three years with regular updates where relevant from the DSL or deputy DSL so are aware of issues to be concerned about. For staff who need an update, an e-learning session is [available here](#)

If staff need to work in different settings they should be given an appropriate level of safeguarding induction by the receiving school. If staff work in different settings, the level of safeguarding induction required will be judged on a case-by-case basis as usually, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training.

Induction should include but is not limited to the following

- The school's child protection policy
- Current and ongoing change of DSL arrangements
- Contact details for the MASH helpline and Front Door should they not be able to contact a DSL or deputy and need to directly report a concern
- An awareness of how to record concerns should they need to document safeguarding concerns
- The code of conduct for that setting
- Re-read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSE) 2020, which outlines types of abuse and neglect and what to do about it

All visitors to the school including staff shared from another setting, will be required to sign in at reception in accordance with the visitor's protocol and will be required to adhere to the conditions contained in this document. In addition to child protection, safeguarding and health and safety, this visitor's protocol is noted as being part of our 'induction' for visitors to the school. This is [available here](#) on the school's HR page on the Education Services website.

These procedures should also be applied where sharing of staff with other settings is needed. We expect these standards to be in place for visiting staff coming into our school or schools receiving our staff and will liaise with all settings our staff work from to ensure these safer working principles are applied. Further information is available below regarding 'code of conduct'.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead coverage in school**

As more children return, we endeavour to have a DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible, and where this is the case there are two options we will consider:

- a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs (or deputies) with other schools (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

*Please note: At the start of lockdown and restrictions, the government advised, that for the period coronavirus measures are in place, 'trained' DSLs (or deputy DSLs) will continue to be classed as DSL/DDSLs even if they cannot access refresher training.*

*However, we aim to ensure this training is still accessed every two years for all DSL/DDSLs in school as they can attend North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership (NTSCP) training which has been made available via webinars during this time.*

*In addition, in school our DSL/DDSLs will continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with ongoing safeguarding developments via information from local safeguarding partners, newsletters, professional advice groups and e-learning, and pass this information to staff where relevant to ensure ongoing safeguarding CPD in school.*

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) 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 the school or college.

Whatever the scenario, school will ensure that staff and volunteers always have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

## **What to do if you're worried about a child or young person**

During and following lockdown periods, we are aware there may be an increase in new safeguarding concerns about individual children whether we see them in person and/or as we have contact with them virtually. Normal safeguarding procedures should apply. Capacity to support this has been increased within the North Tyneside MASH team and through the MASH professional's helpline

We will ensure relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children (including returning children) remains accurate by doing all we reasonably can to ask parents, carers and other multi-agency partners to advise of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that we should be aware of.

We will as a school, continue to be vigilant in all areas of safeguarding but recognise there may be an increase in particular areas of concern and will act and intervene appropriately, seeking support of other services and professionals where relevant. These may include but are not limited to the following - neglect, domestic abuse, online safety issues, exploitation, mental health issues, young carers. General advice for dealing with all areas of concern are noted below.

## Receive

- React calmly; be aware of your non-verbal communication such as facial expressions
- If you don't understand the child's communication method, reassure the child, and find someone who can
- Don't interrogate the child, try to observe and listen, use active listening techniques
- Don't stop a child who is freely recalling significant events
- Keep responses short, simple, slow, quiet and gentle
- Don't end the conversation abruptly

## Reassure

- Tell the child they are not to blame; and have done the right thing by telling you
- Tell the child what will happen next; be honest about what you can and can't do
- Don't promise confidentiality; say to the child, 'Some things are so important I might have to tell them to somebody else who can help'

## React

- Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to tell
- Inform the DSL or deputy DSL immediately
- Make a record of the conversation if asked to do so. Your DSL or deputy DSL will help you with this if needed.

## Also remember that

- Children are also capable of abusing their peers and we will continue to manage any report of such abuse and support for victims in line with the principles as set out in part 5 of [KCSIE](#) during this time regardless of the different circumstances we are operating in
- Abuse can happen online. See the additional information below on online safety.
- Prevent is a vital part of our work to safeguard children from radicalising influences, and it remains in operation in local authorities during this challenging time.
- Information about a pupil may sometimes only be shared with other staff on a need to know basis

## Reporting concerns about a child/young person

- If staff have concerns about a child's welfare, contact either Mrs Kathryn Williams (Deputy Headteacher and DSL or Mrs Louise Dunn, Assistant Headteacher and Deputy DSL), by email or by telephone if necessary. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.
- If not available, staff should then speak to another member of senior staff. This could be someone acting in place of the DSL.
- If a DSL is not available and advice is needed, staff should call the **MASH professionals helpline** on **0191 643 5555**.
- If a safeguarding referral is needed (MASH advice line can support this decision), staff should ring the **Front Door number** on **0345 2000 109**.
- Report any actions to the DSL as soon as is practically possible.
- Document all records of decisions made and actions taken.
- Each setting will have allocated a person acting as a DSL each day. If that person is not a trained and experienced DSL, another DSL will be allocated, even if contactable via phone for additional advice and support if needed.

## Working with others

The school will continue to work with relevant multi-agency professionals at this time to support pupils with child protection plans or any such agreed plans regarding pupil welfare. The school will be working closely with those with special education needs such as those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and will make close links with the virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

If a child needs to attend another setting, we will continue to ensure any relevant welfare and child protection information is appropriately shared ideally before the child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Where possible this will be between DSLs or SENCOs (as appropriate) and if not, senior leaders will take responsibility. As a minimum the receiving setting should, as appropriate, be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them, 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 is (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible virtual school head is as they should manage this process for looked-after children).

We will continue to have appropriate regard to data protection law but understand that does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76 to 83 of [KCSIE](#).

Operation Encompass, a system which reports incidents of domestic violence to schools and Operation Endeavour, a system which reports incidents of missing children to schools will continue as normal but timings of the notifications to schools may vary slightly during this time. As a school we will consider these notifications to deem if the pupils involved are 'otherwise vulnerable' to decide if and what additional contact should be made in light of new concerns.

### **Attendance**

We understand that school attendance is a protective factor in many ways for children and especially where there are safeguarding concerns. Vulnerable children attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending.

We will continue to work with relevant multi-agency partners and families to support appropriate attendance and returns to school when necessary. For pupils with an EHC plan, additional information on risk assessments is available through the North Tyneside SEND support service who can be contacted on 0191 6438684.

### **Supporting pupils not in school**

The DSL/DDSL will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not in 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 policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made. To safeguard staff, calls should be via the school phones and devices. All contact including phone contact and/or doorstep visits should be documented.

Almost all children defined as vulnerable will already have an allocated Children's Services Family Partner or Social Worker and in addition to support from school, they will have their welfare monitored by Children's Services for the duration of the public health crisis.

We will encourage all pupils to attend school. In circumstances where a parent is concerned about their child attending school, will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent and talk through these anxieties with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England.

We will also continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't. To support the above, we will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

## **Online safety**

In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction<sup>1</sup> 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). This may mean increased online risks involving pupils, their peers and staff in a variety of contexts. Any reported online contact that causes a concern will be dealt with by following the school's safeguarding procedures. As a school we recognise that each individual scenario may need a tailored response to an online issue which may need a response varying from contact with parents, children's social care and/or the police. We have reviewed our Acceptable Use policy, IT policy and other associated policies (e.g. social media policy) at this time and have reminded staff about adhering to acceptable online conduct, use of devices and social media posts/profiles. As a school we have considered the advice issued from the local authority on *Safeguarding in Remote Learning* and follow the guidance [available here](#) which includes information and links on the following areas.

- Safeguarding pupils and teachers online
- Reporting concerns
- Communicating with parents, carers and pupils
- Virtual lessons and live streaming
- Providing pastoral care remotely
- Personal data and GDPR
- Acceptable Use

GSHS parents have been encouraged to re-read the Student Acceptable Use policy with their child and in particular note the following instructions:

- 1) Students must only use their GSHS Office 365 outlook email accounts if they need to contact their teachers, not any other sort of personal account.
- 2) Furthermore, students should respect the online privacy of all teaching and support staff and not seek to make contact with them on any form of social media.
- 3) For the time being, we have advised all staff (except our Guidance Team and Careers Leader who use TEAMS. Any further use of video conferencing by teachers would have to be authorised by the LT) against using any form of live video conferencing with students via such platforms as Zoom. Details of our safety protocols around this are outlined in our Online Safety Policy COVID-19 Addendum.

The school will share safeguarding messages (both offline and online safety) on its website, social media pages and through Parent Mail. GSHS 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 school need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. GSHS 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS where necessary.

## **Supporting children in school**

GSHS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. GSHS will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

GSHS 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.

---

<sup>1</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/923539/Remote\\_Education\\_Temporary\\_Continuity\\_Direction\\_-\\_Explanatory\\_Note.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923539/Remote_Education_Temporary_Continuity_Direction_-_Explanatory_Note.pdf)



GSHS 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS where necessary.

Where GSHS has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with our Chair or Governors.

### **Code of conduct/staff behaviour policy**

All school staff should already be aware of the school code of conduct in terms of staff behaviour in school. Please continue to apply these principles and discuss any potential modifications with the head teacher, DSL or deputy DSL prior to any change in practices.

Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any such incident to the head teacher, DSL or deputy DSL.

We will update any visitors working in our school of our code of conduct and if you are working in a different setting, the DSL (or deputy) should update you on their code of conduct as every school can have different safer working practices.

The Safer Recruitment Consortium who produce Guidance for Safer Working Practices have also developed an addendum to their main document. Both the original and the addendum are [available here](#)

Any remote contact or online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct and Acceptable Use Policy. School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements and safeguarding protocols.

### **Whistleblowing**

If you have information that indicates that a staff member in school has engaged in unsafe or harmful behaviours, you have a duty to report this concern. This usually is reported to the Head Teacher. If at this time, they are not available, contact your DSL or you can report these concerns yourself to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is contactable on the Front Door number 03452000109.

### **Further guidance**

As a school, we will face unique challenges at this time, including as we welcome back more children and staff. Where reasonably possible and where relevant, the DSL (or deputy) will consider these challenges in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection policy as appropriate. This may include but is not limited to the following:

- Attendance monitoring
- Staffing and recruitment
- Single Central Records
- Information Governance
- 'Wider opening and health and safety' risk assessments Personal care (including First Aid, medication and intimate care)
- Behaviour and exclusions

*School Improvement Safeguarding training and development Officer (March 2021)*