

Appendix 1: COVID-19 Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements

Scope

We understand during the Covid19 pandemic that we face a time of great uncertainty and, as a school, we are doing all we can to provide clarity and safety to the school community. This appendix includes provisions which the school will have due regard for during the pandemic. The information in this appendix will be kept under constant review and updated to reflect changes to government guidance as required.

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from support services and Barnet LEA. 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 safeguarding policy and child protection procedures continue to apply.

Definitions

- **Hub or Education hub:** a cluster of schools and colleges collaborating and sharing resources, staff and children in a local area.
- **Children of keyworkers:** children of parents who work in the following industries:
 - Health and social care, e.g. doctors and nurses
 - Education and childcare, e.g. teachers and DSLs
 - **Key public services, e.g. the justice system**
 - Local and national government, e.g. administrative occupations
 - Food and essential goods retail, e.g. supermarket workers and grocers
 - Public safety and national security, e.g. police and ministry of defence workers
 - Transport, e.g. freight transport workers and train drivers
 - Utilities, communication and financial services, e.g. bankers, oil workers, and telecommunications (999 and 111 critical services)
- **Vulnerable children:** those who have a social worker and those with EHC plans. These include children who
 - **Are supported by social care.**
 - **Are on the edge of receiving support from social care.**
 - **Have safeguarding and welfare needs.**
 - **Have child in need plans.**
 - **Have child protection plans.**
 - **Are LAC.**
 - **Are young carers.**
 - **Are disabled.**
 - **Have an EHC plan.**
 - **Are adopted.**
 - **Are living in temporary accommodation.**
 - **Are at risk of becoming not in education, employment, or training (NEET).**
 - **Are assessed as otherwise vulnerable by education providers or LAs.**

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. Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

- **Volunteer staff:** staff who are working in a school that is not their usual place of work.

Core principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). Although from time to time we may need to operate in a different way to normal, due to local lockdowns or national school closures, 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 using the referral process set out below;
- 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.

DSL arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL either on site or available on the phone for any times when children are on the school site. All school staff will be informed by email/MS Teams as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them. Details of important contacts are listed in the 'contacts' section at the start of this appendix.

On occasions where there is no DSL or Deputy DSL on site, a designated individual will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be assigned on a daily basis. **Their role will include:**

- Updating and managing access to child protection files.
- Liaising with the offsite DSL or deputy.
- Liaising with children's social care services where required.

The DSL and deputies, wherever their location, will be kept informed of any most vulnerable children in our school who are on site on a given day.

DSL Responsibilities

During the pandemic, the DSL and their deputy will be responsible for:

- Sharing their time and resources with other schools, where necessary.
- Ensuring staff are kept up-to-date with the latest safeguarding information and developments, including via the safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.
- Being responsible for amending Appendix A (this section) in line with the continual changes to education policy released by the DfE and communicating all changes to staff and volunteers.
- Working with the VSH and wider LA to protect vulnerable children.
- Providing support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children at home and their families.
- Ensuring staff are aware of reporting channels for safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring there is a consistent approach to safeguarding children throughout the coronavirus pandemic.
- Speaking to children directly where possible to identify any concerns and ensuring children are provided with clear communication channels so they can report any concerns they have, including reports of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Providing all volunteers and volunteer staff with copies of this policy.
- Identifying a suitable member of the SLT to assume the role of temporary DSL should both themselves and their deputies become unable to work, e.g. due to illness.
- Sharing their contact information with the school community.

- Identifying vulnerable children and communicating additional safeguarding provisions to children and their families.

The DSL will report back to the governing board on all relevant safeguarding concerns.

The DSL will work with the local safeguarding partners to ensure children remain safe during full opening.

Mental Health

During this time there is additional pressure on families and individuals which may impact on mental health and well-being, potentially causing children and staff to feel anxious and concerned. In light of this, where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for mental health for children, including providing some 1-1 sessions where possible and appropriate. The school will have due regard to Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) guidance when identifying early signs of mental health issues in children.

We will also signpost children, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time, including resources posted on the 'staying sane' section of the school websites, in the Alma together blog and through direct communication to families. Activities set for children will include opportunities to promote wellbeing. When setting expectations for work or for remote learning, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health. The school will also explore the possibilities offered by the DfE's [Wellbeing for Education Return](#) programme.

For children who are receiving education at home, e.g. children who are self-isolating, the school will support parents and children in preparing a regular plan or structure that includes time for education, playing and relaxing.

SLT will be encouraged to hold one-to-one meetings with their staff over the phone or via a video call to ensure they feel supported during this stressful time. Face-to-face support will only be provided where two-metre social distancing can be adhered to.

Remote education

Where close of bubbles or lockdowns mean the school needs to close for periods of time, teachers will plan remote learning with the safety of children in mind, including on-line safety. Staff communicating with children or parents via videocall will do so either from within the school, or from an appropriate environment if working from home.

The DSL will ensure that families are able to contact them regarding safeguarding concern. Parents will be given a list of websites their child may access and any information regarding online sessions with staff that their child will be participating in. Children will be directed to practical online support where they feel unsafe and require support outside of school.

When communicating online, staff will:

- Communicate within school hours as much as possible.
- Communicate through the school channels approved by the SLT.
- Only use school email accounts and school devices for work with children.
- Not share personal information.

Online safety

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school, but recognise that parents will need to be responsible for applying filters and monitoring outside of school. To this end we will organise training for parents and carers to support them in:

- Awareness of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online

- Knowing 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
- Awareness that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Knowing where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff behaviour policy and any contact with children will be guided by the digital communication agreement, below.

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 below.

Teaching activities will include guidance for children in reporting any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too. Where appropriate, children will be provided with useful information and contact details of individuals and organisations they can turn to should they feel unsafe online, e.g. Childline or the UK Safer Internet Centre.

Online programmes used by staff will be checked by the school's digital-safety lead and DSL to ensure they are reputable and GDPR compliant. The school will maximise opportunities for collaboration with parents to reinforce the importance of online safety, and encourage parents to set age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites.

Our IT support continues to operate remotely, and have their own contingency plans to ensure they can continue to support Alma Primary during this period.

Provision in other settings

At times, individual children from Alma may be placed in an Education Hub, where there are too few children for provision to be viable at Alma. The partner school is Wolfson Hillel, Enfield. Whilst in provision at Wolfson Hillel, children are protected under Wolfson Hillel's safeguarding policy and any safeguarding concerns which arise during the time the child/ren are at the Hub will initially be dealt with by the Wolfson Hillel DSL.

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 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.

Reporting concerns inc adult staff or volunteers

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, both for children still attending school and those at home. Staff at Alma have all been sent electronic versions of our forms for reporting concerns which have been password protected. Staff are asked to complete and return these to the DSL and phone the DSL or Deputy DSLs immediately, if they have concerns about a child.

Staff should then follow up as directed by the DSL. Following a concern reported by email or telephone the DSL will request a written report from the staff member. In case of illness or other emergency necessitating a change, any update to DSL information will be given to staff as needed. Any concerns about a member of staff or volunteer should be reported directly to the Headteacher. In the event that the Headteacher is uncontactable for a period of time due to illness or a similar

situation, this concern should be reported to one of the Deputy DSLs. If the concern relates to the Headteacher (or a deputy during a period when the Headteacher is uncontactable) then these concerns should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Reporting thresholds

During periods of school closure, the lack of direct contact with a majority of children means that the evidence base for concerns may be reduced. As such, during this time, staff may look for evidence of concerns in other areas including but not limited to work submitted by the child, participation in video lessons or sessions etc. Staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they note, even where these might normally be judged to be below the threshold of concern.

Peer on peer abuse

Alma Primary recognises that during the pandemic a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. 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 – about both children attending school and those at home.

Where concerns are raised by an adult or child, the school 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.

CPD & recruitment

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, ensuring that all staff have read the latest version of KCSIE.

The DSL/headteacher will risk assess any volunteers or staff from other schools to determine their suitability to work with children. Under no circumstances will volunteers who have not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The DSL/headteacher will ensure any volunteers or staff from other schools are suitably trained in safeguarding and ensure that they have read the relevant sections of KCSIE, are aware of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, and any additional local safeguarding arrangements. The DSL/headteacher will use their professional judgement to assess how much additional safeguarding training temporary staff or volunteers require.

The school will follow safer recruitment processes, in line with the relevant policies, when acquiring new staff. In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS however 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.

In the event that we have staff 'on loan' from other schools working in Alma, we will seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks. We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information. Any new staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our safeguarding policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1
- Guidance on our processes and DSL arrangements

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 carry out a check on any existing staff who cause a concern. The school will report individuals who they consider a safeguarding risk to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk – all referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered but hearings may not be scheduled for the current time.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date. Where required, e.g. during certain tiers of restriction in a local lockdown, we will keep a daily log detailing everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan' and details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere.

Attendance

From the start of the Autumn term, all children are expected to attend school. The school will have the power to issue fines for unauthorised absence; however, this will only be used as a last resort. The school will resume its regular attendance register to record attendance after fully opening and will use digital strategies to keep the Local Authority and DfE informed of attendance.

Parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school due to following clinical or public health advice to stay at home, e.g. if they are self-isolating. In circumstances where children cannot attend school for reasons related to coronavirus, the school will use the non-attendance category: 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. This category will only be used in the 2020/2021 academic year in specific circumstances, where a child does not attend school because their attendance at school, or travel to school, would go against:

- Guidance from Public Health England (PHE) or the Department of Health and Social Care related to coronavirus.
- Legislation or instruments, e.g. statutory directions, related to coronavirus.

This category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) and will be recorded using code X. This non-attendance category will be used for the following:

- Children who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus
- Children who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus
- Children who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine (such as those returning from certain countries)
- Children who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only
- Children not eligible to attend school in certain local lockdown tiers of restriction, e.g. where attendance is limited to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.

If a child is self-isolating due to having symptoms of coronavirus, but subsequently tests negative, code X will only be used up until the time of the negative result. The school will then use code I (illness) if the child remains unwell and stays at home, but will not retroactively amend the previous attendance registers because of the negative result.

The school will record and investigate any absences where a child who was expected to attend school did not, or where parents have arranged care for their child who subsequently did not attend. Where relevant, the school will report to social workers any child absence.

The school will ensure that all children's emergency contact information is correct and encourage parents to provide as many contact numbers as possible.

Monitoring & revision

The Governing Body understands the rapidly changing environment and delegates authority to the headteacher and leadership team to make amendments to this policy, subject to confirmation from either the Chair of Governors, Vice Chair or Safeguarding Governor. Any amendments will be ratified at the next scheduled Governing Body meeting.

Agreement for Alma staff-children meetings using Zoom, Skype or other digital communication tools during the Covid-19 Crisis

During the Covid-19 Crisis we are arranging for a very small number of children in our school to have 1-1 zoom sessions with a teacher, LSA or other member of staff in order to support children's, learning and wellbeing. In addition, some peripatetic teachers will arrange music lessons or similar with parents to help children continue with instruments etc. This agreement is to ensure that both the children and staff are protected and that the sessions benefit everyone. In order to go ahead with the sessions, parents will need to email the school office to confirm acceptance of this agreement.

In order to organise such meetings parents/carers agree that:

- Zoom meetings will be arranged with your child during the period of the crisis which will normally be for 20-30 mins once per week. The meetings are optional and if the child involved does not want to take part then the meeting can be cancelled. Where possible staff will endeavour to rearrange meetings that are cancelled, but may not be able to do so in the same week.
- Meetings will only take place when organised in advance by Alma staff and using Alma staff email address. If circumstances change and the meeting can't take place, parents are asked to email the staff member who will rearrange when this is possible.
- Children taking part in a zoom meeting must be in a shared space (e.g. not a bedroom) and we expect an adult to always be present in the vicinity during the meeting, in order to safeguard children and our staff, however parents are not expected to take part in the sessions, other than giving technical support where needed.
- Staff will send parents a summary of notes from the zoom discussion and these will also be saved on Sharefile in school. Any staff contact details must be deleted after the crisis, except by agreement with the school.
- Where meetings are with indirectly employed Alma staff, such as peripatetic music teachers, then we expect them to adhere to our policies on safeguarding and any other guidance on Crisis communication we circulate.
- If parents have any concerns, following a meeting, they should contact the school leadership team or headteacher, via the office email address.

In order to accept this agreement, please email the admin team on office@almaprimary.org copying in our health@almaprimary.org email address.