



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at EK Outreach Services

Date adopted	May 2020
Date for review	May 2021

Important contacts:

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Overall Safeguarding Lead	Dayo Adeagbo (Director)	07904451040
Designated safeguarding Officer (DSO)	Annie McGowan	07747216173

if neither DSO or Safeguarding Lead can be reached please contact Local authority designated officer (LADO). See Child Protection Policy for individual Las.

Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our Local Authority safeguarding partners.

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

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 DSL 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

1. 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 for all those at home. 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.

2. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available during the school day. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children are. The DSL will make sure that at all times they can:

- Identify the most vulnerable children
- 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

3. 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 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

The following guidance is currently in place:

4. Monitoring attendance

As all children will be taught remotely during this period of school closures, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance. The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend 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 via phone, videocall, doorstep call.
- 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.

5. 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 immediately on any concerns they have

6. 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 immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely. 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.

7. Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about. Each child has an individual plan which sets out:

- How often the service will make contact – this will be at least once a week
- Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
- How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone, video call, doorstep visits, or a combination of both

- On-line contact. We have agreed these plans with children’s social care where relevant, and will review them on a monthly basis. If we can’t make contact, we will contact the Local Authority social worker attached to that child or the police.

8. 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 line with the procedures set out in section 3 above.

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to the agreed systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any check-ins or video calls.

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see [section 9](#) below for our approach to online safety. See [section 11](#) below for information on how we will support pupils’ mental health.

9. Online safety

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff behaviour policy/code of conduct/IT acceptable use policy/Online Safety Policy/E-Safety Code of Conduct/Home Visit Risk Assessment. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct. EK Outreach Services will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only – and a parent/carer must be present for the duration of the lesson
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing; anyone else in the household who might be in view of the web cam should also respect these Safeguarding procedures.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- Language must be professional and appropriate by all persons using the webcam; any family members in the background should also respect these Safeguarding procedures.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by the Head of Service and approved by our Administrator Lead to communicate with pupils. Zoom can be used if hosted by the Admin Lead and only if other forms of communication have been exhausted. A password must be put in place at all times.
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held. 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.

10. 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 service is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our service provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

11. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. 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 sessions, staff will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

12. Staff recruitment, training and induction

Recruiting new staff and volunteers:

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work with our students 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 office. 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*.

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

14.3. Keeping records:

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 service each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from our local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks by Annie McGowan – Head of Service.

Links with other policies:

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct
- IT acceptable use policy
- Health and safety policy
- Online safety policy