



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

Annex to Safeguarding Policy – version 1.0
Safeguarding during the COVID-19 measures

This is a whole school policy.

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Action	Responsibility	Date
Reviewed	RAR/PJL	6/5/2020
Approved	Governors	14 th April 2020
Next Review		Weekly from 14/4/20, ongoing

This Annex to our Safeguarding policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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1. Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most pupils are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for pupils who are vulnerable and pupils whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

2. Version control and dissemination

This is version 1.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our DSLs on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website and has been shared with staff via email. It is also saved as an annex to the Safeguarding Policy on the school's intranet.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can to speak to them.

3. Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all pupils at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of pupils continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to pupils
- pupils should continue to be protected when they are online.

4. Current school position

Currently the school has a limited number of adults and children living and working on site. The school makes every effort to comply with social distancing recommendations.

All staff and volunteers attending on site from outside our school will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

5. Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with Durham Safeguarding Children Partnerships, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting pupils 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. Updates to advice given will be reviewed with this policy on a weekly basis and feedback provided to the Governance Committee.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

If possible, at least one DSL will be available on site. Where this is not possible, our DSLs will be available by phone and/or online video.

Where our DSLs cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are Mr Peter Lavery (Deputy Head (Pastoral), Senior School) and Mrs Rebecca Robertson (Deputy Head (Pastoral), Prep School)

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7. Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the local authority and 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. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

We will encourage our vulnerable children to attend school, including remotely if needed.

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSLs know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

8. Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the potential impact of COVID-19 measures on mental health of pupils and their parents and carers and will contact either of the DSLs if they have any concerns.

9. Attendance

Where a pupil is expected but does not arrive at school, if expected, or persistently fails to engage with the school remotely, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. The tutor (Senior School) and Class Teacher (Prep School) will follow-up initially and, if contact cannot be made, a DSL will be informed.

The DSL will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, FaceTime, Skype or by contacting a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff or the family are not put at risk.

10. Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our safeguarding procedures and advise either DSL of any concerns they have about any pupil, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that pupils may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy.

11. Staff training and induction

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSLs are unlikely to receive their refresher training. In line with government guidance, our trained DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any cause for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

12. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the pupils' workforce or gain access to children.

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy.

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.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

13. Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

14. Online safety

It is likely that pupils will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguard and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

Staff who interact with pupils online will continue to look out for signs a pupil may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a pupil, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to either DSL.

15. New children at the school

Pupils may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and safeguarding information. This is relevant for all pupils that join us, but it will be especially important where pupils are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that 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 (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally this will happen before a pupil arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for pupils with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

16. Supporting children not in school

Where the DSL has identified a pupil to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that an individual communication plan is in place to support that pupil. Details of that plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file for that pupil. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

17. Safeguarding Procedures during period of academic staff furlough

During the 3 week period that teaching staff are placed on furlough, the Senior School DSL (Deputy Head, Pastoral) will remain responsible for safeguarding.

In the event that the DSL is unable to fulfil this duty due to illness, the Senior Master (Mr M. Pepper, MTP@barneyschool.org.uk) will assume responsibility for safeguarding.

Parents and pupils will be notified that, during the furlough period, any urgent pastoral matters may be communicated to the school via the email address pastoral@barneyschool.org.uk and the School Counsellor is also available to support pupils: DT@barneyschool.org.uk .

During the furlough period, the DSL will liaise regularly with the Senior Management Team and the School Counsellor to report on any matters of safeguarding and School Safeguarding Policy and COVID19 Annex will be adhered to.