

The Priestley Academy Trust



COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

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Context

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response – who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children – children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of The Priestley Academy Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- GDPR Policy

Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

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.

Those with and EHCP 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 EHCP's can safely remain at home.

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

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

The Trust will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Becky Fowles.

There is an exception that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the Trust will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, the Trust or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

The Trust will encourage our vulnerable children to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

The Trust and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – the Trust will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The Trust will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

How will this look in your school?

To support the above, the Trust will, when communicating with parents/carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the Trust will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The school has a Designated Safe Guarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mathew Atkinson

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Robin Cusdin, Laura Rogers, Becky Fowles, Lyndsey Widdop and Becky Fowles

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via telephone or online video – for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management systems, CPOMS and 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.

It is important that all the Trust staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the likely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher and the Trust Safeguarding Manager. This will ensure the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the CEO.

The Trust will continue to support in the process of managing allegations.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, the DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the Trust, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to the Trust, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:

- The individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check.
- There are no known concerns regarding the individual's suitability to work with children.
- There is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the headteacher that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's Child Protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the Trust will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections of part 3 in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

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.

Where the Trust is utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The Trust will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found in paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

The Trust will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing:

Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone

engaging in regulated activity. As such, the Trust will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety in schools and colleges

The Trust will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Children and online safety away from 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 children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the Trust Code of Conduct.

The Trust 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.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by the Trust to communicate with pupils.
- Staff should record: the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school

The Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as should a record of contact made.

The communication plans can include: remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The Trust and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The Trust will share safeguarding messages on its websites and social media pages.

The Trust recognises that school is a protective factor for children, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at the Trust need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

The Trust 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.

Supporting children in school

The Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and well being of all its pupils.

The Trust 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.

The Trust 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 the spread of COVID-19.

The Trust 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 a school has concerns regarding the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the CEO.

Peer on Peer Abuse

The Trust recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Trust will listen and work with the pupil, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that child.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

Support from the Trust

The CEO and SLT will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.