Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Ash Grove Academy

Date: October 2020

Contents

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Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lisa Finnegan (Principal)	principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk 01625 383075
Deputy DSL	Judith Ceuppens (VP) Sally Veale (VP) Katy Ghorbanian Amanda Thompson	jceuppens@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk sveale@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk safeguarding@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk safeguarding@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk 01625 383075
Designated teacher for cared for and previously cared for children	Margaret Lisle	senco@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk 01625 383075
Principal	Lisa Finnegan	principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk 01625 383075
Trust CEO for reporting concerns relating to the principal	Kevin Simpson	ceo@aet.cheshire.sch.uk
Deputy Trust CEO for reporting concerns relating to the principal in the CEO's absence	Helen Scott	hscott@aet.cheshire.sch.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)		01270 685904 01606 288931
Safeguarding Trustee	Chris Dean	cdean@aet.cheshire.sch.uk
Chair of LAC	Katie Siddall	chair@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk
SCiES Team		SCiESTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01606 275039
ChECS		0300 123 5012 (opt 3) Out of Hours - 0300123 5022

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020. It reflects updated advice from our local safeguarding partner, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership, and local authority (LA) Cheshire East.

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of coronavirus and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal child protection and safeguarding policy continues to apply. We will keep it under review as set out in section 16 below.

In this addendum, where we refer to measures to protect pupils who are at home, this means those who are learning at home for reasons to do with coronavirus – for example, due to clinical and/or public health advice, such as if there's a local lockdown or if they need to self-isolate.

In this addendum, where we refer to vulnerable children, this means those who:

> Are assessed as being in need, including children:

- With a child protection plan

- With a child in need plan

- Looked after by the local authority

> Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by the school or LA, for example those who are:

- On the edge of receiving support from children's social care services

- Adopted

- Living in temporary accommodation

- Young carers

- Supported by an Early Help Plan

- Considered vulnerable by the school and/or LA

> Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will follow the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

We will always have regard for 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 should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)

> It is 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

3. 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, both for children at school and those at home.

Staff will follow the reporting procedures detailed in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

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.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or Deputy) can't be in school, they can be contacted remotely by telephone or email.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Lisa Finnegan (Principal/DSL). You can contact them by telephone or email.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

> Identify the most vulnerable children in school

> 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

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school headteacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children, and with any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners, to help keep children safe.

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 about reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

6. Attendance monitoring

We will resume taking our attendance register. We will also follow guidance from the Department for Education on how to record attendance and what data to submit.

All pupils of compulsory school age will be expected to attend school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health advice, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

Where any child we expect to attend school doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

> Follow up on their absence by contacting their parents or carers via phone

> 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. This information is held and accessed centrally through Arbor and CPOMS.

We will expect all families to notify us if their child is unable to attend on a particular day, so staff can explore the reason with them and offer support as appropriate. Where a child has been in school but has stopped attending and the parent has not notified us, checks will be carried out in line the school attendance policy.

Where a vulnerable child does not attend/stops attending, we will notify the relevant professionals including Social Workers and Family Support Workers, liaising with practitioners and the family to remove any barriers. A record of these discussions and outcomes will be recorded on the child's safeguarding file. School will maintain contact with the child to ensure their continued well-being.

7. 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 and perpetrators of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about children both attending school and those at home. Concerns must be shared with the DSL as per normal safeguarding reporting processes.

Reports made regarding peer-on-peer abuse will be risk assessed by the DSL on a case-by-case basis and, where required, investigated immediately and reported to the relevant authority, e.g. the police or Children's Social Care Services where required.

The school will listen and work with the child, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required ensureing the safety and security of that child.

8. 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. Concerns relating to a member of staff or volunteer should be referred directly to the principal. Concerns relating to the principal should be referred directly to the trust's CEO or deputy CEO in their absence.

The trust's HR Manager will support investigations which will be carried out using online or telephone communication.

We will consult with the trust's HR Manager who will 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 consult with the trust's HR Manager who will 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.

9. Contact Plans

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its children; including those children who are not attending school.

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where the child is at home:

> The pastoral safeguarding team (Amanda Thompson and Katy Ghorbanian) will make contact at least once a week.
> Contact will be made over the phone, through doorstep visits, or a combination of both
> Failure to make contact would lead to the pastoral safeguarding team contacting social care and the police
> All contact and actions will be logged using CPOMS

We have agreed these plans with children's social care, where relevant, and will review them every 6 weeks in line with the MAT overarching policy addendum.

10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children when in school. We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The principal will ensure appropriate staff are on site and staff pupil ratios are appropriate to maximise safety.

School will refer to the Government guidance for education on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of the spread of COVID 19.

Where the school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as the DSL or first aiders – they will discuss it immediately with their trust hub leader.

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.

We recognise that children may present differently when they return to school than they did prior to the lock-down; this does not mean that they have been in abusive situations. However, staff will be alert to the signs of abuse and will take appropriate action should they become aware of it. Staff and volunteers will be alert to new safeguarding concerns about individual children and in relation to children where there have never been concerns raised previously.

The DSL will ensure every pupil has been given information on how they can talk to them about any safeguarding concern they may have. Posters with relevant helpline numbers (eg ChildLine) have been put up around school. The Ash Grove Emotional Resilience, Wellbeing and Mental Health policy has been updated to reflect current practice in school, including the implementation of promoting positive mental health strategies through our PSHE curriculum.

We have a strong system of pastoral care and support for emotional wellbeing in school. This includes informal nurture sessions, focused interventions such as The Resilient Classroom or Cool Connections, and 1-1 interventions such as Next Steps.

Parents have the opportunity to contact Lisa Finnegan (DSL/Principal) via telephone or email so they can report any concerns they have.

Ash Grove Academy will continue to regularly share safeguarding messages on its website via the Safeguarding and Wellbeing page, and alert parents to relevant information through

10.1 Children returning to school

The DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before children return. They will also liaise with the school nurse(s) to gather relevant information about any support provided by school nursing services while children have not been in school.

The DSL (and deputy) will be given time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as children return to school.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see pupils in person.

10.2 Children at home

The school will maintain contact with children who are at home. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home, or if necessary, they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.

Staff and volunteers will look out for signs like:

> Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems

> No contact from children or families

> Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

11. Online safety and security

11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

Any online queries which require the ICT technician will be addressed over the phone or online as much as possible – face-to-face contact is kept to a minimum. If IT staff are unavailable, our contingency plan is to seek IT support from other schools within the multi-academy trust.

All online programmes and platforms used will be checked by the school's DSL and trust DPO to ensure they are reputable, safe for children to use and GDPR compliant.

Staff will adhere to AET Staff Code of Conduct and Safer Recruitment Consortium's Safer Working Practice Guidance at all times when delivering education online.

Staff will report concerns over a pupil's safety online to the DSL.

The school will follow the trust guidance on providing a safe video conferencing environment if it is deemed the best way to deliver education at home.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing AET Staff Code of Conduct and AET Technology acceptable use agreement.

Staff will be made aware of The Aspire Educational Trust Guidance for Safety in Remote Online Video and Telephone Communication with Pupils and Parents. This guidance gives detailed advice on safe practices for staff to adopt when interacting online with children.

The Trust and its schools will work together to develop a clear strategy to support remote learning. Digital strategy implementation plans will include how children will be safeguarded.

School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Staff who interact with children online will look out for signs a child may be at risk of harm online. Any concerns that are reported or observed will be reported immediately to the DSL as per the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

Through our regular communications with parents and carers and our website 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 school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school

> Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote and face-to-face teaching and resources our school provides

> Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online, including the following DfE links

- UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse
- Childline - for support

> The Wellbeing and Safeguarding Support section of the school website will be kept up to date

12. Mental health

12.1 Children returning to school

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupils' mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed.

Pastoral care will be reactive and delivered when the need is identified. This may take the form of nurture session(s), through targeted interventions such as The Resilient Classroom or Cool Connections, or through informal catch-ups with trusted adults.

The PSHE Lead has also identified specific units of work to support teachers when delivering PSHE lessons around core themes, such as resilience, physical and emotional health (including safety), and building and maintaining healthy relationships.

12.2 Children at home

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. Activities and resources around mindfulness, resilience and positive thinking can be found on the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Support page of the school website, as well as support and advice for parents and carers.

This page will be regularly updated in order to signpost all pupils, parents/carers and staff to a range of resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to mental health concerns in children who are at home, and act on these immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

13. Staff and volunteer recruitment

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that staff and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our AET Safer Recruitment, DBS and Single Central Record policies, procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

When carrying out DBS checks and right to work checks, we will follow the latest guidance from the DBS, Home Office and Immigration Enforcement as appropriate (for example, with regards to the process for verifying documents). We will inform candidates about the intended process as soon as reasonably practicable.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and complete the AET Volunteer Risk Assessment to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 183-188 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All safer recruitment checks must be recorded on the school's AET SCR spreadsheet and the most up-to-date spreadsheet saved to the MAT SCR on the Access Collaborate site named The Aspire Educational Trust Single Central Record.

14. 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 in line with the expectations of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

> A safeguarding induction using the AET Induction Checklist

> A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)

> Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

15. Radicalisation and extremism

We are aware that the impact of COVID-19 on communities may give individuals and extremist organisations opportunities to promote hateful or harmful narratives. This may present in the form of graffiti, leafleting and stickering that is of an extremist nature. As a school we will consider the impact this material may have and encourage pupils to share any concerns if they feel worried, upset or anxious.

The school will report any concerns and take advice from:

Prevent Referrals: 01606 362147

16. Monitoring arrangements

This MAT overarching policy addendum will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 6 weeks by the Trust's Safeguarding Lead. At every review, it will be approved by the Board of Trustees using Compliance Manager. Once the overarching policy is approved each school will be responsible for ensuring it is localised to reflect their setting's procedures.

17. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following MAT, MAT localised and local policies and procedures:

> Safeguarding and child protection

> AET Staff code of conduct

> Allegations of abuse against staff

> Technology acceptable use agreement for staff and volunteers

> Data protection policy

> E-safety/Online safety

> Health and safety

> Online safety policy

> Uncollected children

> Single Central Record

> DBS

> Safer recruitment

> Whistleblowing

> First Aid

> Behaviour

> Anti-bullying

> Positive handling and restraint