Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Ash Grove Academy

Date: January 2021

Contents

Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lisa Finnegan (Principal)	principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk 01625 919610
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 919610
Designated teacher for cared for and previously cared for children	Margaret Lisle	senco@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk 01625 919610
Principal	Lisa Finnegan	principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk 01625 919610
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 for the period of national lockdown, commencing at the start of the spring term 2021. 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 and safeguarding policy in light of coronavirus and the latest Department for Education's guidance, including Restricting Attendance During Lockdown:schools, 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.

Nursery classes in AET academies continue to remain open and will continue to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetable hours unless government guidance changes. Only vulnerable children and children of critical workers should attend on-site reception to year 6 classes. All other pupils will receive remote education. Pupils who are self-isolating should not attend school.

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 an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by the school or LA (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance. This might include:
  - On the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - Adopted or children on a special guardianship order
  - Living in temporary accommodation
  - Those who are young carers
  - Those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - Care leavers
  - Others at the academy's and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

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

We expect staff to be vigilant and responsive to all safeguarding threats and ensure vulnerable children are safe – particularly as more children will be learning remotely.

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 and at home
- ➢ Update and manage access to child protection and safeguarding 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 follow guidance from the Department for Education on how to record attendance and what data to submit.

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with normal school attendance requirements.

All pupils who are not eligible to be in school will be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice.

AET academies will allow and strongly encourage vulnerable children to attend, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk. Parents/carers of vulnerable children will be strongly encouraged to take up the place. If vulnerable children do not take up their place or discontinues, AET academies will:

• work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests

• work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child's attendance would be appropriate. Where school grants a leave of absence to a vulnerable child they should still speak to parents and carers, and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions should focus on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate remote education and support while they are at home.

AET academies will work collaboratively with other schools and education providers and other local partners (including the local authority, social workers, police, youth services, key workers etc.) to maximise opportunities for face-to-face provision for vulnerable children.

As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent will be encouraged to let the school know. The DfE expects schools to grant applications for leave of absence given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

AET academies will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged for their child to be in school and the child subsequently does not attend. This will be through phone calls made by the Safeguarding/ Pastoral team in line with our Attendance Policy.

If AET academies have to temporarily stop on-site provision on public health advice, they should inform the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and work towards welcoming back pupils as soon as possible, where feasible to do so.

AET academies will not plan for rotas or allow children other than those who are vulnerable or whose parent or carer is a critical worker to attend on-site, even if the school believes it can accommodate more children safely.

We will continue to make sure we are able to contact all families by having up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

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 ensuring 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 – whether those concerns are about staff/supply teachers/volunteers working on site or remotely. Concerns relating to a member of staff, supply teacher 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 may 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 receiving remote education:

> 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.

We will refer to and follow the Government guidance for education in the section titled Public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID19) risks on how to implement the system of controls set out to maximise the use of effective control measures to effectively minimise risks of viral transmission. All elements of the system of controls are essential. All schools are expected to cover all key elements, but the way different schools implement some of the requirements will differ based on their individual circumstances. These differences will be detailed in the academy's Covid-19 risk assessment and mitigation plan. AET academies will fulfil their legal requirement to revisit and update their risk assessment which is treated as a "living document", kept under review and especially having regard to changing circumstances. [AET academies must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. AET academies will thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments and plans that address the risks identified using the system of controls, some of which are essential measures as detailed in the section titled Public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID19) risks]. All staff are fully updated, via Staff Teams notifications, on the academy's most up-to-date risk assessment and mitigation plan.

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.

Staff will be alert to the signs of abuse, both in school and through remote learning, 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 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

The academy has in place a remote education plan that meets the requirements of the temporary continuity direction. The trust and its academies have worked together to develop our digital strategy implementation plan. This plan places a high priority on safeguarding and keeping children safe online. The plan has due regards to the information provided in the statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education 2020 and information from other online safety organisations. The Aspire Educational Trust Guidance for Safety in Remote Online Video and Telephone Communication with Pupils and Parents gives detailed advice on safe practices for staff to adopt when interacting online with children.

11.1 In school

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of appropriate filtering and monitoring systems. Where children are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Any online queries which require the ICT technician will be addressed over the phone or online as much as possible. 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/or trust DPO to ensure they are reputable, safe for children to use and GDPR compliant.

The ICT technician will work to ensure any loaned devices are secure and have the necessary antivirus and malware protection downloaded.

11.2 Outside school

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

AET academies 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, including online. Any concerns that are reported or observed will be reported immediately to the DSL as per the academy'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 how to report any concerns they have back to school

> 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

We know that receiving face-to-face education is best for children's mental health. Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period of national lockdown may have on pupils' mental health. When working with children online or in school staff and volunteers will look out for signs, including no engagement with learning and behavioural changes, to help identify where support may be needed.

Pastoral care will be reactive and delivered to those when the need is identified.

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. These sessions will be delivered through the timetables live-meet hybrid lessons.

12.1 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. At this time, The Aspire Educational Trust has a policy of limiting the presence of volunteers and visitors on its sites to only exceptional circumstances. This means recruitment may be undertaken remotely.

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 and essential 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