



# **Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum**

## **Ash Grove Academy**



**Date: March 2021**

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## Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Lisa Finnegan (Principal)	<a href="mailto:principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> 01625 919610
Deputy DSL	Judith Ceuppens (VP) Sally Veale (VP) (SLT Team) Katy Ghorbanian Amanda Thompson	<a href="mailto:jceuppens@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">jceuppens@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:sveale@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">sveale@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:slt@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">slt@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:safeguarding@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">safeguarding@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:safeguarding@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">safeguarding@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> 01625 919610
Designated teacher for cared for and previously cared for children	Margaret Lisle	<a href="mailto:senco@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">senco@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> 01625 919610
Principal	Lisa Finnegan	<a href="mailto:principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">principal@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a> 01625 919610
Trust CEO for reporting concerns relating to the principal	Kevin Simpson	<a href="mailto:ceo@aet.cheshire.sch.uk">ceo@aet.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Deputy Trust CEO for reporting concerns relating to the principal in the CEO's absence	Helen Scott	<a href="mailto:hscott@aet.cheshire.sch.uk">hscott@aet.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Local authority designated officer (LADO)		01270 685904 01606 288931
Safeguarding Trustee	Chris Dean	<a href="mailto:cdean@aet.cheshire.sch.uk">cdean@aet.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Chair of LAC	Katie Siddall	<a href="mailto:chair@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk">chair@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
SCiES Team		<a href="mailto:SCiESTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk">SCiESTeamEast@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a> 01606 275039
ChECS		0300 123 5012 (opt 3) Out of Hours - 0300123 5022

## 1. Scope and definitions

From 8 March, all pupils should attend school. A small number of pupils may still be unable to attend, including pupils who in line with public health advice are self-isolating and pupils confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable who are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

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.

## 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 are aware that there may be additional concerns for the DSL and deputy DSLs to deal with as children return to school. Our trained DSL and dedicated team of deputies will have sufficient time to:

- support staff and pupils with new safeguarding and welfare concerns
- handle referrals to children's social care and other agencies where appropriate.

During the return to school period, the DSL and their deputies are additionally responsible for:

- Amending this addendum in line with the continual changes to education policy released by the DfE and communicating all changes to staff and volunteers.
- Keeping up-to-date with the local safeguarding partners' information and implementing their updates and guidance.
- Ensuring staff are aware of reporting channels for safeguarding concerns.
- Sharing their contact information with the school community.
- Ensuring there is a consistent approach to safeguarding children throughout the coronavirus pandemic.
- Providing pupils with clear communication channels so they can report any concerns they have, including reports of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Providing all volunteers with copies of this policy.
- Ensuring this revised policy continues to be publicly available.
- Adhering to AET safer recruitment policy and procedures, including carrying out risk assessments on new volunteers.
- Reporting back to the Trust Safeguarding lead, Board of Trustees and LAC on safeguarding concerns.
- Continue to report safeguarding to the trustees using the trust's Annual Safeguarding Data Return.

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, with the virtual school headteacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children, and with any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners, to keep children safe, to identify harm and ensure children are appropriately supported. We will also speak to and work with our school nurse who has continued virtual support to pupils who have not been in school.

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

School attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from 8 March. We follow [guidance](#) from the Department for Education on how to record attendance, [including guidance for non-attendance in circumstances related to coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#).

AET academies will continue to communicate clearly and consistently the expectations around school attendance to families and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate.

AET academies will be able to request from parents a copy of the shielding letter sent to clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) children, to confirm that they are advised not to attend school or other educational settings whilst shielding guidance is in place.

We recognise it is likely that some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about attending school. This may include pupils who:

- have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised they no longer need to shield
- live in a household where someone is clinically vulnerable (CV) or CEV (including young carers)
- are concerned about the possible increased risks from coronavirus (COVID19) such as those who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

School will discuss any concerns with parents and provide reassurance on the measures we are putting in place to reduce any risks.

School will identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about attending or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. Particular emphasis will be placed on:

- disadvantaged and vulnerable children
- pupils who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic
- pupils who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic.

To support families who may need additional help to secure their child's regular attendance, our safeguarding/pastoral support team will make regular check-ins and provide links to external support services where necessary. All staff are sensitive to the need for additional pastoral intervention for identified individuals, and our SEMH intervention package supports this. The PSHE curriculum also reinforces strategies for building positive relationships and recognising how to look after physical, mental and emotional health. The National Tutoring Programme and catch-up funding will target individuals identified as needing additional academic support to reach ARE by the end of the year, reducing the barriers to education for vulnerable children.

We will also work closely with other professionals across the education and health systems, where appropriate, to support school attendance.

School will always notify a vulnerable pupil's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

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.

### 6.1 Elective Home Education (EHE)

AET academies will encourage parents to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable. If a parent informs the school they are opting for EHE, the school will follow the local authority's procedures.

We understand EHE does not automatically put children at greater risk of harm. However, the school will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school. If school feels there is additional cause for concern, we follow our child safeguarding policy and refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as we become aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

## 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

## 9. Contact Plans

The academy is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its children; including those children who are not able to attend school as they may be shielding or self-isolating.

We have systems in place to keep in contact with all non-attending children, including the vulnerable. We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about:

- 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 in line with the MAT overarching policy addendum.

If we can't make contact, we will contact CHECs for advice and, if it is deemed necessary, ring the police.

Details of contact plans will be recorded in the pupil's safeguarding record, and a record of contact will be made.

Where a vulnerable child is required to self-isolate or shield the school has procedures in place to:

- check if a vulnerable pupil is able to access remote education support
- support them to access it (as far as possible)
- regularly check if they are accessing remote education

## 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 children who attend school. We will continue to be a safe space for those 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 latest Government guidance for education: [guidance about COVID-19 in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students on GOV.UK](#) and [Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#) to minimise coronavirus (COVID19) risks and 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.

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 and Just Drop-In counselling sessions. Over the coming weeks we will be working alongside an NHS Mental Health Support Team with children identified as having mild to moderate mental health and wellbeing issues

Parents have the opportunity to contact Lisa Finnegan (DSL/Principal), Judith Ceuppens (Deputy DSL/Vice Principal) or Sally Veale (Deputy DSL/Vice Principal) via telephone or email so they can report any concerns they have (see contact details on Page 3).

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 the school Twitter page.

### 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

AET academies are affected by the [Remote Education Temporary Continuity Direction](#) and are still required to provide remote education to pupils covered by the direction where their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes, for example, where such guidance means that a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate or that clinically extremely vulnerable children are to shield. All such pupils not physically unwell will have access to remote education as soon as reasonably practicable. 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 (updated January 2021), Government guidance [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) 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

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that the period of national lockdown may have had on pupils' mental health. Some pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. Staff know it is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Staff will consider using pastoral and extra-curricular activities to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID19)
- support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

When working with children in school or online staff and volunteers will look out for signs, including no engagement with learning and behavioural changes, to help identify where more focussed support for pupils 'individual needs' may be needed.

We have a strong system of SEMH across the school (see details listed in Paragraph 10). 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.

Where there is a concern a pupil is in need or suffering or likely to suffer harm, staff will follow the school's child protection policy for reporting a concern and speak immediately to the DSL.

### 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 adhere to the legal requirements on pre-appointment checks as set out in 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