

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE FOR LIMES FARM JUNIOR SCHOOL

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS 22nd January 2021
(This may be done as a Chair action)

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED- *when school lockdown restrictions change*

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During this period of closure, if it is not possible to always have a Designated Lead (or Deputy) on school site, there will always be access to a Designated Lead or Deputy (Level 3 trained), either from our school, or another school or from the Local Authority



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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR LIMESFARM JUNIOR SCHOOL, DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID-19

1. Introduction

Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and, in conjunction with other agencies, they play a vital role in safeguarding children during the current emergency arrangements. This policy is an addition to our existing Child Protection Policy and has been produced to cover arrangements in place during school closure due to Covid-19.

This Child Protection policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our school and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- the current Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2020)
- the school Behaviour policy;
- the school Staff Behaviour policy (sometimes called Staff Code of Conduct);
- the safeguarding response to children missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (Annex B of KCSIE)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (*everyone under the age of 18*) is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment and physical health or development
- Preventing impairment of children's mental
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2. Current context / statutory framework

Schools have been instructed to close, although are required to offer a place to [vulnerable children](#) and children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (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 provision, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want their child to attend, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will explore (with the social worker) the reasons for this and to agree an appropriate plan for that child.

We obviously want to support all our children during this time and will consider making a place available to other children with vulnerabilities, although this will be in discussion with other professionals involved and based on a risk assessment process.

3. Safeguarding procedures during the closure period

Clearly, we are working very differently during this period of closure. However, the principles within our existing Child Protection Policy still apply, as does the duty on all staff to safeguard children.

We have assessed the needs of all our pupils and put in place plans to support them and their families during this period of closure. These plans include an education offer (details of which have been shared separately with parents for their child) and arrangements to support pupils with their safety and wellbeing. These plans may include actions and interventions from other agencies, as we continue to work with partners to provide an appropriate level of support.

Welfare checks (method and frequency)-

- Family Support Worker- K Bishop- will contact vulnerable families (not in school) up to 3 times a week via email and/or telephone (either on the school phone or on a withheld number), offering support and also signposting families to further support with other agencies. Equally K Bishop will contact families daily if pupils have not logged onto their first live teaching session to ensure they are up and ready for their daily learning tasks. Information to be recorded on pupil profiles stored on Microsoft Teams.
- Deputy Headteacher will contact the families of vulnerable pupils with EHCP, not in school, on a weekly basis, discussing learning set and also individual plans for support. This will be carried out when on the school rota and also through email correspondence. Equally, DHT will be liaising with external professionals supporting children with EHCP and organising annual review meetings. Information to be recorded on pupil profiles stored on Microsoft Teams.
- Class teachers will communicate with parents via School Ping and/or telephone. Using Google Classroom, teachers will carry out daily welfare checks and wellbeing sessions with pupils. Class teachers will notify SLT if concerns arise during their daily check ins with pupils. SLT will make direct phone contact with identified families who remain a concern. Information to be recorded on pupil profiles stored on Microsoft Teams. Teachers will record all safeguarding concerns and disclosures on our agreed Child Protection forms and communicated and then emailed to the DSL and/or DDSL in her absence at first instance.

- Learning support staff in school- Any concerns raised when supervising groups of pupils in school are to be passed onto either K Bishop or C Andrews to record on pupil profiles. Concerns will be shared with the HT and/or DHT also. SLT will decide if further enquiry is required. Learning support staff are to record all safeguarding concerns on our agreed Child Protection form and given to the DSL or DDSL at first instance.
 - T Hayes (school counsellor) will continue to provide therapy support for target vulnerable pupils via zoom on a weekly basis. HT/DHT will be liaising with T Hayes. Safeguarding concerns will be discussed on first instance with the DSL or DDSL and then recorded on our agreed Child Protection forms and emailed confidentially to the DSL/DDSL.
 - SLT will liaise with FSM families, providing up to date government advice and support. Communication will occur via school phone contact, School Ping, Parent Pay email and office email. Information to be recorded on pupil profiles stored on Microsoft Teams.
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- Risk assessments have been completed and updated for all vulnerable pupils with EHCP
 - Plans- Class teachers will set remote learning opportunities via Google Classroom for pupils to access. (Refer to our Remote Learning Provision). Pupils in school will complete the same remote learning opportunities under the supervision of their class teachers remotely and by our highly skilled support staff whilst they are in school.

For vulnerable children (including those with a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan), existing plans will be reviewed in conjunction with other relevant agencies and updated to ensure they reflect the current situation and meet need. The school will work with the Virtual School Headteacher to support children in care. Children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) will be assessed in consultation with the local authority, other agencies and parents.

As always, all staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead).

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2019)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2020)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the [Essex Effective Support](#) portal. The school may also seek

advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

4. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies. All internal information to be recorded on pupil profiles, stored on Microsoft Teams.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and regularly reviewed; and our online school privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the pupil file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth, or until they transfer to another school / educational setting.

During this period, there may be occasions where we have children from another school attending our site, or where our pupils may have to attend another school. In these circumstances, relevant information will be shared between schools to ensure there is knowledge and an understanding of any safeguarding issues so that appropriate measures can be put in place to keep children safe. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a 'need to know' basis.

5. Interagency working

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with parent(s)/carers. The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has to be prepared to contribute to the discussions. During this closure period, there are temporary arrangements in place and meetings will take place virtually.

6. Staff conduct

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct and the principles in our Staff Code of Conduct still apply during this emergency period. We have adapted our policies to reflect the current arrangements to ensure they cover remote learning. The usual processes for reporting concerns about a staff apply.

7. Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils is always a priority and it is recognised that, without the protective factor of attending school, some of our children may be more vulnerable. Understandably, this is a worrying and challenging time for everyone, and we understand that families may be placed under considerable additional pressures, potentially coping with issues such as increased anxiety, financial difficulties, caring for children at home full time and illness and bereavement.

We want to continue to do all we can to support our pupils and it is vital, therefore, that we work in partnership with parents/carers to do so. Parents/carers should share any concerns about the wellbeing of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

8. Online safety (for children away from school)

We recognise that the majority of children will not be physically attending school and that it is likely they will be spending longer periods of time online, which may increase their vulnerability.

The breadth of issues with online safety is considerable. It can be categorised into three main areas of risk:

- **Content**- exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material. For example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;

- **Contact**-subjection to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults.
- **Conduct**-personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

It is important for parents to be vigilant about their child's online activity and to inform the school of any concerns they may have about their child in this respect. We have provided parents with information on how to keep their children safe online and resources to support them to do this. Particularly useful websites are:

- [CEOP](#) (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
- [Childnet](#)
- [Internet Matters](#)
- [Net Aware](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Parent Info](#)
- [Safer Internet](#)

Staff are aware that children are vulnerable to being bullied or groomed for abuse or radicalisation online. Staff will be vigilant to any signs that that this may be occurring and report any concerns in the usual way.