

## **Addendum to Safeguarding and Child Protection policy**

### **St Mark's Catholic School**

**Please note: *This was written in March, however the same principles will apply in the event of any further school lockdown.***

***Last updated: January 2021***

***It should be read in conjunction with the School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and the Remote Learning Framework.***

#### **Context**

Due to the COVID 19 outbreak in the UK and school closures from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, a number of specific safeguarding issues need to be addressed. The following information is based on guidance from the DfE: [www.safeguarding.info/covid19safeguarding](http://www.safeguarding.info/covid19safeguarding)

The DSL at St Mark's will need to review these updates for the duration of the school's closure.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children. These are 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 St Mark's Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

#### **Vulnerable children**

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. Parent/carers were contacted of the following

- EHCP students
- Students with Child protection and Child in need plans. In addition, if there was an attached social worker they too were contacted.
- Key workers – the Headteacher contacted all parents and asked them to reply if they needed child care as they were key workers as designated by the government.
- Other vulnerable students – the DSL and Pupil Progress leaders created a list of students deemed vulnerable for other reasons. Parent/carers were contacted and childcare was offered.

FSM students/low-income families – vouchers are being made available covering the closure period and particular parents were contacted to check about food supplies and help needed. Foodbank vouchers and locations were given to some families.

Parents/carers are aware that they can contact the school at any time if their situation changes.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Student Services are aware of the new criteria for monitoring attendance and liaising with the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer). The names of students attending the school as designated above are sent to the borough on a daily basis. If students do not attend school and are scheduled to, Students Services will telephone the parents and contact social services if deemed necessary.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

All staff are aware of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Team and how they can be contacted. A member of the Safeguarding Team will be available throughout the school closure.

### **Reporting a concern**

In school during the closure:

- Use the current procedure if a DSL is in attendance on that day. Complete a blue concerns form and take to the DSL.
- If the DSL is not on site a member of SLT will be informed and they will liaise with the Safeguarding Team.

Outside of school during the closure:

- If a member of staff has a serious safeguarding concerns where the student is in danger they must contact the Police and/or social services directly. Afterwards they need to update the DSL.
- For a less serious safeguarding concern, the member of staff needs to complete the digital **blue concerns form** to refer it to the DSL. The DSL will monitor all emails during the course of the school day Monday-Friday. These instructions and the digital blue form have been emailed to staff.

### **Visitors to the school**

The school will comply with the visitors' policy as normal during this period. If anyone is working with the students they must be DBS checked. A record of staff members on site will be kept.

### **Supporting children in school**

St Mark's Catholic School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. We 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.

- St Mark's 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 spread of COVID 19.
- St Mark's 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.
- We will make sure students in school have access to all resources necessary for their education. This will include computer, internet and library access.

### **Online safety in school**

St Mark's Catholic School will continue to provide a safe environment, and this includes safety online. Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place and there is an online filtering system.

### **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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police. The Headteacher has written to parents frequently reminding them of important guidance regarding online safety and the resources available on the school website.

### **Student Wellbeing and Mental Health**

The school recognises that students' mental health will be affected by the closure of the school and the government's lockdown policy. The following measures are in place:

- PPL (Pupil Progress Leaders) know who needs particular support in their year group. They will direct all students to certain resources and specific students to resources particular to their needs.
- PPL (Pupil Progress Leaders) will keep in regular contact with their year groups via Google Classrooms (separate for each year group), Gmail and telephone (if necessary).
- Form tutors are in daily contact with the tutor groups through Google Classroom. Registration is taken every morning and assemblies and form activities are shared during this time.
- The Wellbeing Coordinator at the school will be in regular communication with PPL regarding wellbeing issues and resources. Prayers, reflections, mindfulness and wellbeing activities will be uploaded onto Google Classroom for students, and this will also be a vehicle for news and updates.
- Due the closure of the school, the one to one counselling service has been suspended. However, students who are counselled via HYCS still have contact with their counsellor.
- The DSL has directed all PPLs and the Wellbeing Coordinator to the newly developed HYCS website which has a lot of online resources and contacts.
- PPLs will also have a password protected document with key contact details for parents/carers in their year group. They can be contacted if students are not engaging with the work or if there are pastoral issues.

- A particular focus for PPLs and the DSL will be vulnerable students (ie: FSM, PP, SEND, CP/CIN, etc)
- Any safeguarding concerns are to be reported as above.

#### **Students with social worker support**

- The DSL has details of students who have social worker support.
- The Safeguarding Team has access to all of the DSLs secure online files. They can act for the DSL where required.
- The DSL will continue to liaise with social workers via email (or telephone) as is currently the case.
- The DSL will determine whether he needs to contact certain students with CP or CIN plans. This will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

#### **Students with EHCPs**

- The SENDCO has responsibility for these students.
- The SEND team will be in regular communication with the SENDCO
- Students with EHCPs will be contacted weekly by the SENDCO. They have access to a school mobile phone for this purpose.
- Other students on the SEND register deemed vulnerable by the SENDCO will also be contacted.

#### **Students designated vulnerable by the DSL**

- The DSL and team have access to details of students who have been designated vulnerable but do not have support from social services.
- The DSL will review these students weekly and determine whether they need to be contacted by email (Gmail) or mobile phone.
- The conversation will determine whether they are coping with the current situation, if they have access to resources/support, and if there are any ongoing or new safeguarding concerns.

#### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

While the school is closed staff members must ensure that they intervene if there are signs of peer on peer abuse (ie: bullying).

St Mark's recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where the 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 of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Principles laid out in the St Mark's Behaviour policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required ensuring the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and communicated via the Pupil Progress Leader.

### **Guidance for parents/carers**

- The school recognises that this will be a very difficult time for parent/carers and families.
- Students will be online much more than usual and this does open them up to online harassment, abuse, fraud and peer on peer abuse (see above)
- The school will continue to remind parents about the potential dangers which students may face.
- The school has access to the “Safer School” app which is available through the St Mark’s website. All parents/carers will be directed there for specialist support.
- The Headteacher will keep in contact with all parent/carers over the period of the closure via Schoolcomms.
- Parents have been advised about safeguarding procedures during live lessons. Students should have their cameras and microphones turned off and can only turn their microphone on when invited to by teachers.

### **Guidance for staff**

Staff are clear about guidance for safe practices during remote working.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the schools Social Media policy. The school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. All staff have been provided with guidance regarding remote working and GDPR.

For safeguarding information about delivering lessons online, please refer to the Remote Learning Framework.

In addition, staff should adhere to the following guidance:

- It may be necessary for teachers to communicate with students one-to-one in order to support them with home learning. This should only be done via school Gmail or Google Classroom.
- Students have already been informed that they must only communicate with teachers in the same way. The use of personal email is not acceptable.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by St Mark’s Catholic School to communicate with pupils. Platforms such as WhatsApp are not to be used.
- Staff should not use WhatsApp to communicate information with other staff members regarding students/parents/other names for GDPR reasons. All communication is secure when through school systems.
- If members of staff have to communicate with students via telephone, they **must** withhold their private mobile phone number.

All St Mark's teachers will receive detailed instructions from the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher on working practices and expectations. The number of hours and subjects taught on certain days will be laid out for all staff so they can set appropriate work for all students.

### **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 and follow the usual school procedures.

We will continue to 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 continue to 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.

### **Staff recruitment, training and induction**

#### **Recruiting new staff and volunteers**

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

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

#### **Safeguarding induction and training**

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of any changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our Safeguarding and Child protection policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

#### **Keeping records of who is on site**

We will keep a record of which staff who are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

**Links with other policies**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

School visitors' policy and procedures

Attendance policy

**Date written: 30-3-20. Reviewed July 2020.**

**Reviewed and updated January 2021.**