

APPENDIX TO WHOLE SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

EMERGENCY SAFEGUARDING INFROMATION AND PROCEDURES DURING FULL SCHOOL CLOSURE

Updated advice from safeguarding partners and the Local Authority

See Covid-19: Safeguarding in schools update from Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Nottinghamshire County Council at the end of this appendix.

This appendix will be reviewed in the light of any further advice from the NSCP / NCC and updated as necessary.

Concerns about a child

If a member of staff has any concerns about a child, they report those concerns <u>immediately</u> to the DSL and Deputy DSLs via phone or email. Staff already have phone and email contact details. They <u>must</u> ensure they have acknowledgment that the DSL or Deputy DSL has received this information. If no acknowledgement is made, staff should go directly with their concern to MASH on 0300 500 8090 or 0300 456 4546 (out of hours)

DSL:- Jackie Moss

Deputy DSLs:- Catherine Turner and Sue Osborne

Arrangement in place to keep children safe while they are not physically attending school

Aim:

- Ensure all pupils have contact from staff, at least once per week. If it has not been possible to make contact then that member of staff must inform the DSL.
- Where possible learning can continue at home through work provided.
- All vulnerable families have additional contact and support with any concerns reported and recorded.

Current child protection concerns (children who have an allocated social worker):

- Phone contact three times a week with the child being spoken to **and/or** the child is attending school
- Liaising with all necessary professionals as usual.
- · Attending any planned review meetings, unless advised otherwise, either virtually or by telephone
- Records kept of any concerns and outcomes of meetings in the usual way
- Brief weekly overview recorded on the SLT Safeguarding Record and sent to DSL/Deputy DSLs

Vulnerable children and young people/families:

- Phone contact two/three times a week with the child being spoken to <u>and/or</u> the child is attending school. During a prolonged school closure, telephone contact may reduce to one/two times a week if staff feel everyone in the family's physical and mental health and safety is alright.
- Records kept of any concerns in the usual way and referrals made to MASH if necessary
- Brief weekly overview recorded on the SLT Safeguarding Record and sent to DSL/Deputy DSLs

Financial difficulties (FSM families and others we are aware of/brought to our attention):

- Phone contact at least once per week with the child being spoken to.
- Access to food through provision of supermarket vouchers including school holidays.
- If needed, food bank information to be provided.
- Brief weekly overview recorded on the Class/Year Group Safeguarding Record and sent to DSL/Deputy DSLs





Trent Vale Infant and Nursery School and Beeston Rylands Junior School

All other children and young people

- Phone contact at least once per week with the child being spoken to. During a prolonged school
 closure, telephone contact may reduce to once a fortnight if staff feel everyone in the family's
 physical and mental health and safety is alright.
- Brief weekly overview recorded on the Class/Year Group Safeguarding Record and sent to DSL/Deputy DSLs

If a child/family cannot be contacted by their allocated team

- SLT/member of staff to text to say they will be phoning back/leave a message
- If after repeated attempts the child/family cannot be contacted then the DSL/Deputy DSL will be informed
- The DSL/Deputy DSL will make a judgement if this family can wait to be contacted the following week or if contact needs to be made as soon as possible. If contact needs to be made as soon as possible then the DSL/Deputy DSL/the DSLs nominated representative will text to say they will be in contact and then phone from the school phone, leaving a message if the call is unanswered. If after repeated attempts the child/family cannot be contacted then the DSL/Deputy DSL/the DSL's nominated representative will phone the additional contacts on the Personal Information Form to see if any of those people have had contact with the child/family. If no one has had contact with child/family or the DSL/Deputy DSL are still concerned then a member of the SLT will go round to the house. If there is still no contact with the child/family, including if neighbours have not seen them, then the police will be called.
- All of these actions need recording on the Safeguarding Record Sheets

Logistics

- Staff will be allocated to a team which has responsibility for a class/year group. A lead person will be allocated for each team.
- Instructions, contact details and Safeguarding Record sheets to be provided to each team by DSL.
- If personal phones are to be used then the Caller ID is to be blocked.
- When speaking to children via phone, this should be, where possible, using the speaker facility with parent/ carers also listening in. This is in order to safe guard any allegations made against staff.
- A record of all conversations to be collated by the lead person on the Safeguarding Record sheet and
 emailed to the DSL every Monday. The DSL/Deputy DSLs should be contacted immediately if there
 are any causes for concerns. If these staff members cannot be contacted, then staff should contact
 MASH immediately.
- The DSL/Deputy DSLs will follow up any safeguarding concerns in the usual way.
- Vouchers for food will be distributed via text or email where possible. Office staff are responsible for organising this.

Staff providing childcare on behalf of the Trent-Rylands Federation

All staff asked to undertake childcare must be on the Single Central Record and have undergone the relevant safeguarding checks.

Allegations of abuse against school staff

The procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and school staff will continue to be followed.

Working with other agencies

School will continue to work with and support other agencies working to safeguard children and young people including, but not exclusively, social workers and the LA Virtual School Heads

Peer on peer abuse

School will continue to manage any report of such abuse and support victims according to the principles set out in part 5 of KCSIE





COVID-19: Safeguarding in schools update

Introduction

The government has made the decision to close schools for the provision of education, and further to direct people not to leave their home except for limited reasons. This is a key aspect of the governments social distancing policy aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19. Schools and settings have been asked to make childcare provision for a limited number of children and young people, identified as being either the children of keyworkers, thereby enabling these keyworkers to continue with their vital work, or children with significant additional needs whereby the risks associated with them not accessing provision during the day outweigh the risks associated with them mixing with others outside of the home. For some children and young people, receiving provision during the day is a protective factor from harm.

The changes to the operation of schools brought about by the government's response to COVID-19 has created the need for all schools and settings to review their Child Protection policy and practices in the light of these changes. The government's most recent guidance on safeguarding in schools can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers

This updated Local Authority guidance has been prepared by myself as Safeguarding Children in Education Officer, alongside colleagues in Children's Social Care, and in the wider Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. It is not a comprehensive summary of the government's updated guidance, which should be read in full, nor is it a replacement for previously issued national or local guidance on safeguarding in schools. Notwithstanding this additional guidance, the requirements on all schools and partners as laid out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) remain in force. This guidance will help you to write a tailored addendum to your own Child Protection Policy for 2019-20.

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to COVID-19 is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- With regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- If anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act, and act immediately
- A DSL or deputy should be available
- It is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children.
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Revised schooling arrangements

Educational settings (not including childcare) are being required to complete a short form to notify the Department for Education about their status regarding coronavirus (COVID-19). This form asks those running institutions to confirm whether their setting is open and, if so, provide information about numbers of pupils and staff attending. The completed form is submitted by noon of each weekday, thereby allowing for a record of attendance to be maintained.

The DfE is asking local authorities to maintain an overview of the provision being made available and accessed within its jurisdiction, and to coordinate access to this provision where a school or setting is not able to staff provision for the number of children and young people who are required to access it. The local authority's safeguarding responsibilities have not been

altered by these changes, in fact, the changes require that the local authority and the wider Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is more vigilant to the potential for children to come to harm as a result of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reviewing children and young people who are at risk of harm

The government's latest guidance on identifying those children and young people identified as vulnerable can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people

Review your school's Vulnerable Children's list to identify:

- i. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan,
- ii. Children subject to a Child in Need Plan,
- iii. Children for whom an extended period of time at home will present an additional risk to the child.
- iv. Children who are Young Carers

In each child's case:

- 1. Clarify where the children deemed to be vulnerable will be living during the period of the school's partial closure and discuss with parents the need to respond to calls.
- Review with the child's parent/carer, social worker, and other professionals actively involved with the child:
 - a) the balance of risk and protective factors of the child remaining at home, with those of them accessing childcare on the school site, and
 - b) based on the level of need/concern, determine a plan for 'checking in', and this checking in should include at least a phone call, and preferably a video call. The frequency of this checking in will vary from 1-3 days, but contact will be no longer than every 3 days.
- 3. Make and maintain a record of this decision and of any ongoing contact on the school's usual recording system, and ensure that contact details of parents and carers, social worker and any multi-agency professional working with the child are up-to-date and recorded on the school's recording system
- 4. The checking-in conversation will ascertain:
 - a) By speaking to the parent/carer that the child is happy and well, to ascertain if the parent has any concerns or worries, and to clarify who if any in the household is showing symptoms of COVID-19, and
 - b) By speaking to the child, that they appear to be well and that they say that they are well. Ask specifically if they are eating and sleeping and maintaining social distance, and if they have any concerns or worries.
- 5. Where a Head Teacher/Senior DSL is concerned about a child's safety and wellbeing, and where the child is not accessing provision in school, consideration should be given to extending an invitation to the child to access provision at school.
- 6. Where concerns for the safety of a child at home escalate, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care or if at immediate risk to the Police. Similarly, if you are not able to make contact with the child and their parent/carer, try again, review the risk assessment and if appropriate call Children's Social Care and the Police.

Safeguarding implications for a school making childcare provision on its site

The school or setting making provision should apply the setting's usual safeguarding protocols, or where these have to be varied, the revised protocol should be published on the school's website. All staff and volunteers need to be made aware of any amendments to the safeguarding policy, and these amendments need to be made publicly available.

As and when 'hubs' are established to make childcare provision for children and young people from a number of schools, the host school must clarify who is the Senior DSL to whom any and all safeguarding concerns should be reported. This Senior DSL for the setting, or their deputy, will be available for consultation to any of the members of staff delivering the provision, including staff who may be accompanying a child from a different school or setting. This consultation need not be face-to-face, but it does need to be readily available.

Schools and settings acting as 'hubs' will need to be able to demonstrate that those with Senior DSL and DSL responsibilities have accessed an appropriate level of safeguarding training in accordance with KCSiE (2019), and our own Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures.

In making provision for children and young people on your school site, where possible make arrangements to keep primary and secondary pupils apart.

Where children are accessing provision on a school site other than the school where they are a registered pupil, their current Head Teacher/Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (Senior DSL) need to ensure that any necessary safeguarding information is shared with the Senior DSL for the provision which the child is accessing, in order to ensure they are fully conversant with the child's safeguarding needs, potential risks and any child protection or CiN plans in place. This is particularly important if the child is not accompanied by a member of their own school's staff.

Other general safeguarding advice

The Senior DSL must ensure that remote access (working from home) to the school's safeguarding recording system is possible and that a laptop/iPad is available for each member of the DSL team.

Discuss with neighbouring schools about DSL cover in the case of sickness.

Remind Teachers to only use approved contacts methods – no social media groups etc

Where a school receives Operation Encompass/Domestic Violence notification emails the inbox should be checked on a daily basis and appropriate actions taken.

The DSL team must meet weekly, via Skype Business, to discuss the status of each child they are working with, and where necessary seek advice.

We advise in accordance with statutory guidance that you always act in the 'best interest of the child'

Key documents and links

Since the publishing of the government's updated advice on safeguarding in schools, a number of organisations including schools have created policy templates and other resource tools to support them in their work. The best of these will be uploaded onto the two main sites used by Nottinghamshire's schools to access recommended safeguarding materials, namely:

- The safeguarding section of Schools' Portal
- The NSCP website, in section resources/schools

Cheryl Stollery
Safeguarding Children in Education Officer
Cheryl.stollery@nottscc.gov.uk



Trent Vale Infant and Nursery School and Beeston Rylands Junior School





Managing safeguarding risk: Additional guidance for Nottinghamshire Schools during COVID-19 Crisis

Revised Risk Assessments

The Covid-19 Crisis has impacted upon the ability of schools to carry out their duty to safeguard all pupils on roll through the usual daily contact. This will have required Headteachers, DSLs and SENCOs to reflect upon where the present situation may create additional risks for vulnerable children including those with CPP, CIN, EHAFs, EHCPs and those pupils deemed to be vulnerable by the school.

Whilst pupils in these groups are currently allowed to access care in school many families have chosen to keep their children at home, which has necessitated the development of remote monitoring and revised risk assessments. The following simple RAG system may help to clarify which pupils are most at risk.

RAG Rating	Threshold
RED	Pupil should be attending school or agreed provision daily: Safeguarding concerns increased due to lack of attendance or agreed provision Welfare of the child/ young person and family is likely to be severely negatively impacted upon without support of the school or agreed provision
AMBER	Through the use of 'reasonable endeavours' the pupil is able to be supported within the home: • Safeguarding concerns can be monitored using an appropriate format where necessary, e.g digitally, online, by drive by visits, telephone, to enable the child to access learning and remain safe and healthy (including mental health and personal wellbeing). Social Care have agreed, if involved.
GREEN	Pupil is able to be supported within the home: • Pupil can be cared for safely in the home setting at the present time with telephone contact only. Social Care have agreed, if involved.

Continuation of usual safeguarding processes

The local processes for responding to safeguarding concerns are detailed in The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's *Pathway to Provision (Version 8)*. Whilst the measures put in place to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the level and nature of contact which schools are having with their pupils, the thresholds for reporting serious safeguarding concerns have not changed.

Colleagues in Children's Social Care continue to visit and stay in contact with families where there are known safeguarding risks, including where Child Protection plans are in place, and where children have been designated as 'Children in Need'. In these open cases the school will be expected to continue to work closely in partnership with the Social Worker as part of the multiagency team supporting the child.





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When the government made its decision to close schools for the provision of education, schools were required to make childcare provision for the children of keyworkers, as well as for those pupils deemed to be 'vulnerable' where the risks of infection from being in school were outweighed by the risks to the child's wellbeing by remaining at home. (See *Safeguarding in schools update 31.03.20*). The determination of this balance of risk is not an exact science; it takes into account a range of risk and protective factors, both historical and current, and recognises that these change over time. So, any decisions need to be kept under review. Where a decision is made to allow a child to remain at home, the risks inherent in that decision may be mitigated by the school maintaining frequent contact with the child and their parent or carer.

Since the partial closure of schools, many Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) have worried about the impact that being at home may be having on some pupils who they deem to be vulnerable. These worries may be about the child's emotional wellbeing, their susceptibility to online abuse, or to other forms of harm. In the past, when such a child had been attending school on a daily basis, the school was able to reassure itself of the child's ongoing safety and wellbeing, including when there has been a history of domestic violence, substance misuse, or challenging behaviour within the family. Now, with most children not attending school on a daily basis, how should a school respond to such worries?

- As before, where a school has good reason to believe that a child has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, the school should make a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Headteachers and DSLs will already be aware of the evidence that is required to support a referral to the MASH.
 - "If a practitioner has a new safeguarding concern regarding a child, or considers that a child is in need of specialist support from the children's social care in line with the threshold criteria outlined on page 12 (of *Pathway to Provision*), they should contact the MASH. If a practitioner working with a child, young person or family has immediate concerns about child protection, they should contact the MASH urgently, without delay. If you believe that a child is in immediate danger, call the police immediately on 999." *Pathway to Provision*
- Where a school recognises that a referral to the MASH is not appropriate, but where the child's family has agreed that they might benefit from support, a referral to the Early Help Unit (EHU) is appropriate.

Concerns arising during the current crisis that do not meet usual thresholds

However, where a school has concerns about a child's possible wellbeing, but insufficient evidence to justify a referral to the MASH, and no consent from parents for an EHAF, there are several actions which a school can take:

Seek to clarify the basis on which the concerns about the child's wellbeing are held. This might include discussing these concerns with the child's parents or carers, and/or use the Carrying out a contextual safeguarding structured conversation framework to discuss the concerns with a colleague. This framework has been designed to help Headteachers, DSLs and others to think carefully about the concerns they have about a child's wellbeing, and thereby consider whether these concerns are likely to meet the threshold for a referral to the MASH, to the EHU, to another support service, or whether it is appropriate for the school itself to take further actions and 'hold' the concerns. The guidance behind this contextual safeguarding framework recommends careful consideration through a 'structured conversation' with a colleague either within the school, or with peer support from another Headteacher of DSL.

"There is no substitute for sound professional judgement, effective inter and intra-agency communication and good communication and good evidence-based practice..." *Pathway to Provision*





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- Where a school recognises that a referral to the MASH is not appropriate, but where the child's family has agreed that they might benefit from support, a referral to the Early Help Unit (EHU) is appropriate.

Concerns arising during the current crisis that do not meet usual thresholds

However, where a school has concerns about a child's possible wellbeing, but insufficient evidence to justify a referral to the MASH, and no consent from parents for an EHAF, there are several actions which a school can take:

Seek to clarify the basis on which the concerns about the child's wellbeing are held. This might include discussing these concerns with the child's parents or carers, and/or use the Carrying out a contextual safeguarding structured conversation framework to discuss the concerns with a colleague. This framework has been designed to help Headteachers, DSLs and others to think carefully about the concerns they have about a child's wellbeing, and thereby consider whether these concerns are likely to meet the threshold for a referral to the MASH, to the EHU, to another support service, or whether it is appropriate for the school itself to take further actions and 'hold' the concerns. The guidance behind this contextual safeguarding framework recommends careful consideration through a 'structured conversation' with a colleague either within the school, or with peer support from another Headteacher of DSL.

"There is no substitute for sound professional judgement, effective inter and intra-agency communication and good communication and good evidence-based practice..." *Pathway to Provision*

Put in place arrangements to increase the protective factors around the child. Whilst partial
school closures have been in place, many schools have maintained regular contact with
children deemed vulnerable, with the level of this contact being proportionate to the level of
concern which the school has about the child's wellbeing.

Since the partial closure of schools, some Headteachers and DSLs have contacted the MASH to discuss concerns about a child's potential wellbeing in the absence of being able to make regular contact with the child or their parent/carer. In the most extreme cases, the parent/carer has refused to answer phone calls, respond to texts and emails, and not appeared at the door. In such circumstances a referral to the MASH without evidence of significant risk of harm would not be appropriate, and nor would referral to the Family Service, unless the school had reason to believe that the parent/carer would be more likely to respond to contact from them. It is a common misconception that social workers or members of the Family Service have any more right of access to someone's home than, for example, a teacher.

'Holding' concerns about a child's wellbeing is difficult when the parent/carer is not responding to contact. The Local Authority is aware that this can be emotionally challenging and frustrating. Do work together with local colleagues, perhaps other Headteachers or DSLs in your hub, to share scenarios of concern. During the Covid Crisis we have arranged for the SEMH team to work with you on this issue in your localities, to allow you to discuss your concerns about the well-being of pupils. Their contact details can be found at the end of this guidance document.

School leaders have developed a range of measures to encourage the parent/carer to maintain contact with the school:

- Make phone calls and leave positive phone messages at different times of the day
- Text or email daily
- Try to make contact using the second emergency contact number provided by the family,
 via a known relative, or via another service who you know are also involved with the family
- Message that someone, ideally someone familiar to the child, will be driving past the front
 gate at a given time, and ask that the child and their parent can come to the door. This
 could be to drop off learning resources, certificates, positive messages, rewards etc
- If the child is eligible for Free School Meals, use the 'drive by' as the means by which the voucher can be delivered
- Write formally, explaining the duty of care which the school has towards all children on the school roll, making clear what 'next steps' the school will make if the parent/carer does not make contact with the school.
- If you have information that leads you to believe that any child may be at heightened risk of harm e.g. knowledge about mental health needs, substance misuse or domestic violence, and you have made unsuccessful stringent and concerted efforts to communicate with the family, It is likely that the threshold for referral to the MASH will have been met. In these circumstances please inform the family that unless they respond to you immediately, you will need to contact the MASH to request Social Care/Police involvement.

Do keep copies of all amended risk assessments, records of contacts, and attempted contacts.

References

- Contextual safeguarding: Reflective practice & structured conversations. Guidance for schools. (14.01.20)
- Carrying out a contextual safeguarding structured conversation. Proforma to use to support the structured conversation. (undated)
- Contextual safeguarding: Risk & protective factors. Grid to support the structured conversation. (10.09.19)
- Covid-19: Safeguarding in schools update. Updated local guidance to schools following the issuing of central government safeguarding guidance. (31.03.20)
- Pathway to Provision (Version 8). Multi-agency Thresholds Guidance for Nottinghamshire Children's Services. December 2018.





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- Safeguarding Children: Indicators of possible abuse or neglect. NSCP. www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscp
- Helpline statement. Guidance to professionals in responding to concerns about domestic violence. (09.04.20)

SEMH Team Contact details

Rushcliffe, Broxtowe, Gedling,

Team Manager	Alison Blackmore	07824 544832	alison.blackmore@nottscc.gov.uk
SHNK	Janet Tyers	07944 465443	janet.tyers@nottscc.gov.uk
Gedling	Emma Dolan	07766 364453	emma.dolan@nottscc.gov.uk
South Broxtowe	Zena Argent	please email	zena.mays@nottscc.gov.uk
Rushcliffe	Jonathan Smith	0115 9772497	jonathanS.smith@nottscc.gov.uk

Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Newark, Mansfield

Ashfield Lucie Keeling 07789 944232 lucie.keeling@nottscc.	ov.uk
Bassetlaw Sue Sparks 07702 170809 sue.sparks@nottscc.g. Mansfield Alison Hardwick 07492 062195 alison.hardwick@nottscc.g. varah.angell@nottscc.g. Sarah Angell 07970 597747 sarah.angell@nottscc.g.	ov.uk scc.gov.uk c.gov.uk