Child Protection and Safeguarding during COVID-19 operation

Addendum Version 1

We will provide a learning environment that empowers, challenges and encourages individual success and social responsibility.

St Matthias Academy actively promotes the principles of equality and inclusion for all its students.

Date: June 2020
Reviewed Date: January 2021

The guidance in this document is to be used in conjunction with:

⬚ St Matthias Academy Attendance flowchart

⬚ St Matthias Academy whole school and individual student risk assessments

⬚ St Matthias Academy staff handbook and code of conduct

Approved by: St Matthias Academy – Academy Council

Date: 2nd June 2020

Last reviewed on: September 2020, January 2021

Next review due by: March 2021

Contents

Named Roles

Important contacts - please see website for contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Simon Quinn

Deputy DSL Fishponds site Caletta Jordan

Deputy DSL Brentry site Simon Kershaw

Headteacher Aileen Morrison

Safeguarding Academy Councillor Eileen Flynn

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure to all but children of keyworkers and most vulnerable, due to COVID-19 and the partial reopening of schools from June 15th 2020, and reflects updated advice from central government.

It sets out changes to our normal safeguarding and child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers, and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal safeguarding and child protection policy continues to apply. The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

Have a social worker, including children:

 With a child protection plan

 Assessed as being in need

 Looked after by the local authority

Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education. Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following 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

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. Staff can contact the DSL (and deputies) using their mobiles, which have been circulated internally if the DSL is not in school. DSLs (and deputies) are also available via their school emails and CPOMS system. As a reminder, all safeguarding staff will continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

During this period, we would aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL in school wherever possible, we have ensured within our arrangements that all DSLs (and Deputies) will be contactable by

telephone for their staff. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum and contact details are on the website.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be in school, they can be contacted via their school email or through the mobile number shared internally with staff.

We will keep all school staff on the rota to be teaching in school informed as to who the DSL (and deputies) are for children attending school. Senior staff across the Trust have personal mobile numbers and these include the DSLs.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are on a day to day basis.

There will always be a senior leader in each school and they 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

Update and liaise with the DSL (and deputies) on a daily basis about any vulnerable children on site

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children. We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

Our 3 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, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need.

The following guidance is currently in place:

A duty to carry out individual risk assessments for all children and young people who have

⬚ an EHC plan and/or.

⬚ a social worker (including those on a child protection plan, child in need or previous social care history and looked after pupils)

All learners in these categories within our school have had a completed risk assessment to inform their attendance at school and these will be reviewed to further inform planning for a phased return to school where this is identified as the action. All risk assessments are completed with the family and services involved with the child.

In addition, St Matthias Academy will:

⬚ complete online self-reporting attendance form on a daily basis.

⬚ Monitor the record of contacts made with the family if the child is not accessing school. The DSL and SENDCo are responsible for ensuring this contact is up to date.

⬚ Make contact with vulnerable students regularly, using the risk assessments to inform frequency and record this communication on their personal log in their current student file and on CPOMS if there is a concern.

⬚ Keep in regular communication with all social workers and other external agencies working with afamily to share information and reduce risk.

⬚ Attend any virtual on-going child protection or child in need meetings as required.

For children with EHC plans risk assessments should include the views of parent/carers and need to consider health risks, potential impact on child and young person wellbeing and ability of the school to meet needs.

6. Monitoring attendance

St Matthias Academy will be following the DfE attendance guidance issued on 28th May 2020 for learners attending school during this phased re-opening and for those learners continuing with remote learning.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educationalsettings/process-for-recording-attendance-and-using-the-educational-setting-status-form

The codes for absence reporting are as follows:

⬚ Where a learner is shielding, self-isolating (see note 1), or the pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met in school, they should be recorded as code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). (Temporarily, code Y can be used where a pupil is prevented from attending school due to following government guidance on coronavirus). To complete the educational setting status form, the attendance officer and office administrators should note whether the absence is due to shielding or isolation.

⬚ Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be recorded as code I (illness). When completing the educational setting status form, you should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms

⬚ Where a pupil does not attend school - despite being eligible and is not shielding, self-isolating, unable to attend due to illness, nor has an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school, the pupil should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) where no other authorised absence code is appropriate At this time, all absence should be classed as authorised.

Students eligible to attend school

The record of all learners eligible to attend school will be overseen by the Headteacher and kept up-to-date. This daily attendance record will be shared with the attendance administrator to inform normal absence reporting and follow-up processes

Keyworker and vulnerable children

We continue to provide education for these learners in school. These parents and carers are also expected to inform our absence line if their child will not be present in school for their session. Where a child has increased vulnerability, due to having a social worker, the DSL/DDSL will follow up on the reason for absence personally and inform the social worker.

In addition to taking registers, we are continuing to also use the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school. The LA have also requested a weekly summary of attendance and this will be completed and sent via SOFIE every Friday.

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 of peer-on-peer abuse. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately. If we are made aware of concerns regarding peer on peer abuse, we will make contact with the child and parents or carers and support them remotely, signposting them to support and advice. Schools will highlight peer on peer abuse through student newsletters and emails and ensure that students know where to get support.

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.

The staff handbook and code of conduct includes information about the LADO and the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline.

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 for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns

We have the option to offer places in school to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this and these children were included in our initial identification and risk assessment work and form part of our contact plan. If these children will not be attending school, the contact plan will be in place, as explained in section 10.1 below.

10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

10.1 Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

These plans set out:

- How often the school will make contact
- Which staff member(s) will make contact
- How they will make contact
- How the contact will be recorded

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them during our weekly DSL and safeguarding team meetings. A copy of our vulnerable child list was sent to the Local Authority. This information included those children who we were not expecting to attend and this ensures that social workers are fully aware.

If we can't make contact, we will continue to try, alerting social worker where they have one. We may write to the parent and will carry out a home visit. Home visits will only be made with regard to the following advice:

Advice is for staff to stand 2m away from the front door or entrance and spend no longer than 15 minutes at the address. The purpose of the visit is to visually confirm that the learner is ok, requires no further assistance and may coincide with a scheduled work drop off and collection or food parcel delivery.

If, after we have completed the home visit, we have not been able to make any visual contact with the learner, we will ensure that relevant external agencies are notified and agree further actions. If there are no existing external agencies involved with the family, we will ensure that relevant referrals are completed following any academy and local authority guidance.

We may wish to call the First Response Team or complete an online referral 0117 9036444

⬜ 0117 9036444 Monday to Thursday 9.00 – 5.00, 4.30 on Friday

⬜ If a child or young person is in immediate danger then please dial 999 and ask for police assistance

⬜ For professionals: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/make-a-referral-to-first-response

10.2 Safeguarding all children

⬜ 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 particular, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

⬜ Staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following partial school closures.

⬜ It is of the upmost importance that all staff and volunteers act immediately on any safeguarding concerns, including new concerns where children are returning.

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

IT staff are available via remote access during the school day.

11.2 Outside school

As more children return it will be important that we continue to provide a safe online environment for those who remain at home. 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 will continue to be made to First Response and as required the police. Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing code of conduct and IT acceptable user policy.

Expectations regarding staff communication with learners through social media remains the same and all staff will continue to use only work emails and accounts.

Advice in general is as follows:

⯀ Data Controllers will reassure themselves that any teaching/learning software and/or platforms are suitable and raise no privacy issues; or use cases against the providers terms and conditions (for example, no business use of consumer products) Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

Home school communication is of increased importance during this period. Parents/carers will receive regular Tutor / Learning Mentor contact to check on work completed, student well-being and recording any concerns. Some children may be living at homes of extended family during lockdown and may be contacted by personal phones by prior arrangement with parents/carers and all calls logged on student records.

Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online. 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 teaching and resources our school provides

Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

We will use the school website, social media platforms and parent newsletters to offer advice and guidance to parents in relation to online risks.

12. Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Where we have children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children returning to school from 1 June onwards, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools can help us to identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can

include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from specialist staff or support services.

Teachers should be aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of those students/pupils (and their parents) who are continuing to work from home, including when setting expectations of childrens' work. The department has provided separate guidance on remote education practices during the coronavirus outbreak.

The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school or college. Where possible staff should try and speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff should be encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school or college site via school or college phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they should withhold their personal number.

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for student mental health for all students. The Safeguarding team hold a list of vulnerable children and we are in touch with them at least once a week. Where we have concerns about significant mental health, we will advise parents to seek medical support through calling 111 where an assessment will be made about either an ambulance being called or the child being taken to hospital for assessment or a GP appointment to access CAMHS services.

We will also signpost all students, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for students 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.

13. Staff recruitment, training and induction

13.1 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.

DSL training

It is acknowledged that DSL training is unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). For the period coronavirus measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

DSLs (and deputies) should continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.

13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools within the Learn@ Multi Academy Trust

All staff working in Learn@MAT are fully compliant with safer recruitment checks. All Trust staff have completed Trust safeguarding training.

13.3 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

A copy of our safeguarding children protection policy (and this addendum)

Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

Face to face training will commence as soon as it is safe to do so

13.4 Keeping records of people on site

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

Staff signing in records for everyone working in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'

14. Children moving schools

It will be important for us to continue to plan for the sharing of information for transition for learners as well as those leaving the secondary phase into Post 16 provisions. DSLs should ensure that this key safeguarding information is shared with the receiving school.

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection law, that does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76 to 83 of KCSIE.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from our safeguarding partners or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every term by the safeguarding team. At every review, it will be approved by the Academy Council.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

Safeguarding and Child protection policy

Staff code of conduct

IT acceptable user policy

Health and safety policy

Online safety policy

Trust Managing allegations against staff policy

Anti-Bullying policy