



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy during the COVID-19 measures

Annex to Safeguarding Policy – version 2.0 Updated 07-04-2020

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Context

The way Holywell School is currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in the school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

As a school, we have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and for children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This annex to our Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

1. Version control and dissemination
2. Safeguarding priority
3. Current school position
4. Safeguarding partners' advice
5. Roles and responsibilities
6. Vulnerable children
7. Increased vulnerability or risk
8. Attendance
9. Reporting concerns about children and staff
10. Safeguarding training and induction
11. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
12. Peer on peer abuse
13. Online safety
14. New children at the school
15. Supporting children not in school

Version control and dissemination

This is version 2.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website and is made available to staff by direct email and on the school intranet (P-drive).

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can speak to them.

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority.

The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Current school position

In line with DfE guidance, we have established a list of Key-worker children eligible for a care placement with us. We have also identified all of our vulnerable students (ie. students with an EHCP and/or social worker). Parents/carers have been given the option of taking up a care placement or looking after their child/children at home. This is a flexible offer and parents/carers can take up the offer of a care placement at any time. This means that we currently have, on average 12 students on site across the full range of year groups. To accommodate these students, part of the school is opened up to accommodate the students and they have three supervised/taught sessions per day. Sessions are led by teaching staff with some limited TA support. We are not acting as a cluster school (where children and/or staff from other schools cluster at one site).

At the moment, we are not using staff or volunteers from outside our school. If this becomes necessary in the future, they will be required to complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups); we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This includes expectations for supporting 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 current advice (up to and including 7th April 2020) is below.

Central Bedfordshire Advice:

During the period in which the school is open only to provide care for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response and vulnerable children who cannot safely be cared for at home, some changes to school policies may be necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff and work in a way that minimises the risk of virus transmission. These changes may include, but are not limited to:

- The use of mobile phones by staff to enable essential contact with parents/carers, colleagues working at home, emergency services and across the school site
- The sharing of data (for which permission will be sought from parents/carers using the school for care)
- Toilet provision: it may be necessary for toilets to be allocated to a specific group from a school, rather than exclusively for boys or girls; in this case, timings of use will be managed as far as possible to separate boys and girls.

At all times, staff will continue to work with the safeguarding of children at the forefront of all decision making.

General advice from Central Bedfordshire Council:

Health advice

We're working closely with our NHS colleagues and neighbouring local authorities to ensure that residents in Central Bedfordshire are kept well informed about the outbreak of this virus and how to look after themselves and others.

You'll find lots of information around the virus, how to prevent its spread and what to do if you're concerned that you might be at risk.

The information and advice changes regularly, the most up to date guidance and help can be found on the NHS website.

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a continuous cough
- a high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher)

If you are concerned about symptoms or potential exposure to the virus, the NHS online tool can provide helpful advice and instruction. If you need further advice, then please ring 111.

You will need to stay in isolation away from other people until you've recovered.

Vulnerable groups

Everyone should do what they can to stop coronavirus spreading.

It is particularly important for people who:

- are 70 or over

- have a long-term condition
- are pregnant
- have a weakened immune system
- Extremely vulnerable groups
- Government guidance has been published for people who are extremely medically vulnerable to coronavirus to ask them to stay at home and avoid all non-essential contact for at least 12 weeks.

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

- solid organ transplant recipients
- people with specific cancers
- people with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD
- people with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired

If you think you have a condition which makes you extremely vulnerable or have received a letter from NHS England you are strongly advised to shield yourself, to reduce the chance of getting coronavirus (COVID-19) and follow the face-to-face distancing measures below.

Shielding measures are:

- strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
- do not leave your house
- do not attend any gatherings. This includes gatherings of friends and families in private spaces for example family homes, weddings and religious services
- do not go out for shopping, leisure or travel and, when arranging food or medication deliveries, these should be left at the door to minimise contact
- keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
- Do use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

If you are extremely vulnerable, you can register for support on the Government website www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable.

Avoid catching or spreading coronavirus

You should:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Self-isolating advice

You can find in-depth information about self-isolation on the NHS website, and on Public Health England.

Looking after your mental wellbeing

Public Health England has published guidance for the public on practical steps people can take to look after their mental wellbeing and specific guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak.

PHE has also updated its Every Mind Matters platform with specific advice on maintaining good mental wellbeing during the current situation. This is in addition to useful resources you may have already seen, including World Health Organisation guidance on mental health and psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and wellbeing information from Mind.

Domestic abuse

Measures announced over recent weeks to tackle COVID-19 have seen people's day-to-day drastically altered.

The order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation, no matter what stresses you are under. For anyone who feels they are at risk of abuse, there is help and support available to you. The government has also provided some additional resources and advice.

Bedfordshire Police

<https://www.bedfordshire.police.uk/information-and-services/Advice/Coronavirus/COVID-19-questions-answers>

Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

https://www.bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk/news/?story_id=1318&id=3710&area_id=116

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

A member of the safeguarding team will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video; or
- ensure we have access to a trained DSL or deputy DSL from another school or college by phone and/or online video.

Where our DSL or a deputy DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is Jillian Davies

Contact details: email: jdavies@holywellschool.co.uk

The deputy designated lead(s) are Stephan van der Merwe / Emma Collins

Contact details: email: svdmerwe@holywellschool.co.uk / ecollins@holywellschool.co.uk

tel: 01234 750 381

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 or health 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 school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the local authority and parents to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend Holywell including remotely if needed.

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

At the start of the Covid-19 preparations, all parents/carers of vulnerable children were contacted to explore what was the best method of support for each child. This will be regularly reviewed and the parents'/carers' wishes will be respected subject to there being no safeguarding concerns arising from this. We will make contact with parents/carers on the vulnerable list on a weekly basis.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents. Staff are acutely aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. We have taken the approach of providing structured work for all students via Show My Homework (our online homework tool) and differentiated work has been provided for vulnerable students where appropriate. The work is there for students to complete if they want. There is no expectation from Holywell that all work be completed, but there is an expectation that during school-calendared time, all students do some form of home-study. Where parents/carers do not have access to Show My Homework, core subject work packs are delivered on a weekly basis – more is available on request.

Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns. Mental health and wellbeing packs have also been prepared and are available for students and families.

Attendance

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone or by contacting a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff and the family are not put at risk. Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, we will notify their social worker.

Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Safeguarding (Child Protection) procedures (see Safeguarding Policy) and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Allegations Against Staff Policy.

Staff training and induction

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSL and deputy DSLs are unlikely to receive their refresher training. In line with government guidance, our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy.

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can

still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the processes set out in the following policies:

- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Behaviour for Learning
- Anti-bullying Policy
- ICT (e-safety) Policy.

Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and in our ICT (e-safety) Policy.

We will ensure that parents, carers and students are aware of routes to report any concerns whilst working online and we will reinforce the importance of children being safe online in communications with parents.

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

New children at the school

It is highly unlikely that children may join our school from other settings. However, if and when they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility. The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff needs to know the information.

Supporting children not in school

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

Safe Working Practices

We are following the practice detailed in the Q&A section of DfE guidance 07-04-2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/>

Social distancing

Q: What does effective social distancing involve in practice in educational settings? As much as possible, children, young people and staff should be spaced apart at all times.

This means:

- sitting children at desks that are far apart
- ensuring everyone queues and eats further apart than normal
- keeping apart when in the playground or doing any physical exercise
- visiting the toilet one after the other
- staggering break times
- putting guidelines on the floor in corridors
- avoiding unnecessary staff gatherings

Social distancing measures should also be in place when providing meals, or food for collection, from families of free school meal pupils not in school.

This approach also applies to further education settings, including for learners who may be taking part in practical learning. Clear messaging to young people attending the setting about the purpose of social distancing, and personal hygiene, is likely to be particularly important.

Q: What does social distancing involve in early years settings where children are very young?

We acknowledge that social distancing for settings with very young children will be harder to maintain. Staff should implement the recommended measures as far as they are able, whilst ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for.

Staff should pay particular attention to handwashing before and after supporting children who need help with nappy changing, toileting or eating, as well as avoiding touching their own face whilst at work. Teachers and other staff may want to use age and developmentally appropriate ways to encourage children to follow social distancing, hand-washing and other guidance, including through games, songs and stories. They should encourage parents/carers to reinforce these messages at home, by asking them to remind their children.

As much as possible, settings should seek to prevent the sharing of food, drink, utensils, equipment and toys. Equipment, toys and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently.

Q: How should social distancing be implemented in settings such as special schools where care needs can be complex and some children will find it harder to adhere to instructions on social distancing?

We will shortly publish additional advice for settings caring for children and young people with complex needs.

Protection and cleanliness in schools and childcare settings

Q: Do schools, colleges and childcare settings need personal protective equipment (PPE)?

The scientific advice indicates that educational staff do not require personal protective equipment. This is needed by medical and care professionals providing specific close contact care, or procedures that create airborne risk, such as suctioning and physiotherapy, for anyone who has coronavirus (COVID-19), and is displaying symptoms.

If you are not providing this care to someone with the virus, and displaying symptoms, PPE is not needed. Asymptomatic people (people with the virus but not displaying symptoms) have a reduced viral load and so risk of transmission is considerably reduced.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air. They quickly fall on floors or surfaces. The advice for schools, colleges and childcare settings is to follow steps on social distancing, handwashing and other hygiene measures, and cleaning of surfaces.

Some children, and young people with special educational needs, may be unable to follow social distancing guidelines, or require personal care support. In these circumstances, staff need to increase their level of self-protection, such as minimising close contact (where appropriate), cleaning frequently touched surfaces, and carrying out more frequent handwashing.

We will shortly publish additional advice for settings caring for children and young people with complex needs.

Childcare practitioners do not need PPE. They should care for children as normal, although increasing the frequency of handwashing (and always doing so before and after, for example, feeding children or changing nappies) and cleaning of surfaces and toys. Soft toys should not be shared between children. If a child displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they should not come to the setting, or should be sent home with their parents/carers if symptoms arise during the day. Staff should clean as normal after this.

Q: Will educational settings have enough cleaning equipment?

DfE has been working with public sector buying organisations, and with Crown Commercial Service, to understand and address supply chain issues relating to hygiene and cleaning products for state-funded provision. At this time, the supply chain has flagged that for some products there are reduced volume deliveries, and less frequent deliveries, which means some items may be rationed. They are seeking to find alternatives to any products which are out of stock. Should schools be short of cleaning product supplies, they should email DfE-CovidEnquiries.COMMERCIAL@education.gov.uk, providing details of the supplies they are short of, and where they have been trying to buy their supplies (for example, which supplier).

Q: What should educational settings do in terms of daily cleaning regimes?

We recommend that all educational settings follow the Public Health England (PHE) guidance on cleaning for non-healthcare settings.

Where healthcare, and certain personal care support, is delivered within settings (particularly special schools), then additional measures may apply: see PHE guidance.

Settings should clean and disinfect equipment, toys and surfaces more regularly. This includes keyboards, mouse, tables, chairs, door handles, light switches and bannisters.

Q: Why is handwashing advised over hand sanitiser?

Soap and water, and regular handwashing for at least 20 seconds, is the best way of staying safe. Handwashing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available, or the situation makes using soap less feasible (for example, when outside), but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides.

Q: How often should staff, children and young people be washing their hands during the day?

Staff, children, young people and families should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently than normal, including on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing.

Staff should supervise young children to ensure they wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water (or hand sanitiser if soap is not available or feasible in the particular situation) and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues. Bins for tissues should be emptied throughout the day.

Consider how to encourage young children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs and repetition.

Some children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities may require additional support in following public health advice, or may find frequent

handwashing distressing. Staff will know where this is likely to be the case, and how they can best support individual children and young people.

Q: Is it safe to wear jewellery?

Yes. It is fine to wear jewellery as normal, provided handwashing guidance is being followed.

Q: Does my educational setting need deep cleaning on an ongoing basis?

No. Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual, using your standard cleaning products.

Q: Someone in my educational setting has become unwell with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, what do I do?

Government has issued advice on what to do in education settings if someone becomes unwell.

Q: Should educational settings ask parents/carers to report pupils' temperatures at the start of each day?

Educational settings should reiterate to parents/carers the need to follow the advice on coronavirus (COVID-19), including the whole household entering 14 days of self-isolation if anyone in the household develops a fever or a new, continuous cough. They are advised to follow the staying at home guidance.

Parents/carers and schools do not need to take children's temperatures every morning, but should be vigilant about signs of a temperature.

Q: Why are we not testing educational staff who display symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

PHE, together with NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), has agreed to prioritise testing for those most at risk of severe illness from the virus. Those in hospital care for pneumonia or acute respiratory illness will be the priority.

If a member of staff becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough, or a high temperature, in an education setting, they should be sent home and advised to follow the staying at home guidance.

Wider testing is being rolled out, and priority lists will be set for this. If critical workers, including education and childcare staff, are tested, this will not be for all staff, but rather for staff with symptoms, in order to enable them to go back to work if they test negative.

Q: Are there extra precautions staff need to take after work, for example washing clothes?

There is no need for stringent cleaning of people or clothes following a day in an educational or childcare setting. This is only required by medical and care professionals providing intimate care to people with coronavirus (COVID-19). The advice for settings is to follow steps on social distancing (as well as possible), handwashing and other hygiene measures including cleaning of surfaces.

Pupil numbers

Q: Are settings, with these limited numbers of children or young people attending, safe - especially special schools and alternative provision where a higher proportion of children may be attending?

We are asking all educational and childcare settings to care for vulnerable children, so long as they do not have health conditions that put them at severe risk, for safeguarding purposes, and where their health and care needs cannot be met safely at home. This is in addition to the children of critical workers, to enable their parents/carers to go to work and support our critical services at this time. Fewer children attending will mean social mixing is reduced and the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) is less likely.

Settings remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, will protect the NHS and save lives by reducing the risks of spreading the virus.

As far as is possible, social distancing should be adhered to in all settings and class or group sizes should be kept small.

Further guidance relating to special schools will be published as soon as possible.

Q: How do I know if I have too many children or young people attending?

There is no specific target or limit on children attending educational or childcare settings.

If you think you have more pupils than you can manage with the staff available, and particularly if this is impacting on your ability to implement social distancing, you should speak to your local authority (or trust, if appropriate) about how this might be managed.