Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures: COVID-19 addendum



**Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith**

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| **Approved by:** | Mrs Tine Boving Foster  Mr Paul Buckland | Chair of Governors  Headteacher | **Date: 22nd April 2020** |
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# Key contacts

| **Role** | **Name** | **Contact details** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) | Rebecca Chapman | rchapman@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Deputy DSL | Paul Buckland  Elaine Mawson | [pbuckland@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:pbuckland@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk)  emawson@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputies) can’t be contacted | Rob Dawson | rdawson@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Headteacher | Paul Buckland | pbuckland@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk |
| Local authority designated officer (LADO) | www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk | 03003 033892  [lado@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:lado@cumbria.gov.uk) |
| Chair of governors | Tine Boving-Foster | tbfoster@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk |

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# 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) and our 3 local safeguarding partners

· Cumbria County Council

· Cumbria Constabulary

· NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group

It sets out changes to our normal Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in light of the Department for Education’s guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal child protection and safeguarding 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2).

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’s 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, both for children still attending school and those at home. Please follow the usual school procedures as set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Rebecca Chapman, Paul Buckland and Elaine Mawson are contactable via their usual school emails. As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children’s social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

# 4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

When any of our students are attending the hub school, we aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the ‘Important contacts’ section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) isn’t required to be at the hub school, they can be contacted remotely via email ([rchapman@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:rchapman@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk) / [emawson@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:emawson@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk) / [pbuckland@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:pbuckland@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk). These email accounts are checked regularly throughout each working day.

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed by email as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) when we are staffing the hub school. On other days, Rebecca Chapman will be the DSL unless staff are informed otherwise.

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

On the rare occasions where there is no DSL or deputy available, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Rob Dawson, Assistant Headteacher. You can contact him on: rdawson@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk

The senior leader 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 manage access to child protection files, where necessary
* Liaise with children’s social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

# 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

This link to the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership page details the current arrangements in place during the COVID 19 crisis: <https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/LSCB/covid19.asp>. However the key procedures on reporting a concern or referring to the safeguarding hub remain the same: phone 0333 240 1727 or go to <https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/> and complete the single contact form. Anyone can make a referral, but when possible, please discuss your concerns with the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately, using the standard procedures set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

# 6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn’t attend, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

* Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by phone.
* Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education’s daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school or our hub school.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. When parents drop their children off at the hub school, they will be asked for 2 emergency contact numbers for that day. Staff at the hub school will also have access to the school SIMS database.

# 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 – about both children attending school and those at home.

We will continue to refer students to the relevant agencies for support, where appropriate, but clearly the nature of this support may have changed due to government guidance on safe working practices.

# 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 – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely. Please follow the procedures set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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.

# 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. These children might include, for example, children who have previously had a social worker, or who haven’t met the threshold for a referral but where staff have raised concerns. We will risk assess these students on an individual basis. If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

# 10. 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; or
* They don’t meet the threshold or criteria for attending school during closure, but we still feel they need some support and monitoring.

Each child has an individual plan which sets out

* How often the school will make contact – this will be at least once a fortnight, according to the needs of each individual child
* Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
* How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone or via email, or a combination of both

We have agreed these plans with children’s social care where relevant, and will review them at each team meeting. If we can’t make contact with children with a social worker, we will contact children’s social care or the police.

# 11. Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

All children will be contacted once a week via email by the form tutor.

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 line with the procedures set out in section 3 above.

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

* Not completing any assigned work or logging on to school systems
* No contact from children or families

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support pupils’ mental health.

# 12. Online safety

12.1 In school

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

12.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff code of conduct. Staff must follow these key points:

* Staff should only use their school email address and the student’s email address to communicate.
* Staff should not use any social media or messaging services to communicate with students.
* If staff are phoning students about school work, they should phone the parent first, using the contact details they have been provided with, speak to the parent to let them know why they are phoning, and then speak to the student.
* If staff are phoning because they have a safeguarding concern, these concerns **must** be discussed with the DSL or Deputy DSL first and a plan of action will be decided.

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.

12.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

* 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 Parentmail, the school website and the school Facebook feed to communicate with parents and to update them on information from key agencies and support groups. We will use the school email to communicate any key information to students.

# 13. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. Students who usually receive 1-2-1 support from school will receive support over the phone at a time agreed, within the working week.

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

When setting expectations for pupils 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.

# 14. Staff recruitment, training and induction

14.1 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.

14.2 Staff ‘on loan’ from other schools

We will assess the risks of staff ‘on loan’ working in our school, and seek assurance from the ‘loaning’ school that staff have had the appropriate checks. The Headteacher will be responsible for organising this.

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

14.3 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 children protection policy (and this addendum)
* Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff ‘on loan’ need. In most cases, this will be:

* A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
* Confirmation of local processes
* Confirmation of DSL arrangements

14.4 Keeping records of who’s on site

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, if the school is open to students, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

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

We will use the single central record to log:

* Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff ‘on loan’
* Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

# 15. Children attending other settings

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

* The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
* The child’s EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
* Details of the child’s social worker
* Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO can’t share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

An Early Help Officer is attached to each hub school to offer support, help and guidance. Our Early Help Officer is Steve Kemp: 07557 210979.

# 16. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 4 weeksby Rebecca Chapman, Assistant Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

# 17. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

* Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
* Staff Code of Conduct
* Health and safety policy
* Whistleblowing Policy
* Anti-bullying Policy
* SEND Policy and Information Report