Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures:

Return to school during COVID-19 addendum



**Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith**

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| **Approved by:**  **Chair of Governors: T Boving Foster**  **Headteacher: P Buckland** |  |  | **Date: 15.10.2020** |
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# Key contacts

| **Role** | **Name** | **Contact details** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) | Allen Martin | amartin@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) |
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| Safeguarding Governor | Marytn Worrall | mworrall@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk |

# 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies to the current period of school reopening while the COVID-19 situation remains. It 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 for full opening: schools*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools), 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 definition of ‘vulnerable children’ includes those who:

Are assessed as being in need, including children:

* With a child protection plan
* With a child in need plan
* Looked after by the local authority

Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or LAs, for example those who are:

On the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services

Adopted

At risk of becoming NEET (‘not in employment, education or training’)

Living in temporary accommodation

Young carers

Considered vulnerable at the provider and LA’s discretion

# 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. Allen Martin, 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. 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.

# 5. Monitoring attendance

Government guidance states “it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children’s education, wellbeing and wider development.”

“Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

* parents’ duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
* schools’ responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
* the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities’ codes of conduct.”

As such, when any child we expect to attend school doesn’t attend, or stops attending, we will:

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

6.1 Children returning to school

The DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before the child returns.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see pupils in person.

6.2 Children at home

The school will maintain contact with children who are unable to return to school or have returned to school but then need to self-isolate because of concerns over Covid 19 infection. Staff will use Edulink to communicate what work has been set. They may need to speak directly to children at home through the use of Zoom or by phone. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home. Or, if necessary they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.

Staff and volunteers will look out for signs like:

Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems

No contact from children or families

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about where those children have had to self-isolate

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, using zoom or via email, or a combination of the three.

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.

# 7. Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk. Should the school need to close fully or partially again:

All children missing school will be contacted once a week via edulink/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

# 8. Online safety

8.1 In school

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

8.2 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
* When using Zoom to teach students or run tutor sessions, video can be used by staff, but will not normally be used by students unless there is a specific educational need. Students and teachers must follow the guidelines as issued by SLT. These lessons or tutor sessions will be recorded. Parental permission must be obtained before students take part.

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.

8.3 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, Edulink, 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.

# 9. Mental health

9.1 Children returning to school

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupils’ mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively needy, to help identify where support may be needed.

9.2 Children at home

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.

# 10. Staff recruitment, training and induction

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

10.3 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

10.4 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. Members of the public will not be allowed on site without an appointment.

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

We will use the Inventry system to log our staff who are in school each day.

We will use the single central record to log:

Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, who are not our staff, including staff ‘on loan’

Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

# 11. 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 Allen Martin, Assistant Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

# 12. 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