

# **St John Fisher RC Primary School**

## **Covid-19 Child Protection and**



## **Safeguarding Policy**

**Headteacher: Ms. J Kenna**  
**Chair of Governors: Mrs. K. Blom**  
**Safeguarding governor: Mrs T Lord**

**Agreed January 2021**  
**Review date: Under Constant Review**

This is an addendum to St John Fisher RC Primary School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. This policy will be under constant review as guidance and information will change.

This addendum replaces all previous versions.

This additional policy should be read alongside the school or college Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the following Department of Education and Gov.uk guidance [Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](#)

This is in response to the Cabinet Office and Department of Education instruction issued on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 [National lockdown - stay at home](#), and all primary, secondary and colleges to move to online learning.

In addition, and as before during previous lockdowns, schools will remain open for Vulnerable Children from all year groups and whose parents are “critical workers”.

Critical Workers are parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required.

**Vulnerable children** are defined as those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children’s social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - ❖ children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services or in the process of being referred to children’s services
  - ❖ adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - ❖ those at risk of becoming NEET (‘not in employment, education or training’)
  - ❖ those living in temporary accommodation
  - ❖ those who are young carers
  - ❖ those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - ❖ care leavers
  - ❖ others at the provider and local authority’s discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support.

St John Fisher RC Primary School will continue to work with and support children’s social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children’s social workers and the Merton Virtual School for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk.

In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and (St John Fisher DSL team) will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, St John Fisher RC Primary School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

St John Fisher RC Primary School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

The **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** will continue to function as normal.

**First Response** will conduct face to face visits with all new cases. Subsequent visits may be held virtually.

### **Attendance**

St John Fisher RC Primary School will comply with the guidance issued in January 2021 by the Department of Education [Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools](#)

Vulnerable children's attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending.

Vulnerable children – regardless of year group – that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to school or college provision where this would now be appropriate for them to do so.

Vulnerable Children who have a social worker are expected to attend unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable.

Vulnerable Children who have an EHCP, attendance is expected where it is determined, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the school.

Vulnerable Children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school or local authority discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable.

The Headteacher of the Merton Virtual School must be informed in relation to all children who are "Looked After"

St John Fisher RC Primary school will continue to inform social workers where children (with a social worker) do not attend. We will continue to follow up with any parent or carer of a child who is expected to attend and fails to do so.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

St John Fisher RC Primary school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Janine Kenna

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (S) are: Claire Higgins, Angie Mackay

A trained DSL (or deputy) will be available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

All school named staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely or may be virtual, for example via Zoom or Skype.

If the DSL is nearing or is over the 2 yearly statutory update, for these emergency provisions, that DSL may continue in their duty.

If a school does not have a DSL due to sickness or staff in self-isolation, assistance can be sought from a nearby school or cluster group of schools to provide DSL cover.

The DSL will ensure that all CP records relating to a child attending another setting will be communicated and transferred if necessary. It is recommended that both settings discuss any concerns involving a Vulnerable Child. This will include access to CP Plans, EHCPs or Personal Education Plan if the child is "Looked After".

### **Reporting a concern**

If staff do receive an allegation of abuse or harm, then they must follow the procedure detailed in the main Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. All allegations of abuse or harm must be recorded, signed, dated and timed and passed immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

If any member of staff has a concern about an adult working in the school, they must immediately inform the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors must be informed.

The Headteacher, on receipt of an allegation against a member of staff, will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer, John Shelley (Tel: 020 8545 3187. Email: [lado@merton.gov.uk](mailto:lado@merton.gov.uk)) immediately.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Any reports of peer on peer abuse must be followed up as set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 and in the specific section of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

School staff have received training on "peer on peer" abuse in accordance with part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020. All reports of incidents must be reported to the DSL, and subsequently the MASH in accordance with the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

School staff therefore need to be mindful of any conflicts that may arise or the identification of Vulnerable Children.

### **Safeguarding Training and Induction**

Any new staff recruited during these emergency procedures will require safeguarding induction in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 which includes receiving:

- Part 1 of KCSiE 2020
- A copy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy including this addendum,
- A copy of the Staff Code of Conduct/ Staff Behaviour Policy
- A copy of the School Behaviour Policy, and
- The Safeguarding response to Children who are missing education.

The induction will also include a meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to understand his/her role.

All staff will require to be made aware of safeguarding updates during the emergency period.

### **Safer Recruitment including the movement of staff**

It is essential that all staff and volunteers who work in the school are subject to safer recruitment processes and vetting and this includes ensuring that unsuitable people are not permitted to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. During this emergency period schools will continue to follow their policies and procedures set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

We will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process for volunteers as set out in paragraphs 183 to 188 of KCSiE 2020. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, we will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 173 in KCSiE 2020.

All staff who may be working together in a hub/ cluster will not require to undergo a further DBS check. The SCR for the hub/ cluster lead school must include all new staff who are transferred from other schools.

Any member of teaching staff who is dismissed for serious misconduct will be reported to the Teaching Regulation Agency and any member of staff who is withdrawn from a role involving regulated activity for a safeguarding reason will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **Online Safety**

During this lockdown period children will be spending more time online using remote learning, playing games and accessing social media.

We will continue to provide a safe environment for children both on and offline. Pupils will not be allowed to use personal computers, iPads and Chrome Books without supervision. Schools need to be particularly aware of online learning tools and systems in line with privacy and data protection/ GDPR requirements.

This school has filtering on the IT network to ensure all online content is appropriate to the year group. Children who can access the school IT network remotely will also have the same security and filtering. Children who are using an approved device given to them to use at home during the period of lockdown will also have the same security and filtering settings.

Schools in Merton have access to resources supplied by the London Grid for Learning for children and families to help to keep them safe online.

The Data Protection Officer will be made aware of any new communications platforms. This will likely require a Data Processing Impact Assessment.

If St John Fisher RC Primary School is using a tutor as part of the catch-up programme this can be done remotely and we will ensure that the tutor is aware of their safeguarding obligations of online teaching.

### **Supporting Pupils not in school**

Children other than those who meet the definition of "vulnerable" will remain at home and through a communication plan staff will continue to contact them regularly.

The contact may involve speaking on the telephone with parents and with children themselves. At all times staff look out for any signs or indications that a child may be at risk and report this immediately to the DSL.

Staff will continue to monitor any remote learning that may involve logging on to online learning or submitting work on time. Any indications that children are not logging on must be followed up.

If the pupil is "looked after" liaison must be made with the Merton Virtual School.

### **Supporting Children in School**

St John Fisher RC Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and will continue to provide a safe space for all pupils to attend. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are onsite and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety.

We will refer to Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of the spread of Covid-19. We undertake to care for the children of key/ critical workers.

If we have concerns about the impact of staff absence, for example, our DSL or first aiders we will contact the Local Authority.

### **Important Contact details**

**MASH** 020 8545 4226

**Elizabeth Fitzpatrick**, Head of School Improvement 020 8545 3806 | 07535 448600

**Ian McGraw** Safeguarding in Schools Officer 07961 808545

