

St Jude's C of E Junior School

Learning and Achieving Together with God



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Date: 17.04.20 Updated 30.09.20
Lead teacher: Vicki Chiverton
Lead Governor: Stephen Wilkinson

Context

From 20th March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - *who absolutely need to attend*. Schools and all childcare providers were also asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable. In September 2020, all children returned to school.

In case of any self-isolation or lockdowns, and we have a separate Remote Learning Policy which must be read alongside this policy.

This addendum of the St Jude's C of E Junior School Child Protection policy is in line with DfE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> and contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

Key Personnel

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is: Vicki Chiverton

Contact details: *email:* head@stjudes.surrey.sch.uk *Telephone:* 01784 432180

The deputy DSL(s) are: Emily Stanton and Pru Ashplant

Contact details: *email:* deputy@stjudes.surrey.sch.uk *Telephone:* 01784 432180

The Headteacher is: Vicki Chiverton

Contact details: *email:* head@stjudes.surrey.sch.uk *Telephone:* 01784 432180

The Chair of Governors is: Martyn Shapter

Contact details: *email:* governors@stjudes.surrey.sch.uk *Telephone:* 01784 432180

The Nominated Governor is: Stephen Wilkinson

Contact details: *email:* governors@stjudes.surrey.sch.uk *Telephone:* 01784 432180

Designated Safeguarding Leads

A member of the DSL team will always be available during school hours. In the event of a national or local lockdown or school closure, the optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, a designated senior member of staff will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include 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.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely. **Refer to [guidance Changes to Child Protection Conferences](#)**

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, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

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.

Those with an EHCP 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 the event of school closure, 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 EHCPs can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the 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.

Contact with families in the event of school closure

We will aim to have contact with every family once a week via phone, email or MS Teams call. In addition, we have drawn up a school list of vulnerable families. These families will be allocated to a DSL or the Home school Link Worker, who will contact them once a week to ensure they are well. All contact with vulnerable children and ANY concerns from ANY phone call will be recorded on CPOMS.

St Jude's school staff will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. The lead person for this will be **Mrs Chiverton**.

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 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 Mrs Chiverton will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Mrs Chiverton or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Attendance monitoring

Expectations of an Education Setting to track, identify and action non- attendance of vulnerable children and Automated Tracking Mechanism

We know that some families need more support than others and that attending education settings is an important protective factor for children receiving support. We also know that some families may over estimate their ability to cope in these extraordinary times.

All professionals need to be mindful that there will be some examples where the current COVID-19 pandemic could be used by families as a reason to avoid contact from professionals when the family may not be symptomatic and to prevent identification of safeguarding issues.

To ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep children safe and protected, the government requires all education settings to identify, through a new automated tracking mechanism, the non-attendance of **vulnerable children that are expected to attend an education setting.**

Education settings must act by notifying the local authority on the first day of non-attendance and any day following, when a vulnerable child, that is expected to attend an education setting, is absent by using the following link to the Automated Tracking Mechanism:

<https://www4.surreycc.gov.uk/social/child/absence-submission-portal/>

Education settings must continue to take action as soon as they are aware of non-attendance using first day calling and other internal tracking and follow up procedures. Education settings must continue to inform relevant agencies (including Social Work Teams) and professionals of any concerns that require a response.

Expectations of the Social Work Team response to non-attendance

The Automated Tracking Mechanism, described above, immediately alerts the Social Work Team to act in response to the child's non-attendance at the education setting. Surrey Virtual School will be informed if the child is looked after.

On receipt of an alert the social work team must act to contact the family to find out why the child hasn't attended and act to encourage them to attend if it's safe to do so.

The social work team must act to contact the education setting to further inform their assessment of the risk to the child of non-attendance.

If a child is not presenting at an education setting because they are symptomatic or self-isolating it is essential that the social worker contact the education setting and any relevant partner (including Surrey Virtual School), to action arrangements for maintaining contact with the child and agree who will contact the child and how.

It may be necessary for a Social Worker to take action by visiting the child in person to establish their wellbeing.

Keeping in touch with the child and the family during any isolation period is the responsibility of the team around that child. A clear plan for visiting (virtual or in person) must be made and acted upon by all partners. The team around the child partners must communicate to the Social Worker findings from each visit they undertake.

Due to the number of notifications, it is not possible for social care to guarantee a response time, each response time will be based on the Social Work Team's analysis of risk.

If an education setting has significant concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, the education setting should ring the child's Social Worker for an urgent discussion. If the child's social worker is not available, a discussion should be held with the Social Work Team Manager. If neither are available, contact must be made with the Social Work Service Manager. If you are not satisfied with the response you get from the Social Work Team education settings must follow the [**SSCP Inter- Agency Escalation Policy and Procedures.**](#)

Expectations of a SEND/Vulnerable Learner Team response to non- attendance

Where a child with an EHCP has a Social Worker, the process above will be followed by the Social Work Team. The Automated Tracking Mechanism, described above, will collate data for EHCP children to be sent to the Vulnerable Learners Service once a week for action. Attendance and any known history of the child will be considered by the appropriate professionals within the Vulnerable Learners Service to establish further action. The Vulnerable Learners Service will establish with the family the reasons why the child has not attended and act to encourage them to attend if it's safe to do so.

If a child is not presenting at an education setting because they are symptomatic or self-isolating it is essential that the Vulnerable Learner Service contact the education setting to inform them of this and act to establish the ongoing point of contact while the child is not attending the education setting.

Where circumstances change, the education setting should act to ensure any changes to risk are notified to the Local Authority in a timely manner (within 24 hours of being informed of the change) via the SEND Team area email address.

Children and young people who are “otherwise vulnerable” expectations on the education partnership

This cohort is defined as children and young people who have been assessed as “otherwise vulnerable” by education settings, the local authority or partner agencies; examples may include Young Carers, adopted children and/or children with mental health and wellbeing concerns.

The Vulnerable Learners Service will contact education settings to assist the identification of these children and young people.

Education settings should use their discretion to encourage the attendance of children and young people that they or partners feel would be safer by attending provision. In the case of non-attendance education settings should act to follow up with both the parent/carer and any partner agency involved to establish the reason for absence and act to encourage attendance.

The Vulnerable Learners Service will provide support to education settings to identify “otherwise vulnerable children” who do not have a Social Worker or an EHCP. The Vulnerable Learners Service will assist the setting to make arrangements with families to provide for these children and track and encourage attendance.

Where any professional continues to have concerns about the safety of a child they should email a Children’s Services Request for Support Form to cspa@surreycc.gov.uk or contact the C-SPA on 0300 470 9100.

If the school is open but working with a skeleton staff

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where it is not possible for this to be the case, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home. The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection Policy, including making a report on CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the DSLs, which will ensure that the concern is received. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the headteacher immediately. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Martyn Shapter.

Safeguarding training and induction

DSL training will not take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus. All three of St Jude’s DSLs have up to date training (renewed January 2020.)

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL should communicate with staff about any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

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. It is not anticipated that St Jude's will need to recruit new staff in the immediate future, but, in the event that this changes, St Jude's will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

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.

We will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 179 of KCSIE.

St Jude's will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 182 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.'

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

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 will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, St Jude's will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in KCSIE 2020.

Online safety in schools

St Jude's will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where students are using computers/iPads in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Children and online safety away from school

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 Child Protection Policy and, where appropriate, referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Video Calls

See our remote learning policy for further details on our use of MS Teams for learning.

The following procedure applies:

- No 1:1s – minimum of 3 pupils
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers/phones used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms or bathrooms.
- Language and behaviour must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by St Jude's to communicate with pupils.
- Staff should note the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Email communication

Pupils have now been allocated their own email address. Although most messages to pupils can be sent via the chat function in Teams, should it be necessary to contact a pupil via email, the pupil's parent will be copied in.

Supporting children not in school

St Jude's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, we will ensure that a communication plan is in place for that pupil. Details of any contact must be

recorded. That communication may take the form of email, phone or Teams and its content may also be recorded on CPOMS.

Teachers will be aware of a pupil's circumstances when setting expectations of pupils' learning where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

St Jude's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. Mrs Chiverton will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. We will refer to the government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on hand washing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

We will ensure that, where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, appropriate support is in place for them.

Staff absence

Where Mrs Chiverton has concerns about the impact of staff absence rendering the school unable to open, this will be discussed with the Chair of Governors and a decision will be taken. If the school has to close, alternative provision at another local school will be sought.

Peer on peer/child on child abuse

St Jude's recognises that, during a school closure, a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of child on child abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE 2020 and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy. We will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.