

# COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

This policy must be read in conjunction with the existing school Safeguarding Policy.

## CONTEXT

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, 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 asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. This addendum of the school Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements. We will follow:

Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers

## VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 years with education, health and care plans (EHCP). 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. Beech House will complete this and where necessary they will consult 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 an EHCP can safely remain at home.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) 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. The 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 local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The lead person for this will be: Mrs Street. 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 the school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Beech House School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. The school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

## **ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. If the school has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s)/carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

The school and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. Beech House School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Beech House School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend. To support the above, Beech House School will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Beech House School will notify their social worker and team manager.

## **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

Beech House School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSL

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr K Sartain

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Mrs C Collier & Mrs J Street

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, for example, when working from home. 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 records and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social care where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at Beech House School. It is important that all Beech House School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the 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.

## **REPORTING A CONCERN**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. If a member of staff cannot access children's safeguarding records from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Principal. This 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 Principal. If there is a requirement to make a

notification to the Principal whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Principal.

Concerns around the Principal should be directed to the LADO. The Local Authority will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

## **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND INDUCTION**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. Where new staff are recruited Beech House School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the safeguarding policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT 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, Beech House School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE). In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS identification checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact. If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:

- the individual has been subject to all safer recruitment checks set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, including an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- the individual has been subject to relevant child protection training
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

Beech House School 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 163 of KCSIE. Castle House School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

## **ONLINE SAFETY IN HOUSE SCHOOL**

Beech House School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where students are using computers 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 & Safeguarding policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the school's code of conduct.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL**

Beech House School is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its students. Beech House School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff-to pupil ratios are appropriate, to maximise safety. Beech House School 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 handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19. Beech House School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on the child's safeguarding file.

## **PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE**

Beech House School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy. The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partners required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded on the child's safeguarding record and appropriate referrals made.