Annex to Child Protection Policy - Version 3.0 (Stanborough School March 2020)

Child Protection during the COVID-19 measures

Date: September 2020
Review: Weekly

Kaz James Interim Headteacher	Judy Clements Chair of Governors

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This Annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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1 Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.   Some staff have been placed on furlough.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

2 Version control and dissemination

This is version 3.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our DSL or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis, as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website here (http://www.spsch.org/) and is made available to staff (by e-mailing the document to all staff)

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSL are and how staff and volunteers can speak to them.

3 Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

4 Current School Situation

The school initially closed and went into self-isolation on March 12th 2020. Following the government's announcement about lockdown from the 30th March, the school remained closed, as no key worker parents requested for their children to attend school. Education is delivered online by all teachers.

All staff and volunteers from outside our school will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

5 Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting 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.

6 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Child Protection Policy.

Our DSL and Deputy DSL will be available by phone and/or online video during the school day.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection is: Mrs Eileen Hussey

Contact details: email:ehussey@stanboroughpark.herts.sch.uk

Phone: 01923673268 (when school is open)

 Mobile: 07877530240 (8.30 – 5.30)

The Deputy Designated Lead is: Mrs Alicea Anderson

Contact details: email: aanderson@stanboroughpark.herts.sch.uk

Phone: 01923673268 (when school is open)

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7 Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans.

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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Those with an EHC plan 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 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 EHC plans can safely remain at home.

We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

8 Increased vulnerability or risk

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a Deputy DSL, if they have any concerns.

9 Attendance

Where a child is expected but does not attend Registration or an online lesson, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, text message, e-mail or using all the contact numbers on the school contact list, including a relative. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff and the family are not put at risk.

Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, we will notify their social worker.

10 Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures (http://www.spsch.org/) and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school, using the school's CPOMS platform, which is on the school's website.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently.

11 Staff training and induction

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

12 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.

When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy which can be found on our website.
(http://www.spsch.org/).

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.

For volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

13 Peer on peer abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Child Protection Policy, which can be accessed here (http://www.spsch.org/)

14 Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguard and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Child Protection Policy and e-Safety policy (http://www.spsch.org/)

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to the deputy DSL.

15 New children at the school

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children who join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children, we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible, it will happen as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

16 Supporting children not in school

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.