

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY IN THE EVENT OF EXTENDED CLOSURE (COVID – 19)

Written:	April 2020
Ratification and adoption:	
Next review:	April 2021

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Management Committee annually.

The policy is a newly written document in light of the Covid-19 pandemic of March 2020

It is due for review in April 2021. This policy will then be reviewed and updated annually pending changes annually.

Signature

Date

Head Teacher

Signature Date

Chair of Management Committee

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY IN THE EVENT OF EXTENDED CLOSURE (COVID – 19)

1. INTRODUCTION

Please note: This guidance has been created in response to the COVID-19 outbreak of Spring 2020. It is based on the government updated guidelines issued on 27th March 2020 and is subject to change as the situation continues. This guidance will be updated in line with any further guidance from the government or the LA.

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of any new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

Child Protection Policy in the Event of Extended Closure (Covid – 19) should be read in conjunction with:

- The Child Protection Policy
- The Behaviour Guide
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- Online Safety policy

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

‘Keeping children safe in Education’ 2019

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance to ensure that schools and colleges should continue to have regard to, as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements. Whilst we acknowledge that these are challenging times, the principles set out in KCSIE 2019 still underpin all the work we do to support children and keep them safe. These are set out below:

- With regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- If anyone in a school community has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- The Designated Safeguarding Person, or Deputies should always be available
- Unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce and/or gain access to Children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

However, during a time of extended closure during term time the following points set out how we will amend our processes. DESC will, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding so that any new policies and processes in response to any closure such as COVID-19, are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining our Child Protection Policy.

3. Child Protection Policy Procedures and the Safeguarding Team

At DESC we emphasise the importance of safeguarding. If a member of staff has a concern about a child they should act immediately, by contacting one of the Safeguarding Team. (Day to day practices relating to Safeguarding at this current time please refer to Appendix 2 and 3 of this policy).

The Safeguarding Team

- The Designated Senior Person (DSP) is Dan Griggs (Deputy Head Teacher) contacted
07950 267900
dgriggs@desc.herts.sch.uk

The Deputy Designated Senior Person(s) (DDSP) are:

- Dustin King **07958 215901**
dking@desc.herts.sch.uk
- Emma McKenna **07984 437553**
emckenna@desc.herts.sch.uk
- Jade Dixon **07562 759090**
jdixon@desc.herts.sch.uk
- Jo Olliffe **07904 359831**
jolliffe@desc.herts.sch.uk
- Lisa Allen lallen@desc.herts.sch.uk

The Safeguarding Governor is Sue Bramley.

- Sue Bramley **01442 453812**
sue.bramley@hertfordshire.gov.uk

4. REPORTING A CONCERN

It is very important that you speak to someone to pass on your concern. As a member of staff please add to CPOMS following a phone call. If you are not a member of staff and therefore do not have access to CPOMS please send your concern to Dan Griggs dgriggs@desc.herts.sch.uk.

If you have a concern about the behaviour or safety of a member of staff then please contact Dan Griggs. (The principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns).

If you have a concern about the Head Teacher this should be raised with the Chair of the Management Committee

The Chair of The Management Committee is Sara Johnson.

- Sara Johnson chair@desc.herts.sch.uk

In the event of a concern being raised procedures will follow the usual pattern as much as possible. The DSP or another member of the Safeguarding Team will direct the member of reporting staff to add the incident to CPOMS if they have not already done so.

The DSP will either call Children's Services directly or call the LADO for advice (in place of the currently closed Consultation Hub). Advice will be taken and followed accordingly.

5. SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Looked After Children

We recognise the continued importance for staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Support for Vulnerable Students

At the time of an extended closure there are 2 groups of vulnerable students:

Group 1 - those designated by the government as Vulnerable

- Children Looked After by the LA
- Children on a CP or CIN plan with a Social Worker
- Children with an EHC Plan

Group 2 - Children who are vulnerable for other reasons known to the school

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an educational 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/send their child to an educational setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the Safeguarding Team in communication with

the Social Worker will have explored the reasons directly with the parent. All professionals will ensure that it is in the best interests of the child.

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in these circumstances and should support these children to access this provision. Procedures are in place to make sure that these children and their parents/carers know that they can access school and obtain food parcels and vouchers.

Staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during an extended closure period. DSP's/DDSP's may attend CP and CIN meetings via video conferencing if needed. The centre is set up with appropriate technology to facilitate and access this effectively.

All Students will be given clear guidelines on how to access support from the school or from other services should they need it.

Due to the very nature of our setting we consider each and every one of our learners to be vulnerable. In response we have ensured that appropriate and effective safeguarding practices are put in place for all. (Please refer to Appendix 2 and 3 of this policy).

Free School Meals and PPG students

Procedures will be put in place to ensure that students still receive the provision to receive food. This could be by delivery of a weekly food parcel, food bank or supermarket vouchers and/or a school lunch. In addition food parcels courtesy of the local food bank are being distributed to families in need by the Safeguarding Team and key members of staff.

Designated Senior Person (DSPs/DDSP's)

The optimal scenario for any school or college providing care for children is to have a trained DSP or deputy available on site. DESC is no different and will always have a DSP presence on site.

6. HUB SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

Due to the very nature of our centre and our learners we will do our utmost to provide provision. However should incidents such as COVID – 19 prevent the safe running of our centre whereby we feel we can no longer safeguard both the staff and students effectively the following principles shall be applied if a Hub School setting was needed to be accessed:

Where schools and colleges collaborate and children and/or staff from multiple settings are clustered in one place, the principles in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and this guidance continue to apply. In particular, the school or college that is acting as the hub in the cluster should continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required.

7. ATTENDANCE

The school will follow guidelines from the LA and DfE with regard to recording attendance in the period of an extended closure.

In the instance of COVID-19 outbreak Spring 2020, local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

- School and social workers will be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending educational provision – and the school should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend.
- Schools should 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 college, or discontinues, the school or college should notify their social worker.

A daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school has been introduced. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

The DSP or other senior member of staff completes both the register of students and the DfE return by 12pm each day.

8. STAFF TRAINING AND INDUCTION

All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. Staff will be made aware of any new local arrangements so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school or college, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction including an up to date child protection policy and part 1 of KCSIE.

The existing school workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to closure e.g. COVID-19. The receiving school or college should judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and all they will require is a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSP and Safeguarding arrangements.

9. STUDENTS MOVING SCHOOLS OR COLLEGES

It will be important for any school or college whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable 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). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSP (or deputy) level, and likewise between Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO) 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 senior leaders will take responsibility.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinators at DESC are:

- Clare Winter (Tenzing Road) **(01442) 247476 (Option 1)**
cwinter@desc.herts.sch.uk
- Jade Dixon (Barncroft Campus) **07562 759090**
jdixon@desc.herts.sch.uk

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

10. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents. Teachers/Deliverers should be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, schools should ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Support for students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways) for example over the phone or from specialist staff or support services. All students who had more formal mental health support from school are continuing to receive contact with Link Tutors/Key Staff remoting and via phone.

Learners and parents who receive counselling will also continue to do so with their dedicated counsellor via Zoom with appointments scheduled as per usual.

11. PEER ON PEER ABUSE AND ONLINE SAFETY

Peer on Peer abuse

Given the very different circumstances schools and colleges are operating in a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform any revised approach).

Children and online safety away from school and college

During this time children's time online will increase due to extended periods at home and the need to utilise the internet for online learning. Regular updates on keeping safe on line will be sent to parents and students. All schools and colleges should be doing what they reasonably can to keep all of their children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending the school or college. 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.

All schools and colleges should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be the same principles as set out in the school's Online Safety Policy. This policy includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy applies equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

Any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

All students who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. Students have been made aware of both reporting routes back to the school or to age appropriate practical support from;

- **UK Safer Internet Centre** - to report and remove harmful online content
- **CEOP** - for advice on making a report about online abuse

In our communications with parents we will constantly reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In our communications with parents/carers we will emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable

organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- **Internet matters** - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- **London Grid for Learning** - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- **Net-aware** - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- **Parent info** - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- **Thinkuknow** - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- **UK Safer Internet Centre** - advice for parents and carers

12. REMOTE TEACHING AND COMMUNICATION

Remote Teaching and communication

During times of extended closure, we know that staff and students will miss the classroom experiences that bring teaching alive but it is also the most important time to keep hold of safeguarding guidelines. In a crisis, there are always people who will use the difficulties for their own advantage.

Online Guidance

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background
- Staff should alert parents when webcams may be used and staff should record all learning sessions so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Currently only Microsoft Teams should be used at DESC, as other platforms are either not under the control of DESC management or potentially move personal data outside of the European Union.

13. SAFER RECRUITMENT/VOLUNTEERS AND MOVEMENT OF STAFF

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.

If schools and colleges are recruiting new staff, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE.

In response to extended closures e.g. 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.

Where schools and colleges are utilising volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE.

Regarding members of the school or college workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above).

Whilst the onus remains on schools and colleges to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

Schools must continue to follow their 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).

Schools should 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. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Schools must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE. The SCR can, if a school chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in a school or college on any given day, including

any staff who may be on loan from other institutions. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

APPENDIX 1:

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION (DfE 2019)

Part One: Information for all centre staff

Annex A: Further information

On publication of policies relating to Child Protection (September 2019), the CPSLO Service have therefore decided to provide the hyperlink only to Keeping Children Safe in Education in this policy rather than the document in its entirety, due to the potential for updates to the content.

All staff should have access and have read Part one and Annex A (which provides further information specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues) of this statutory guidance. They should also have the opportunity to seek clarity from designated staff for any content.

This is to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in this guidance.

We highly recommend that staff are asked to sign to say they have read these sections (please see Appendix 2) and should subsequently be re-directed to these online documents again should any changes occur.

Link to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019:

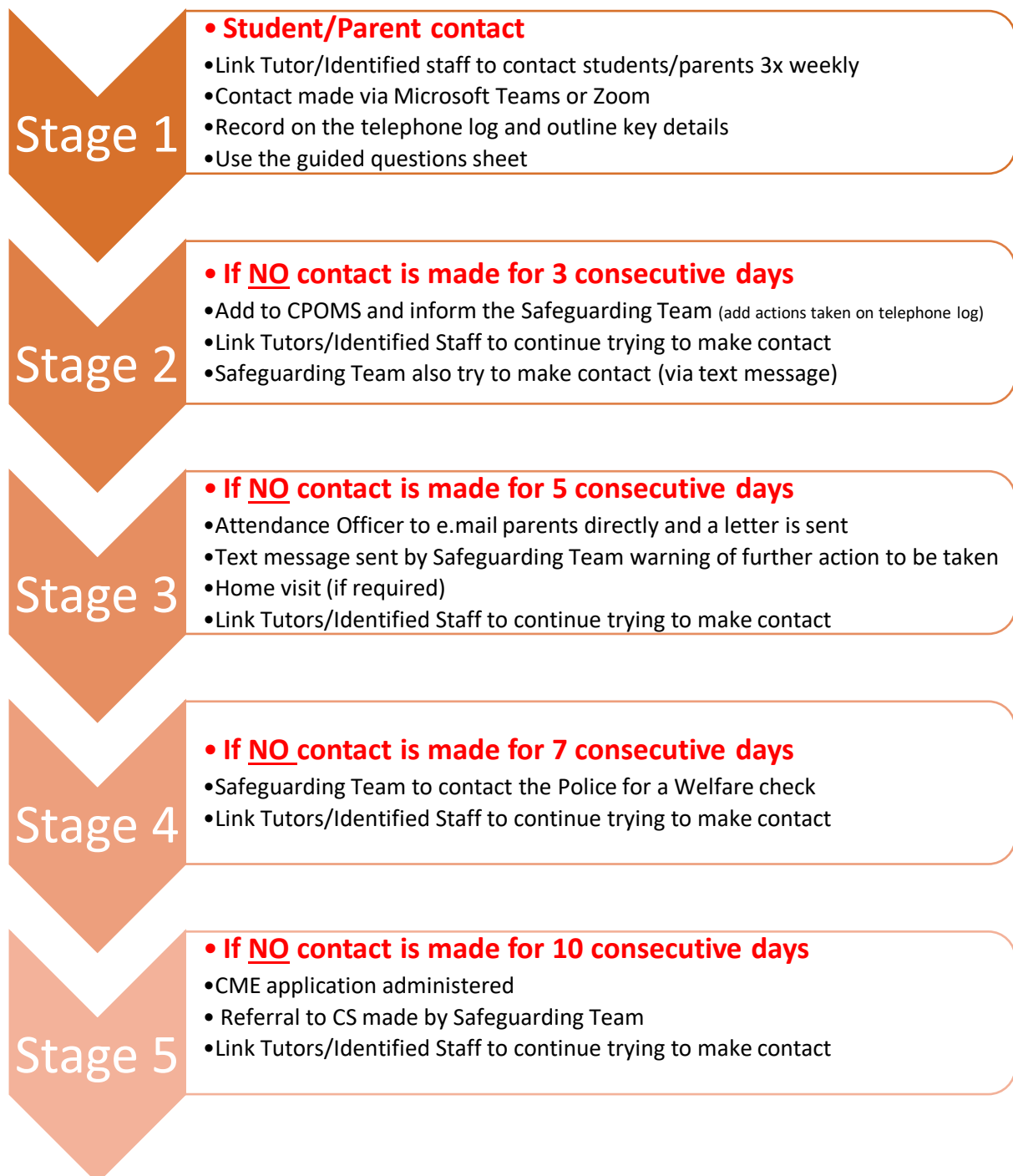
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Appendix 2

Link Tutor/Identified Staff Flowchart

When contacting learners/parents throughout the period of COVID – 19.
Keep a record of all contact made (See telephone log).

Any serious Safeguarding concerns please add to CPOMS immediately.



Appendix 3

Student/Parent Contact Flowchart

At DESC we have a statutory requirement to ensure that our learners and families remain safe throughout what is a very difficult and upsetting time. In response we need to keep lines of communication open.

Below is a flow chart that explains this process.

