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# Coronavirus (Covid-19) Safeguarding Appendix

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May 2020

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

Published 27.03.2020 DFE Guidance

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## 1. Background

This guidance is relevant to all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent (including academies, academy trusts, free schools and alternative provision academies), maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

Where the guidance refers to 'colleges' this includes all of the following:

- further education colleges
- sixth-form colleges
- institutions designated as being in the further education sector
- other further education providers, funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, such as 16 to 19 academies and independent learning providers, including special post-16 institutions.

### Key contacts at The Links Multi Academy Trust

| Role                                | Name                   | Contact Number | Email                                   |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead        | Mark Fuller            | 01727 836150   | mfuller@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk       |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead        | Sarah Stagg            | 01707 346 170  | sstagg@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk        |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Gemma Nash             | 01727 836150   | gnash@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk         |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Thomas Laud            | 01727 836150   | tlaud@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk         |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Ben Rice               | 01727 836150   | brice@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk         |
| Executive Headteacher               | David Allen            | 01727 836150   | dallen@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk        |
| Head of School                      | Matthew Slater         | 01707 346 170  | headofschool1@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk |
| Chair of Trustees                   | Maire Lynch            | 01727 856206   | head@loreto.herts.sch.uk                |
| Vice Chair of Trustees              | Justine Elbourne-Cload | 01727 857524   | head@cunninghamhall-jun.herts.sch.uk    |

|                             |                  |                     |                                |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Safeguarding Trustee</b> | <b>Ian Woods</b> | <b>07774 088225</b> | <b>irwoods@btopenworld.com</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|

## **2. Role of the local authority**

The Department for Education ( DfE) is working very closely with all local authorities to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend a school or college. The department will, via regional school commissioners, continue to support local authorities' crucial responsibilities in maintaining effective safeguarding and child protection services in this challenging time to ensure schools and colleges can access the support they need.

## **3. Safeguarding and clusters**

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. Additional advice on clusters and safeguarding will be provided in due course.

## **4. Keeping children safe in schools and colleges**

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools and colleges should continue to have regard to as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements.

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that schools and colleges are under, it remains essential that as far as possible they continue to be safe places for children. This guidance supports governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) so they can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep their children safe. It suggests where schools and colleges might consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual.

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that 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

Schools and colleges should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and

processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

## 5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS (or other electronic recording software) which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Headteacher. 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 to the headteacher. 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. Staff can also use The Links Multi Academy Trust whistleblowing policy or report concerns to the Local Authority on 03001234043.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Trustees:

|                    |
|--------------------|
| <b>Maire Lynch</b> |
|--------------------|

## 6. Child protection policy

The Links Multi Academy Trust will have an effective child protection policy in place reflecting business as usual. This appendix helps the school comply with the new arrangements in response to COVID-19. It is important DSL or deputy, wherever possible review and revise the child protection policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve. This child protection policy reflects:

- any updated advice received from *Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP)*
- <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/coronavirus-service-updates.aspx>
- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding 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
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns

- DSL (and deputy) arrangements
- the continued importance for school and college 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
- 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)
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns)
- any arrangements to support children the school or college are concerned about who do not meet the ‘vulnerable’ definition
- what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school or college safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed

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

### 7. Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)

The optimal scenario for any school or college providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case these are the options to consider:

- a trained DSL or deputy from the school or college can be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools or colleges (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)
- **Everyone is responsible for keeping children / young people safe and anyone can make a safeguarding referral, in this event any employee or volunteer is faced with an emergency please call may include updating Children Services on 03001234043 or the Police 101**

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, the department recommends a senior leader takes responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site. This means managing access to child protection files, 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.

| Named Senior Leader (s) are: | Contact details                         |
|------------------------------|---|
| David Allen                  | dallen@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk        |
| Matthew Slater               | headofschool1@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk |

|                 |                                   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Charlotte Brown | cbrown@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk  |
| Gemma Nash      | gnash@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk   |
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| Ben Rice        | brice@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk   |
| Sarah Stagg     | sstagg@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk  |
| Thomas Laud     | tlaud@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk   |

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all school and college staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

Every school and college including The Links Multi Academy Trust face unique challenges at this time. Where reasonably possible, the DSL (or deputy) should consider these in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection policy as appropriate.

## 8. Vulnerable children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans, read more in the [guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) for further information.

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 this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend provision, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.

Senior leaders, especially DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.

School and college staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the COVID-19 period.

## 9. Attendance

Local authorities and Links Academy do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Links Academy and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and Links Academy should follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Links Academy should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend. To support the above, Links Academy should take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to 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, or discontinues, Links Academy should notify their social worker.

The DfE has introduced a [daily online attendance form](#) to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. 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.

### **10. Staff training and safeguarding induction**

All existing school and college staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The important thing for staff at The Links Multi Academy Trust will be 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 Links Multi Academy Trust, they should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. An up to date child protection policy (described above) will support this process as will part 1 of KCSIE.

The existing The Links Multi Academy Trust workforce may move between schools and colleges on a temporary basis in response to 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 DSL arrangements.

### **11. Children moving schools and 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 DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs coordinators/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 senior leaders should take responsibility.

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.

## **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. If The Links Multi Academy Trust 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 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 The Links Multi Academy Trust utilises volunteers, they should continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Regarding members of The Links Multi Academy Trust 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 and colleges 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.

The Links Multi Academy Trust 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). 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school or college 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, schools and colleges 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 or college chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in The Links Multi Academy Trust 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.

### 13. Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. The department is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely.

Where they are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, The Links Multi Academy Trust should ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Our guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools (which may also be useful for colleges) sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils and 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. You can read the guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

### 14. Online safety in schools and colleges

It will be more important than ever that schools and colleges provide a safe environment, including online. Schools and colleges should continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what "appropriate" looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the school or college's IT systems or recommended resources. Schools and colleges should consider who in their institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements. The Links Multi Academy Trust should also consider what the contingency arrangements are if their IT staff become unavailable.

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>What the contingency arrangements are if their IT staff become unavailable.</b> | Refer to Ben Rice Assistant Head |
|--|----------------------------------|

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. Local authorities may also be able to provide support.

### **15. Children and online safety away from school and college**

The Links Multi Academy Trust 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.

The DfE is providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. It will set out 4 key areas that leaders should consider as part of any remote learning strategy. This includes the use of technology. Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) could help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.

The Links Multi Academy Trust should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's or college's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct). This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy should apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

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.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct. Links Academy will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- 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 the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- 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 must only use platforms provided by Links Academy to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) may help Links Academy satisfy themselves that their staff behaviour policies are robust and effective. In some areas schools and colleges may be able to seek support from their local authority / Herts for Learning when planning online lessons/activities and considering online safety.

The Links Multi Academy Trust should ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

The Links Multi Academy Trust are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should be used to 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 Links Multi Academy Trust online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents and carers, The Links Multi Academy Trust should 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

The DfE encourages schools and colleges to share this support with parents and carers

## 16. Help and support

[Advice for the education sector](#) is being updated daily.

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline, is available to answer questions.  
DfE coronavirus helpline Telephone 0800 046 8687

If you have a query about coronavirus (COVID-19), relating to schools and other educational establishments in England contact our helpline.

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.

**DfE March 27<sup>th</sup> 2020**

**Please check government website for any relevant updates on a regular basis:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

**Review date: To be reviewed at the beginning of September 2020 or earlier in response to updates from the government.**

### **Interim DfE Safeguarding Guidance: Actions Required**

- Ensure that someone is responsible for ensuring these actions are completed
- Ensure governors are aware of the Government's interim safeguarding guidance
- Ensure that someone is responsible for continuity in safeguarding leadership
- If you are a hub understand that you have the responsibility for safeguarding all children and staff

- Ensure DSL is available, in-person, by phone or video link
- Nominate a senior leader to be the onsite safeguarding lead
- Create a Coronavirus Outbreak addendum to your child protection policy to include the specific issues for these circumstances
- Ensure staff know the new arrangements for DSLs and reporting concerns
- Understand what changes there may be for contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO
- Understand what changes there may be for contacting the MASH team or other 'front door' services
- Understand what changes there may be for contacting social workers
- Know which children have social workers and how to contact them
- Know which children are LAC/PLAC, who their Virtual School Head is and how to contact them
- Know which children should be in school and follow up where they do not attend
- Ensure that emergency numbers and alternatives are kept up to date
- Ensure that there are safeguarding induction processes for new staff and volunteers
- Ensure that new staff, staff relocated to the school, and volunteers understand the staff code of conduct
- Ensure that any volunteers have been individually risk-assessed
- Ensure that each vulnerable child has an easily transferable record of why they are vulnerable,
  - a copy of the EHCP and/or CIN or CP Plan,
  - the name of their social worker and contact details, for LAC children
  - the name of the relevant Virtual School Head
- Ensure there is a record of which staff are onsite daily
- Ensure that the SCR is up to date with any relocated staff or volunteers and the checks that have been made
- Ensure that your safer recruitment processes are clear and adhered to, for example, be aware of anyone unknown to the school offering themselves as a volunteer
- Ensure that staff are aware that there may be an impact of the mental health of pupils, parents and staff or volunteers; and what support may be available
- Consider what to do if there are no IT staff available
- Ensure that the school has an online teaching and learning policy which considers safeguarding risks
- Ensure that pupils, parents and staff know how to raise any safeguarding issues that may arise during any online learning
- Ensure that SLT has a plan for how any bereavements may be handled, including obtaining any support services (not otherwise shared) See charity websites, for example, Winston's Wish, Grief Encounter, or Childhood Bereavement Network or Hope Encounter