



THINKING  
SCHOOLS  
ACADEMY TRUST

Annex to Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy  
COVID-19 changes to our Safeguarding/Child  
Protection Policy

21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 updated *version 3*

*Subject to change ensuring, we are compliant with Government guidance*

## Version control and dissemination

This is version 3 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our Head of Safeguarding 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 and is made available to staff via the Safeguard Software System.

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

## Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

## The current school position and local advice

From 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> of June if possible, schools will begin to re-open in a planned and controlled way to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community. At The Gordon Children's Academy, we will be open to years EYFS, 1 and 6, details of which have been shared with the parents and carers. During this planned return, there will be a mixture of some attendance at

school for identified year groups communicated to the parents and learning from home. This link explains the measures that will be taken

<https://youtu.be/VG347gkQ5zM>

This addendum of the The Gordon Children’s Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements. We remain committed to supporting those children and families that are most vulnerable and this includes where there may not be an allocated social worker. We continue to work together with both the Local Authority and Medway Safeguarding Childrens Partnership.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads are working together with Medway LA and are in contact with families and relevant outside agencies including Social Workers. The Head teacher/DSL will be available for the daily call/email return from the social worker administrative team. We remain committed to supporting those children and families that are most vulnerable and this includes where there may not be an allocated social worker.

### Staff training

The DSL and deputy DSLs are up to date with their training and will attend refresher training online with the Head of Safeguarding for the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

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 Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

Gordon Children’s Academy <b>Head teacher</b> <b>Mrs J Murphy</b>	Mrs M Pace <b>DSL</b> Ms R Chetty-Marston D’DSL Ms N Youseman D’DSL Mrs D Debnam D’DSL Miss H Miller D’DSL	<a href="mailto:M.Pace@tsatrust.org.uk">M.Pace@tsatrust.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:R.ChettyMarston@tsatrust.org.uk">R.ChettyMarston@tsatrust.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:N.youseman@tsatrust.org.uk">N.youseman@tsatrust.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:d.debnam@tsatrust.org.uk">d.debnam@tsatrust.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:h.miller@tsatrust.org.uk">h.miller@tsatrust.org.uk</a>
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All staff have access to the Safeguard software system used to raise, monitor and record all matters of Safeguarding. Staff will continue to use this as per normal where there are any concerns raised. The designated safeguarding leads are continuing to process these concerns as per our normal safeguarding

procedures and in line with our Safeguarding policy. The LA arrangements for referrals remains unchanged.

The DSL will also ensure that their knowledge remains up to date with other safeguarding developments for example Domestic Abuse with has seen a sharp increase during the current situation. This will be achieved through numerous routes such as the TSAT weekly bulletin, Local Authority briefings, on line training opportunities to name a few.

In accordance with Government Guidance and in view of the clarity provided, pupils with EHC plans will have a risk assessment completed and shared with parents.

The local authority designated officer are operating as usual and should a concern be raised about adults working with children, the normal robust process for managing allegations against staff will be implemented.(see also section on managing allegations below).

## **Reporting arrangements**

The school arrangements continue in line with our safeguarding child protection policy.

The Thinking Schools Academy Trusts approach ensures that there is a DSL or a deputy always available while each hub is open. All staff have access to Safeguard, the software system used to alert DSL's and deputies of any concerns raised by staff, including remotely. Where there is a concern regarding a child who is not a member of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, but attending one of our hubs, electronic/paper record of concern forms are available to staff who will then pass this on to the DSL or deputy DSL on duty. The Thinking Schools Academy Trust also have a Head of Safeguarding, Mrs Lee Lucas who is on call as well as her deputy Mrs Debbie Clarke-Basrai and who can both access Safeguard.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have regarding any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there

may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting children's services are:

For children who are at risk of immediate harm or where a clear disclosure has been made. Please call Children's Services First Response Service on 01634 334466

Should a child, in the school's view, be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure available here: [Policy](#)

### **Identifying vulnerability**

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 (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.

The DSL within our school has worked together with the Head Teacher, SENCO and relevant pastoral staff to ensure that any child who is considered vulnerable will continue to be supported. The school is open to those children where it is deemed appropriate and safer for them to attend. Consultation with the relevant professionals will have taken place with the DSL and arrangements agreed in the best interests of the child. We 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. Medway social workers will have undertaken risk assessments to determine the best interests and safety of the child.

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 DSL will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, DSL or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Any non-attendance is followed up with the parents and relevant outside agencies. Non- attendance for those children where on line learning is available or failure to supply work to staff will also be followed up in the same way using the same processes as non attendance at school. Pupils may fall into one of the following groups however this is not an exhaustive list and any child considered vulnerable and therefore benefiting from this support as deemed by the DSL and Head teacher will be offered support. This may result in telephone communication, referrals to outside agencies and relevant charities, offer of attendance at school etc.

- Looked After Children
- Previously Looked After Children
- Children subject to a child protection plan
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Children with an EHCP where their needs cannot be safely met at home.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker. Where required these children will be offered a place at school (or another school by arrangement).
- Other children the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required.

## **Supporting children in school**

All schools within the Thinking Schools Academy Trust are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. The Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. Staff 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. Any concerns about the

impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will be immediately discussed with the Head Teacher and any necessary appropriate action will be taken to ensure everyone’s safety and wellbeing.

We acknowledge that there may be an increase of support required and this will include identifying new safeguarding concerns. Staff are aware and have been given resources on the impact on mental health and seeking support for children and families.

Where children are not accessing the school site, contact will remain in place and wherever possible staff will speak directly to the child allowing opportunities to discuss concerns and any support that may be required. Such concerns will be shared by staff with the DSL in order to ensure appropriate actions and support are sought.

### **Holiday arrangements**

The Gordon Children’s Academy school will be closed during May half term.

### **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 we have any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers, that year group are now on a planned return) 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>

This information, as requested, will also be sent to Medway LA daily.

The DSL and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – any pupil that was expected to attend but who does not, will be followed up on. The same follow up process will be adhered to with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

### **Staff will be aware of increased risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a

small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay

### **Peer on peer abuse**

All staff recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

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 of the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

Staff 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 Safeguard and appropriate referrals made.

### **Risk online**

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place



- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly

## **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 Safeguarding/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 Thinking Schools Academy Trust code of conduct. Staff will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

### **TSAT Top Ten Tips for Digisafe 'Live Learning'**

1) Always follow the protocols within the ICT Acceptable Use policy and the Social Media policy

2) Always use the devices supplied by your school. Ensure that you are logged into your MS 365 account so that e-safe security can run.

3) If you are delivering a 'live' session via MS Teams, do so from a safe and appropriate place (not a bedroom) and ensure that there is a clear background. Use 'background effects' to blur or change your background.

4) Wear suitable clothing and ensure the camera angle is straight ahead, stable and focused on your head and shoulders.

5) Ensure that you will not be interrupted inappropriately by other family members.

6) Language must be professional and appropriate including any other adults or children in the vicinity.

7) If you are recording the session, make this explicit to the participants and ensure that incoming videos are turned off. Do not capture images of children.

8) When students join your live sessions, remember to use the participants window to check they are 'attendees' (see the TSAT guide steps 21-26 to remind you) - this will ensure students cannot take control of presentations or microphones. If there are any concerns about students' behaviour, follow the consequences process put in place by your senior team.

9) For over 13s you can conduct a live learning session on a 1-2-1 basis if needed, but you should record the session. At the start, record yourself seeking and obtaining consent to make the recording. The video must be stored securely and not shared.

10) If a child raises a safeguarding concern during an online session, they should be immediately directed to use the 'Report it' link on the school website front page. Staff should also record via Safeguard as well.

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

- Staff are aware of [Safe-Lessons-by-Video-and-Livestream.pdf](#) when delivering any livestreamed sessions
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#). Available as well on individual Academy websites and TSAT website.
- Parents and carers will receive information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents will be offered the following links:
  - [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 careers 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
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

## **Allegations or concerns about staff**

With such different arrangements, young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the Head Teacher/DSL. If the concern relates to the Head Teacher Mr L Miller Deputy CEO must be informed.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

Maisie Adkins (LADO Manager) [maisie.adkins@medway.gov.uk](mailto:maisie.adkins@medway.gov.uk) - 01634 336204

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address

[Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

## **Safer recruitment/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, the relevant safer recruitment processes will continue to be followed for the setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

New starters will receive an induction call by their Head teacher. They will not be required to provide support to students until school resumes, most likely tasks will be agreed with the Head teacher and will support the production of resources etc. They must read the school safeguarding/child protection policy,

the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a [written risk assessment](#) to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept of who is working in the school each day.

### **New children at the school**

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstances this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment if required, in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

### **Support from Central Services HR/Head of Safeguarding**

The Central Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively. This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction. We will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.