

## Temporary Policy Addendum: S Baran

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

This Policy addendum is effective from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Approved by the Trust Board:** G Bladon

**Date:** 4.3.21

#### Purpose

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remains *everyone's responsibility*. Consequently, everyone who comes into contact with our children, whether it is those in our settings during this period of lockdown or those students learning remotely, has a role to play in safeguarding and child protection. In doing so, all staff and volunteers should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, *what is in the best interests of the child*.

#### Context

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, The Prime Minister announced the government's roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England. This included a direction that from 8 March 2021, all pupils should attend school.

SHINE Academies will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education (as amended, Jan 2021).<sup>1</sup>

We will ensure that where we care for children on site, we have appropriate support in place for them.

We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners.

We 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 coronavirus.

This addendum of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

#### Key contacts

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/954314/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2020\\_-\\_Update\\_-\\_January\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf)

Remain as per the School Safeguarding Policy.

## Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989<sup>2</sup>, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Our trust of schools will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The DSL and inclusion lead will liaise with services where necessary.

In circumstances where a parent is hesitant about or does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and DSL for will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Our trust of schools will encourage all pupils to attend a school.

## Procedures for managing child concerns

Despite the emergency nature of the current situation, everyone in school has a role of recognising and responding to potential indicators of abuse and neglect, all action should be taken by those with statutory powers to help the child. Early contact and close liaison with such agencies are therefore regarded as essential by our school.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/17>

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that children are identified, and the appropriate agency involved if there are actual or suspected case of child abuse by adults, parents, or any other adult.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend any reviews called by the Local Authority by Skype, Teams or other means of social distancing and may call on appropriate members of staff for reports.

### **Attendance monitoring**

We expect all pupils to attend school.

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of the illness and inform us of the reason for absence so that the correct attendance codes can be used in every case of absence. We expect parents or carers to make contact to make us aware of the status of any COVID-19 tests that have become necessary and to update the school on the welfare of the pupil.

From 8th March 2021, we will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)<sup>3</sup> for all pupils.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

For children self-isolating or quarantining or shielding – we will use code X.

In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction<sup>4</sup> will provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

Also, we will offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating
- shielding
- vulnerable (and off-school)

The Department for Education expects schools to grant applications for leave in exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/923539/Remote\\_Education\\_Temporary\\_Continuity\\_Direction\\_-\\_Explanatory\\_Note.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923539/Remote_Education_Temporary_Continuity_Direction_-_Explanatory_Note.pdf)

Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be penalised.

### **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, which can be done remotely.

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 use a yellow form to report the concern to the head teacher.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter schools site, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from their current Head Teacher that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### **Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

When recruiting new staff, head teachers will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021).

Where our trust of schools are utilising volunteers for the purpose of testing, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 183. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (as amended, Jan 2021)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/954314/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2020\\_-\\_Update\\_-\\_January\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf)

## Children and online safety away from school and 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 Safeguarding and 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 SHINE Academies code of conduct.

Our trust of schools 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 if there are 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 specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

It is essential that our pupils are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate communications and online material. As such, our school ensure appropriate procedures, filters and monitoring systems are in place in accordance with the following policies:

- E-Safety
- Web Filtering and Device Monitoring.

## Harmful online hoaxes and online challenges

SHINE Academies is aware of the distressing and harmful content that can be shared by children and young people, including challenges whereby individuals may record themselves and distribute to others via videos or other means of social media content. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) sets out to **Identify, Intervene** and **escalate** concerns where necessary.

The following government guidance will support all schools with managing incidents in a professional manner:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes>

Where pupils are using school equipment at home, the ability to filter access is limited. Filtering will be provided to the extent that is possible within the technological constraints the current crisis allows.

Pupils should be reminded of Internet Safety rules and parents will be expected to manage their children's safety whilst at home.

Staff delivering teaching online will listen for any cues that indicate a safeguarding concern and report these to the DSL as soon as possible. These cues might include:

- Comments or questions about child abuse or neglect
- Inadequate supervision at home
- The impact of food poverty
- The health status in a family and any young caring responsibilities children have

Our remote learning process ensures children who are being asked to learn remotely have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school this will 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

### **Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy DSL**

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL or deputy will be available to be contacted via phone or online video.

SHINE Academies knows that whatever the scenario, it is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy.

### **Supporting children not in school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

SHINE Academies is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

SHINE Academies recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.

Teachers need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

## **Supporting children in school**

SHINE Academies is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Our schools will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish.

Schools will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing<sup>6</sup> and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19.

Our trust of schools will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS.

School staff have the responsibility to ensure appropriate support is offered to all students with respect to their mental health.

## **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Attendance leads within the trust will encourage parents to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Where an application is made, the head teacher will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school.

Where we feel that there is additional cause for concern, the DSL will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as the attendance lead becomes aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

Attendance leads will work with local authorities and, where possible, coordinate meetings with parents to seek to ensure EHE is being provided in the best interests of the child.

If a parent wants to admit their child to school, we will follow our normal processes for in-year admissions applications.

## **Contingency planning**

Senior leaders will ensure that for individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding, we follow government guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19), remote education plans.

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<sup>6</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963541/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

Our schools will continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in schools are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, we will refer to the contingency framework<sup>7</sup>, which has been updated and outlines how schools should operate in the event of any restrictions.

### **Mental Health**

Negative experiences and traumatic life events can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff are aware of this when considering the setting and expectations of pupils' work where they are learning remotely.

The DfE's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools 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 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 here](#).

Staff and safeguarding policies are aligned to Government guidance:-

[Mental health related to the Covid-19](#)

[Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

SHINE Academies recognises that during lockdown revised processes may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where schools receive a report of peer on peer abuse, the DSL will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We will listen and work with the children, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Our school staff are aware and stay alert to domestic abuse, and that the potential for domestic abuse and violence to go unseen is high. We know that many victims will have reduced or limited opportunities to share what is happening to them. We are mindful that some children, whether returning to school, or remaining at home, will have suffered the impact of domestic abuse and we will be vigilant in our professional curiosity and ask those additional questions. Our schools have created positive working relationships with Black Country Women's Aid and will continue to work closely in partnership. Operation Encompass is embedded within all schools whereby the DSL follows up all communication and formulates a support plan where necessary.

### **Helpline numbers**

NSPCC Adults Helpline 0808 800 5000 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Refuge 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

NSPCC Childline 0800 1111 <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Find your nearest foodbank [Trussell Trust](#)

Links to associated school policies and procedures

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings-excluding-universities>

Links to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</li><li>• Staff Code of Conduct</li><li>• Behaviour Policy</li><li>• Safer Recruitment/DBS policy</li><li>• E-safety Policy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SEND policy</li><li>• Allegations Against Staff (Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures)</li><li>• Anti-Bullying Policy</li><li>• Acceptable Use Policy</li></ul>