



COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy –March-July 2020

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 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.

Reporting arrangements

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

Elizabeth Challinor-Harris (Assistant Headteacher)

e.challinor@stchads.oldham.sch.uk

The Deputy DSL/s are:

Sophie Nelson (Head of School), Brandon Fletcher (Assistant Headteacher)

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The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always contactable while the school is open. All staff will be re-issued with contact details for DSL's during school closure and should report any concerns via CPOMS in line with the current policy. This will alert a (D)DSL. A reminder that urgent concerns should also be phoned through to (D)DSL.

A member of SLT will be on site/on call at all times while school closures are in operation.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about 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 the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are:

Adult.mash@oldham.gov.uk

0161 770 7777

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 executive escalation procedure.

Schools relationships with the community mean we have identified children who may be classed as 'vulnerable'

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and Social Worker, mostly involving weekly contact, phone or Zoom- Designated Teacher
- Children who have previously been Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and SW, mostly involving fortnightly contact – Class Teacher
- Children with an EHCP – Individual Risk Assessments undertaken and consultations held with parents/carers, SLT and SENCO.
- 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 individual contact plans will be agreed

Other children the school considers vulnerable.

More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. Contact arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers, SLT and DSL.

Where appropriate school will liaise with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Children in Care and those who have previously been Children in Care.

In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school.

- Children of critical workers who may attend school if no safe alternative arrangements can be made.
- Children at home – Parents have been provided with a personal 'Jotter' page, which includes daily learning and much more.....such as links to weekly English, Maths, Well-Being and Foundation Curriculum activities will be available via the school website.

The plans in respect of each child in these groups will be reviewed regularly.

Holiday arrangements

School will be open over Easter.

Attendance

The school is following the attendance guidance issued by government. Where a child is expected and does not arrive the school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child.

The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

These arrangements will only be in place for children who have enrolled and are eligible for Emergency Childcare or from June 1st, Reception, Year 1, Year 6, Key Worker children and vulnerable groups.

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.

Incidences of Domestic Abuse are expected to significantly increase during the period of isolation as perpetrators will use this time as a “tool of coercive and controlling behaviour”, and victims and their children are consistently more vulnerable during periods of societal stress see government guidance.

Operation Encompass will continue as normal with notifications being sent to the school's email address encompass@stchads.oldham.sch.uk.

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
- The school has taken on board guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and guidance for safer working practice from the Safer Recruitment Consortium.
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance
- Parents and carers have information via the website about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community.

Sites for Guidance

- Internet matters - 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 safeguarding team.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged and can be found at [The role of the LADO and the allegations management process - Safeguarding Children in Oldham](#).

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.