Covid-19 Addendum to Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy 2020 - 2021

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Contents

This addendum contains details of Seckford Education Trust's (SET) safeguarding arrangements during the COVID-19 period, following guidance issued by DfE.

1. Context

- From the beginning of the autumn term in September 2020, the majority of children will return to school full time.
- In line with public health advice, a small number of children will still be unable to attend because they will be self-isolating having had symptoms or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August 2020, subject to continued decline in the rates of community transmission of COVID-19. This means that even the small number of children who remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- Some children who are no longer required to shield but who remain under specialist care may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school, usually at their next planned clinical appointment.
- If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore, they may be temporarily absent.
- The schools will immediately offer access to remote education to any child who is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice.
- Any wider opening risk assessments and related health and safety risk assessments will appropriately take into consideration a safeguarding approach.
- All staff and volunteers will be aware of the policy addendum, which will also be made available on the schools' website.

2. Vulnerable Children

- Where there is a partial or full closure of the schools or any one school, there is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker and children of parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk.
- Vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care and those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including those with child in need plans or child protection plans, looked after children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans. School leaders may also want to include other children facing social difficulties.
- Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors.

- Eligibility for free school meals in itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.
- The 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 lead persons for this will be the schools' DSL and designated teacher for looked after children.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead Arrangements

- There will be trained DSL on site as most children return to school. In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available for contact via phone or online video, for example when working from home.
- In addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.
- The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be held remotely.

4. Supporting Children Not In School

- When children are unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, the schools will continue to follow the Safeguarding guidance for schools in the event of a school closure SOP March 2020, which outlines procedures for maintaining regular contact with students and families, including home visits where necessary.
- Where a class, group or small number of children needs to self-isolate, or there is a local lockdown requiring students to remain at home, the schools will follow the guidance outlined above and offer immediate remote education.
- For individuals or groups of self-isolating children, remote education plans will be in place. These will meet the same expectations as those for any children who cannot yet attend school at all due to COVID-19.
- We recognise that younger children and some children with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support, and so the schools will work with families to ensure the curriculum is appropriate for these children.
- Remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision.
- Annex C of the Guidance on Safeguarding and Remote Education during Coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as statutory guidance on online safety in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education provides further information.
- We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances can affect their mental health and wellbeing and that of their

parents/carers. Staff will take family wellbeing into account when setting expectations of students' work when they are at home.

- School will continue to signpost children and their parents/carers, to a range of appropriate sources of support, within school and beyond school.

5. Supporting Children in School

- School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish.
- The Head of School will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and that staff to student ratios are appropriate, to maximise safety.
- The schools will refer to the Government guidance (as set out in Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June) 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 COVID-19.
- Where the schools have concerns about the impact of the absence of staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders, the Head of School will discuss them immediately with the Executive Headteacher.
- It is recognised that staff, parents/carers and children may experience some degree of anxiety about the return to school.
- The schools will plan to develop an inclusive culture so that everyone returns to a positive working environment. Schools will refer to the DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour to help identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. Pastoral staff will be available for children and will be given the time to provide support as required.
- The schools will continue to signpost children and parents/carers, to a range of appropriate sources of support, in school and beyond school.
- The schools' PSHE curriculum will focus on mental health and wellbeing in term 1.
- The schools will complete the Safeguarding Risk Assessment (vulnerable students) available as part of its preparation for reopening https://www.reopeningschools.org/ to ensure that all children who are categorised as vulnerable are appropriately supported.

6. Reporting a Concern

- The schools will continue to use its normal referral processes for any children where it has concerns, in line with the SET Safeguarding Policy.
- The schools will continue to use its normal referral processes for any adults working with children where it has concerns, in line with the SET Safeguarding Policy.

7. Attendance Recording and Absence Monitoring

- For appropriate coding of students, the schools will follow guidance as set out in the Attendance Policy Addendum available alongside the Attendance Policy.
- Absence procedures for 'phone calls and home visits will be followed in line with the Safeguarding Guidance for Schools in the event of a school closure SOP March 2020.

8. Safeguarding Training and Induction

- 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 have missed their refresher training.
- All existing SET 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 any of the schools, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.
- All staff will maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and report any concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

9. Safer Recruitment

- 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 schools will continue to follow the safer recruitment processes in line with the SET Recruitment and Selection Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (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, which the schools will follow. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines
- Where the schools are utilising volunteers to work in regulated activity, they will continue to follow the SET Volunteer SOP in line with the SET Recruitment and Selection Policy and as set out in KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.
- If volunteers are required to complete tasks that do not involve regulated activity with children e.g. delivering food to vulnerable adults, or supporting wider community initiatives then a risk-based approach will be taken in-line with the SET Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that appropriate supervision is provided where required. The schools will contact the Seckford Foundation HR team if it has any doubt about the correct process to follow.

- The schools will continue to follow the 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 in KCSIE.
- The schools will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as in KCSIE and the TRA's Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral. During this period all referrals will be emailed to Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk
- Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the schools remains aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the schools, and is assured that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. The schools will continue to keep its single central record (SCR) up to date in line with the SET Safeguarding Policy and as outlined in KCSIE.

10. Online Safety In School

- The schools will continue to provide a safe environment including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.
- Where children are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

11. Online Safety Away From School

- It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.
- Where webinars are used for remote education, the following safeguarding issues will be considered:
    i. Language and behaviour must be professional and appropriate.
    ii. Questions and answers from both staff and students must be professional and appropriate.
    iii. Any concerns about inappropriate language, questions or answers raised in webinars from either staff or students must be referred to the Head of School.
    iv. The live webinar should be recorded and backed up elsewhere, so that if any issues were to arise, the webinar can be reviewed.
- Where live webcams are used for remote education, the following safeguarding issues will be considered:
    i. No individual teaching will take place. As far as possible, there should be no fewer than 5 students in one group or class.
    ii. The live class should be recorded and backed up elsewhere, so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.

iii. Data Controllers will reassure themselves that any teaching/learning software and/or platforms are suitable and raise no privacy issues; nor will they infringe the provider's terms and conditions (for example, there will be no business use of consumer products).

- The schools will ensure that there is an appropriate risk assessment in place.

12. Peer-on-Peer Abuse

- Where the schools receive a report of peer-on-peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and in line with the SET Safeguarding Policy.
- The schools will listen to 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 the safeguarding platform and appropriate referrals made.

13. Support from The Trust

- The SET Central Safeguarding Team will continue to provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.