**Wribbenhall School**

**Child Protection and Safeguarding: COVID-19 Addendum**



Re-Written: Spring Term 2021

Date of Next review: Spring 2021

**To be read in conjunction with:**

Child protection policy

Staff Discipline Policy and Procedure

Staff and Pupil IT acceptable use policy

Health and safety policy

Online safety policy

**Approved by:**

Proprietor: Ellis Wells

19th February 2021

# Important contacts

| * Role | * Name | * Contact details |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) | * Ellis Wells | * [ewells@wribbenhallschool.co.uk](mailto:ewells@wribbenhallschool.co.uk) * 01299 405383 * 07813 661780 |
| * Deputy DSL | * Sally Wells | * 01299 405383 * 07779 626445 |
| * Headteacher | * Ellis Wells | * [ewells@wribbenhallschool.co.uk](mailto:ewells@wribbenhallschool.co.uk) * 01299 405383 |
| * Local authority designated officer (LADO) | * LADO Team Telephone: * Matt Davies (Practice Mgr.) | * 01905 846221 * 01905 846211 |
| * Complaints Governor | * Linda Minnock | * 01299 405383 |

# Scope and definitions

On January 5th, 2021 another national lockdown was imposed, and the government is currently looking towards 8th March to reopen schools. Schools, alternative provision, special schools, and colleges will remain open to vulnerable children and children of critical workers only. All other children and students will learn remotely until February half term.

Wribbenhall School will continue to follow DfE COVID guidance (DfE COVID Safeguarding guidance) This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners: Chief Executive of Worcestershire County Council; Chief Constable of West Mercia Police; Accountable Officer for NHS South Worcestershire, NHS Wyre Forest and NHS Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)and our local authority (LA) Worcestershire Children First.

It sets out changes to our normal Child Protection Policy in light of the Department for Education’s guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>, and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education’s (DfE’s) definition of ‘vulnerable children’ includes those who:

* Have a social worker, including children:
* With a child protection plan
* Assessed as being in need
* Looked after by the local authority
* Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

# Vulnerable children

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.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. We ensure that all children with an EHC plan will have returned to school in September 2020. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support.

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

* are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, 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

# Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. Children with at least one parent or carers who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

# Core safeguarding principles

We have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) January 2021.

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

* The best interests of children must come first
* If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
* A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
* It’s essential that unsuitable people don’t enter the school workforce or gain access to children
* Children should continue to be protected when they are online

# Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children’s social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

# DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all, important contacts are listed in the ‘Important contacts’ section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) can’t be in school, they can be contacted remotely by calling 07813 661780, or the DSL email: ewells@wribbenhallschool.co.uk

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed by Wribbenhall WhatsApp as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

# Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children’s social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children and other safeguarding and welfare partners.

* We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:
* Our 3 local safeguarding partners
* The local authority about 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

# Monitoring attendance

Attendance in school is mandatory and normal attendance is required. Please refer to our Attendance Policy.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn’t attend or stops attending. In these cases we will:

* Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by Telephone and video calling. Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education’s daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. We will do this as a written request sent either by letter or email.

# Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

# Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff, governors, volunteers, visitors and supply teachers, should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

# Support for children who aren’t ‘vulnerable’ but where we have concerns

Attendance in school for children who don’t meet the Department for Education’s definition of ‘vulnerable’, but who we have safeguarding concerns about, is still mandatory. We will work with parents/carers to support attendance. If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10.1 below and continue to expect work to be completed at home and returned to school.

# Safeguarding for children not attending school

10.1 Contact plans

We expect all children to attend school. We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

* They would usually attend but have to self-isolate.

These plans set out:

* How often the school will make contact
* Which staff member(s) will make contact
* How they will make contact

We have agreed these plans with children’s social care where relevant and will review them following each contact.

If we can’t make contact, we will inform social Care, Worcestershire Children First SEND, and Police.

10.2 Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils’ mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately. In particular, if children are at home, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

# Online safety

11.1 In school

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff Discipline Policy and Procedure and Staff Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

11.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

* Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
* Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
* Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
* Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

This will be done by providing the information in email form when sending out work and links to work for the children.

# Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. If a child is at home, this will be done by use of video conferencing.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for pupils learning in school and remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children’s and adults’ mental health.

# Staff recruitment, training and induction

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that staff and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

When carrying out DBS checks and right to work checks, we will follow the latest guidance from the DBS, Home Office and Immigration Enforcement as appropriate (for example, with regards to the process for verifying documents). We will inform candidates about the intended process as soon as reasonably practicable.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren’t in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 183-188 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

# Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff, supply staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff supply staff, and volunteers will continue to receive:

* A safeguarding induction
* A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
* Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

# Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeksby Ellis Wells Proprietor.