

Addendum to Safeguarding Policy: COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Rossett School

This appendix will inform staff, students, parents and carers about their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding during the period of school closure commencing on 20 March 2020.

Key contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mr D. Royles droyles@rossettschool.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mr P. Saunders psaunders@rossettschool.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Ms C. Woolaston cwoolaston@rossettschool.co.uk

Key principles

Staff must know they may see new welfare issues presenting in young people who have been at home for an extended period. This may be identified through phone or email contact with the parent or student or may become apparent when the student eventually returns to school. In all cases, staff must use the school's existing safeguarding protocols (found in the main safeguarding policy) to handle disclosures and report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead using CPOMs. Potential emerging welfare concerns may include:

- All forms of abuse – sexual, emotional, physical and neglect;
- New mental health challenges as a result of lockdown and the pandemic;
- Exacerbated pre-existing mental health challenges;
- Domestic violence;
- Substance misuse;
- Cyber-bullying;
- Self-harm;
- Suicidal ideation.

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 policy and where appropriate, referrals will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Leads to the local authority or relevant agency.

Staff must ensure that although they may be working remotely, all safeguarding concerns must be recorded and passed on through CPOMs without delay. If a member of staff has a concern about another member of staff regarding a safeguarding issue, they will follow the protocols outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and as identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.

Vulnerable students

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 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.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We will continue to work with and support children's Social Workers to help protect vulnerable children.

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 Rossett School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Supporting students not in school and identifying newly vulnerable students

The pandemic and the aftermath will create new challenges for students and their families where they may have been none before. Rossett School will be proactive in identifying these challenges in the following ways:

- Class teachers will identify any students (regardless of whether they have been deemed vulnerable or not) who have not completed three or more pieces of work remotely and the Student Support Officer will then contact the family to check on the wellbeing of the student and attempt to remove any barriers to their learning. The non-completion of work could be an indication that there are welfare concerns arising in the household;
- Student and parent surveys will be used to identify any welfare or safeguarding concerns and respondents will be encouraged to share any changes to their circumstances which may be impacting their wellbeing;
- Face-to-face support will include either direct or remote contact with a member of the Pastoral Team who will be trained to assess for any underlying vulnerabilities that have emerged since the closure;
- Where there are issues identified during this contact the member of staff must record the issue on CPOMs for it to be picked up by the safeguarding team swiftly so that necessary action can be taken such as referral to support services.

Peer-on-peer abuse

The school will do all it can to identify and stop any peer-on-peer abuse occurring during the school closure. Students and parents will be reminded that they should refer any incidents of cyber-bullying or similar, to their Student Support Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Lead in serious cases. The school will then follow the protocols outlined in the Anti-bullying Policy. Students and parents will be given the opportunity to share their concerns using surveys and must contact the Designated Safeguarding Leads using the contacts at the start of this document.

Concerns and actions will be reported using CPOMs and appropriate referrals will be made. Parents and carers must be aware of their duty to safeguard their child whilst at home from harmful online content and should have appropriate controls in place to reduce risk to their child. More information for parents can be found here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>.

Mental health

All staff must recognise the impact of the pandemic on mental health and be aware of the signs that a student is suffering. Where students are finding learning from home difficult and this is either a cause of declining mental health or an impact of it, staff will ensure a flexible, reasonable and bespoke approach is taken to minimise the impact of excessive work demands during this period. The school will share wellbeing messages on its website and social media pages and will provide links to organisations that can support with mental health on a weekly basis. Where the school is made aware of mental health concerns in young people, the Pastoral Team will work to organise an appropriate package of support which may include:

- ✓ more regular check-ins from the Pastoral Team;
- ✓ signposting to organisations such as Kooth, Mindmate, The Go To etc;
- ✓ referrals to Just B counselling;

- ✓ liaison with CAMHs if they are involved;
- ✓ complete early help assessments to identify need and refer as appropriate;
- ✓ engage the parents and carers in a discussion about how they can support from home;
- ✓ consider if the child is sufficiently vulnerable to offer a place in school where their needs can be better met.

The school will ensure an appropriate support system for bereavement guided by NYCC Safeguarding Board.

Supporting vulnerable and key worker children in school

We will identify vulnerable and key worker children and be proactive and do all we can to ensure their attendance at school. Where students do attend, the following safeguarding protocols will be in place:

- Accurate registration will take place each morning before 10:00am using the Department for Education attendance tracking tool we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon - where students are expected to attend, and don't there will be a phone call to their parent/carer to establish their whereabouts;
- There will be a Designated Safeguarding Lead in school throughout the period of closure to act up any safeguarding concerns that arise from students who are attending school or are due to attend. They will also be responsible for monitoring CPOMs alongside the other two designated members of staff to ensure that the welfare of students not attending is also reviewed daily;
- Staff who are working with the students in school will be briefed on any important information about those students attending including to listen out for watch words or potential red flags and be made aware of the evolving nature of student welfare concerns in amongst the individual students. This handover is critical when using a rota system to ensure all members of staff are up to date with relevant safeguarding information;
- If safeguarding concerns arise from the group of students in school, the member of staff who identifies them will immediately refer them to the designated member of staff on site and record it on CPOMs.

Live lessons and remote tuition

A small number of lessons that take place may be 'live' involving students logging in to Microsoft Teams and engage remotely with the teacher as a class. There will also be a small number of remote academic and pastoral reviews which will take place remotely. The following protocols will ensure appropriate safeguarding for students and staff during these online interactions.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff. All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and report any signs of abuse.

Key protocols

- Live lessons will always include a member of staff (not a volunteer) and more than two students. Staff will not conduct a live lesson if there is only one student in attendance;
- A small number of remote academic review meetings may take place remotely on a 1:1 basis, but only with the consent of the parent/carer which will be sought in advance;
- Cameras of both staff and students will be turned off and communication will only be done using audio;
- Cameras should be off. However, in the event of a malfunction or your face being shared, staff/students must ensure they wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household who might appear on screen. Staff/students must sit in front of a neutral background or blank wall.

- Any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.
- Staff and students must report any safeguarding concerns arising from live lessons to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (see Key Contacts at the start of this document).

A full protocol document outlining the responsibilities of staff and students will be available to all participants in advance of the adoption of live lessons.

Safer recruitment/volunteers

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, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (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 to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

Where Rossett School uses volunteers, 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 who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

We 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 at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

We will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral. During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Rossett School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.