



Annex to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy: COVID-19 changes. March 2020

Context

There have been significant changes within our school following the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) across the country. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation. Despite the changes, the academy's approach to Safeguarding and Child Protection is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and should 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.

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend. Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. This addendum to our academy school Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

- 1. The current school position and local advice**
- 2. Reporting arrangements**
- 3. Key Contacts for our Academy**
- 4. Vulnerable Children**
- 5. Attendance**
- 6. Mental Health and Well-Being**
- 7. Peer on peer abuse**
- 8. Online safety**
- 9. Allegations or concerns about staff**
- 10. New staff or volunteers**
- 11. New children at the school**

March 2020

Introduction

The academy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. It will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish during a period of extraordinary uncertainty. The Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The academy will refer to the Government guidance for schools 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 COVID19.

We 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. Where we have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Spencer Academies Trust, of which the school is a member

1. Local Advice

The academy has taken account of DFE guidance and local advice in producing this addendum to the safeguarding policy. The Nottinghamshire safeguarding Children Partnership provide regular bulletins and have advised schools that despite operating in a different way, a number of important safeguarding principals remain the same;

- With regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- If anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act, and act immediately
- A DSL or deputy should be available
- It is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children.
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

2. Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our existing child protection policy. 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, or making referrals. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Principal. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. See section 9 regarding any staff concern about an adult working with children in the school – this should follow the normal arrangements contained within our academy's full Child Protection and safeguarding policy. If the concern is around the Principal, staff should refer to the Trust whistleblowing policy which can be found at <http://satrust.com/policies/>

The Spencer Academy Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations

3. Key Contacts for our Academy

Role	Name	Contact Details
Academy Roles:		
Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding (Senior DSL)	Jonathan Dakers (Assistant Principal)	jdakers@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk Safeguarding mob: 07972295698
Designated Person for Safeguarding (DSL)	Caroline Holland (Safeguarding and Well Being Lead)	cholland@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk Safeguarding mob: 07837 095068

When the school is closed for holiday periods, our out of hours contacts are the same as identified above where one of the members of staff will be contactable on the details provided.

The academy will try, wherever possible, to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where we are not able to arrange for this, due to staffing constraints, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone when working from home. In the first instance, this will be one of the academy's usual DSL team of staff but where necessary, we will use DSL trained staff from other academies within The Spencer Academy's Trust of which this academy is a part.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include

- updating and managing access to child protection files, including those in the CPOMs online information management system,
- liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and
- as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the academy

It is important that all academy staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). Each day, staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them. The DSL or one of the DSL team, will continue to engage with social workers, and represent the school at all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

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 children’s services are

External Contacts:		
Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Teacher for Children in care of the Local Authority/Post adoption/Virtual School Coordinator	Sue Denholm	0115 8040629 07946244426 sue.denholm@nottsc.gov.uk
LA Child Protection Contact/LADO	Eva Callaghan	0115 8041498 eva.callaghan@nottsc.gov.uk
Emergency Duty Team (Children’s Social Care) - Out of hours	N/A	0300 456 4546
External Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC)	N/A	prevent@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk 101 Ext 2962/2963
MASH- Nottinghamshire		0300 500 8090 www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/MASH
Children Missing Education Officer- Nottinghamshire	Glen Scruby	0115 804 1045 glen.scruby@nottsc.gov.uk
City, Children and Families Direct		0115 876 4800 candf.direct@nottinghamcity.gcsx.gov.uk
Derbyshire- Starting Point		01629 533190 www.derbyshire.gov.uk/startingpoint

4. Vulnerable Children

We have used what we know about our children and their families to identify the most vulnerable children and to consider whether they need to be able to come into the school during the period of the COVID-19 whole school closure. These children include those who have a social worker, those children and young people with education with health and care plans (EHCPs) and those on the edge of receiving children’s social care support. ¹

- **Those with an EHCP** will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents. Any other any key agencies involved in the EHCP may be called upon to inform risk assessments, such as the school nurse, or any other specific medical professionals named on the plan, promoting multi-agency decision making to decide whether those children 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. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home. Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly as decision making is subject to individual circumstances which may change over time.

¹ 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.

- There is an expectation that **children with a social worker must** attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless they have an underlying health condition that puts them at risk and/or where, in consultation with the child's social worker and family, it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. 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 school name will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.
- Where children with a social worker are not attending, contrary to advice, a school placement is likely to continue to be offered through regular communications with the parent. The academy will maintain a clear record of communication with Social Care and parents to demonstrate that it is still encouraging the parent to take up the offer of the school place, despite initial refusal. This information will be entered within CPOMs for children for whom there are child protection concerns.

The academy 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 person for this will be: Jonathan Dakers (Assistant Principal and Senior DSL).

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

Where vulnerable children are not attending school, we will make the following arrangements to keep in regular touch with those children and their families:

- The senior DSL and DSL will liaise with key members of staff to identify all vulnerable students attending the academy. This will include children who have a social worker, children and young people with education with health and care plans (EHCPs), children on the edge of receiving children's social care support and any other children that the school considers to be 'vulnerable' due to circumstances that may not have been specifically defined in the governments' guidance.
- All children identified as vulnerable will be assessed to establish the level of risk and protective factors around the individual student. The frequency of which students and their families are contacted will be dictated by this assessment.
- The school will conduct 'safe and well' checks with vulnerable students initially via telephone. Where concerns arise, the school will liaise with relevant agencies and where necessary conduct home visits.
- The school will maintain regular contact with external agencies including social workers and will work with these agencies to ensure the safety and well being of our vulnerable students.
- All contact with students, parents/carers and external agencies will be logged (on CPOMS and internal database to demonstrate frequency of contact made on a weekly basis).

5. Attendance

Whilst the school is closed as a result of COVID-19, the academy is following the government's attendance guidance. The Department for Education (DFE) has introduced daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the DFE on the number of children taking up places.

We will follow up on any children who are expected in school (including the children of key workers who have been unable to make alternative childcare arrangements). To help us do this we will ask parents/carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct – when communicating with you - and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where available. In all circumstances where a

vulnerable child with a social worker does not take up their place at school, or stops attending, we will notify their social worker.

Where a child is expected in school 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 Senior 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.

6. Mental Health and Well-Being

We know that the pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. We will be mindful of these in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Where staff become concerned about the mental health of either children or their parents and carers, they will inform the DSL about any concerns. Where children are on site, staff will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

7. Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially during whole or partial school closure. Staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people not currently attending our school. During the closure period, we may need a revised process for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles set out in our full Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, available on our website, in determining the appropriate course of action. The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

8. Online Safety

We know that children and 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.

Online safety within school

The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place where children are using technology within school

Children and online safety away from school

The majority of children will not be physically attending our school during the period of closure. We know 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 concerns should be dealt in line with our existing child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

We are aware that the DFE will be providing separate guidance on providing education remotely. This will include the use of technology.

All staff will consider the safety of children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the Trust's *Expectations and Code of Conduct* policy. This policy includes acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. We will apply this policy equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

- The risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period has been highlighted to staff and they have been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families
- The principal has directed staff to only have contact with students via Google classroom and email. The use of webcams and live streaming will not be used as part of the school's remote learning offer.
- 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.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#).
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out our approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. We would emphasise to parents/carers the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers 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

9. Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements in place, children 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.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

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 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

10. New staff or volunteers

The academy will continue to ensure that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter our workforce or gain access to children. We will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes. 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 and we are following this guidance. When using volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.

New starters will have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy and this addendum, the Expectations and Code of Conduct and the Trust whistleblowing policy. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other schools for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a risk assessment to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our child protection procedures remain robust:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- The school will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with DBS guidance.
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS, the DFE has indicated it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include risk assessment around DBS.

11. New children at the school

Where vulnerable children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DSL as to whether they have a Safeguarding File or EHCP. Any safeguarding file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. We must be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them

As a minimum, the academy will need access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan. The academy will need to know contact details for the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, the responsible Virtual School Head). For a child with an EHC plan, it is likely that information exchange will also take place at SENCO level wherever possible

Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system (CPOMs), will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child. The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will also be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.