

# Child protection during the COVID-19 measures

Annex to Child Protection policy - version 1.0 March 2020  
- version 2.0 Sept 2020

Ocean Academy

## Context

~~The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.~~

~~Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.~~

From September 2020, schools are open to all pupils and attendance is mandatory for all pupils unless a medical clinician has deemed this detrimental to that child's health.

All staff have returned to work and should only be absent in relation to COVID if they have been asked to self-isolate by a health professional or TEST and TRACE or if they themselves are symptomatic or have a positive result.

This annex to our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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## Version control and dissemination

This is version 2.0 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the academy's website here <https://www.ocean-aspirations.org/about-us/policies/> and is made available to staff by email and shared on the staff safeguarding board in the staffroom.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff can to speak to them. Each DSL and Deputy DSL are identified on posters around the academy also.

## Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school - whether they are currently at home or in attendance - continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

## Current school position

- ~~Ocean Academy is open to children of key workers and those who are vulnerable throughout term time.~~
- ~~Ocean Academy is open to children of key workers in holiday time.~~
- Ocean Academy is open to all pupils.
- At all times, designated staff make contact with vulnerable families depending on need. These members of staff are also in contact with outside professionals inc. social care, family outreach, police etc.
- Staff continue to follow all safeguarding procedures and adhere to KCSIE.
- Online safety support is emailed to parents regularly and is displayed on the school website, Twitter feed and Facebook page.
- Safeguarding induction for new members of staff and visitors is robust.

All staff attending on site from outside our school will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

## Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting 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. The current advice is below.

- Ocean Academy follow advice as it is received from relevant professionals. Updates will be added to the list below as receive:
  - [Virtual Schools](#)
  - [School Watch](#)
  - [BCP Family Information Directory](#)
  - [DFE](#)
  - [BCP Safeguarding Forum](#)

## Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If possible, our DSL and at least one deputy DSL will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video; or
- ensure we have access to the Trust's trained Safeguarding Lead by phone and/or online video.
- We have increased our number of DSLs by 3 members of staff (Total now 5) to try to ensure there is a DSL on site at all times.

Where our DSL or a deputy DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

**The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is J Quarrie** Contact

details: email: [jquarrie@ocean-aspirations.org](mailto:jquarrie@ocean-aspirations.org) tel:01202606888 **The The deputy**

**designated lead(s) is/are A Simpson**

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**The deputy designated lead(s) is/are R Richardson**

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**The deputy designated lead(s) is/are L Tharme**

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**The deputy designated lead(s) is/are C Beedie**

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## 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 or health 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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. ~~Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.~~

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed **and will come to school full time as appropriate from September 2020 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.**

**As necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians will visit school to provide any essential services. COVID restrictions and risk assessments will guide how this is put into practice. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.**

**We will welcome our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed - especially if a pupil / family has been instructed to self-isolate.**

~~Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and 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 children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and **Browne Jacobson LLP | Child protection during the COVID-19 measures |**

previously looked-after children.

We will continue to monitor the family situation for vulnerable pupils where self-isolation is enforced.

### **Increased vulnerability or risk**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work. ~~where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.~~

Our staff will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

### **Attendance**

From September 2020, all pupils are expected to attend school daily. Where this does not happen, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed. The attendance lead in school (Mrs Richardson) will contact the academy / BCP attendance worker who will give advice / contact the family.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, email. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we will undertake a home visit or ask an appropriate agency to do so. A risk assessment will be carried out before any such visit is made to ensure staff the family are not put at risk.

Where a vulnerable child does not attend school, we will notify their social worker or contact MASH for advice.

### **Reporting concerns about children or staff**

The importance of all staff acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff will continue to follow our Child Protection and safeguarding procedures <https://ocean.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/03/safeguarding-policy-2019.pdf> and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Allegations Against Staff procedures <https://ocean.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/03/safeguarding-policy-2019.pdf>

[https://ocean.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/11/3\\_634\\_aspirations-whistleblowing-policy-2019-sep-19.pdf](https://ocean.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/11/3_634_aspirations-whistleblowing-policy-2019-sep-19.pdf)

### **Staff training and induction**

Government guidance states that our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive their training due to COVID. However from September 2020, all DSLs and Deputy DSLs have received their refresher training as needed. This has been through on line courses or through our safeguarding INSET in September 2020.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

### **Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

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 our Safer Recruitment policy (this can be requested from the academy office.

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.

We are not currently accepting volunteers in our academy.

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It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which can be accessed via the academy website.

### **Online safety**

It is likely that children may be using the internet and engaging with social media during this time is having to self-isolate at any point. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which can be found on the academy website. [There is also e-safety guidance and regular updates for parents regarding e-safety.](#)

Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

### **New children at the school**

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff needs to know the information.

### **Supporting children not in school**

There may be times due to self-isolation or for medical reasons that a pupil identified as a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, will need a communication plan in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded in My Concern. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

All concerns will be recorded on My Concern.