



**Pleckgate**  
HIGH SCHOOL

## **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Pleckgate High School**

Date: 01/04/2020

Date shared with staff: 01/04/2020

### **1. Context**

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles 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 will be available at all times
- 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

From 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 is an annex to our standard safeguarding policies and details changes we will put in place during this period.

Pleckgate's expectation is that we will continue to have the usual safeguarding responsibilities for pupils that are attending school. This includes making referrals in the usual way if necessary.

For pupils who are not in school, if there are safeguarding concerns, these should be reported in the usual way through the use of CPOMs (using the usual way of making a concern detailed in the Safeguarding policy).

We will continue to try to have regular contact with families, however, it is not the role of school staff to be carrying out home visits. If necessary, this is something for the local authority and Children's Services team to consider.

This addendum of the Pleckgate Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

1. Context. Page 1
2. Key Contacts. Page 2
3. Vulnerable children. Page 3
3. Attendance monitoring. Page 3
4. Designated Safeguarding Lead. Page 4
5. Reporting a concern. Page 4
6. Safeguarding Training and induction. Page 5
7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff. Page 6
8. Online safety in schools and colleges, Children and online safety away from school and college. Page 7
9. Supporting children not in school. Page 8
10. Supporting children in school. Page 9
11. Peer on Peer Abuse. Page 9

### **Key contacts**

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Aishling McGinty

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Headteacher: Mark Cocker

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Chair of Governors: Andrea Hepplestone

## **Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker or a 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. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Pleckgate 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 Rob Hamilton/Sophia Karolia

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 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 Pleckgate will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Pleckgate will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

## **Attendance monitoring**

We do not need to complete the usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

Pleckgate and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. We will then follow up on any pupil that we expect to attend, who does not. Pleckgate will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

#### How will this look in Pleckgate?

To support the above, Pleckgate will, when communicating with parents/carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Pleckgate will notify their social worker.

The department for education has introduced a 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 department on the number of children taking up places.

This will be completed and returned to the LA daily.

#### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Pleckgate has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. They are available to be contacted by phone or email.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

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 online management system, CPOMS and 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 school or college.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

#### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this would mean making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead [rhamilton@pleckgate.com](mailto:rhamilton@pleckgate.com) the deputy DSL [amcginity@pleckgate.com](mailto:amcginity@pleckgate.com) or the Headteacher [mcocker@pleckgate.com](mailto:mcocker@pleckgate.com). This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Andrea Hepplestone by emailing [chowarth@EPT-uk.com](mailto:chowarth@EPT-uk.com) (current clerk to governors).

## **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 miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). 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 Pleckgate, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:-

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

For any movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## **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, Pleckgate will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, 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 Pleckgate are utilising 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 will 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 or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Pleckgate will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **Online safety in schools and colleges**

Pleckgate will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Smoothwall will produce a daily report of student usage of their iPads/school accounts. This is monitored daily by a member of staff and where necessary interventions are applied.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Staff should adhere to the guidance previously outlined when communicating with students remotely. Copy a Line Manager into all shared group activity and correspondences with students (google classroom, showbie, emails, etc)

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 Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct.

Pleckgate will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

**NOTE:** Staff should not be trialling new, untested software. At the moment, staff should also not be utilising any **video calling software with students**, without the permission of the Headteacher.

Below are some things for teachers to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided and recommended by Pleckgate to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online.

Students have been shared [safeguarding@pleckgate.com](mailto:safeguarding@pleckgate.com) email address. We signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

## **Supporting children not in school**

Pleckgate is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact. Pleckgate and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Pleckgate recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at Pleckgate need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

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.

### **Supporting children in school**

Pleckgate is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Pleckgate will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Pleckgate will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings 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.

Pleckgate 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.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Pleckgate recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen 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 CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.