

PRIOR PARK SCHOOLS SAFEGUARDING POLICY: Addendum: COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at The Paragon School.

Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in an educational setting and staff numbers have been reduced due to the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children whose parents/carers are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be cared for at home and those children who are vulnerable, for whom school is a safer environment.

[Advice for the education sector](#) is being updated daily, and the information provide will be used to review the provision laid out in this document.

This annex to our child protection policy sets out our revised safeguarding arrangements for:

1. Dissemination of the revised policy
2. Safeguarding priority
3. School current position
4. Local Authority advice
5. Roles and responsibilities
6. Vulnerable children
7. Attendance
8. Reporting concerns about children and staff
9. Safeguarding training
10. Online safety
11. New children at school

1. Dissemination of the revised policy

This revised policy will be reviewed weekly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL in line with updated guidance from the Department for Education. This revised policy will be made available to staff by sharing via SharePoint and updates to be emailed.

2. Safeguarding Priority

Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory guidance that the school will continue to prioritise as per our legislative duty. Safeguarding children at our school, whether they are at home or in attendance remains paramount and the following safeguarding principles remain the same:

- The best interests of children must always continue to come first
- If anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern about any child, they must act immediately
- A DSL or deputy DSL will always be available
- No unsuitable persons will be allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children
- Children will continue to be protected when they are online

3. School current position

We are currently providing childcare onsite for children of key worker children and children with an EHCP; and have offered care to children we consider vulnerable.

All staff on the rota to care for the children onsite are members of staff who have all undergone the full recruitment process and checks. All staff have also undergone the full induction process, as well as updated child protection training.

Introduction to Safeguarding and Child Protection - E-Learning

<https://bathnes.learningpool.com/login/index.php>

4. Local Authority Advice

We continue to work closely with the Bath and North East Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership (BCSSP) and will ensure this policy is consistent with their advice. This will include supporting children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer (LADO) and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Our roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in school remain as per our Safeguarding Policy.

Our DSL, or a Deputy DSL, should be on site every day. They will also be contactable at any time for staff via email, phone call or video link - using Teams.

The DSL for child protection is Sarah James

Email: sjames@priorparkschools.com

Tel: 07584 016065

The Deputy DSLs are:

Justin Ryan - jryan@priorparkschools.com

Emily Murphy - emurphy@priorparkschools.com

Gareth Millar - gmillar@priorparkschools.com

6. 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.

For children with an EHC plan school will consult with the local authority (LA) and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to attend school in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home.

Where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this and explore their reasons, directly with the parent.

All our vulnerable children will be encouraged to attend school.

Senior leaders in our school, in particular the DSL and deputy DSLs know who our most vulnerable children are and 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 for looked after and previously looked after children.

7. Attendance

School will be agreeing with families whether their children in need should be attending school and school will follow their attendance procedures with any child they were expecting to attend that fails to do so. School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend.

School will additionally register children working remotely each day and staff will follow up on any child who has not registered by contacting sjames@priorparkschools.com

School will register any child attending Key Worker Care.

8. Reporting concerns about children and staff

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures as set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, section 5, Allegations against a member of staff.

9. Safeguarding training

During COVID-19 measures, DSLs and deputy DSLs are unlikely to receive refresher training. In line with government guidance, for the duration COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL or deputy DSL who has been trained, will continue to be classed as trained.

All existing school staff have received safeguarding training and read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff or volunteers join us they will be provided with a safeguarding induction in line with our Child Protection Policy.

If staff join us from another school to support on a temporary basis, the level of safeguarding induction required will be judged on an individual basis.

In line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting they are coming from can confirm the following:

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

10. Safer recruitment

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 adhere to our Safer Recruitment Policy.

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 will continue to follow our legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are 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, we will continue to keep our single central record (SCR) up to date.

11. Online safety

It is likely that children will be spending more time than ever online and school will continue to ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems ([guidance on what 'appropriate' looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the school IT systems or recommended resources.

Staff who interact with children, including online, will continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk in line with our Child Protection Policy. Appropriate referrals will still be made to children's social care and the police via the DSL or deputy DSLs.

12. New children at school

If children from our school are attending another setting, we will provide the receiving setting with any relevant welfare and child protection information. If we are receiving children from another setting, we will secure the same level of information. This is particularly important where a child is vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for vulnerability and any existing arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, we will access 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 is and the responsible Virtual Schools Head.

Ideally this will take place before the child arrives, but if this is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchange of information will ideally happen at DSL or deputy level and likewise between special educational needs coordinators/ named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. If this is not possible, the senior leader will take responsibility.

We will continue to have due regard to data protection and GDPR legislation, but it will not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.