

Annex 1



## **Temporary Policy Addendum:**

# COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Mountfield Heath School

This Policy addendum is effective from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

School Name: Mountfield Heath School  
Policy owner: Lyndsey Jeffries  
Date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Date shared with staff: 11th January 2021

## Context

To support public health efforts to arrest the rising cases of Covid-19 (Coronavirus), on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, The Prime Minister announced a new national lockdown for England, with people instructed to "stay at home" as they did during March's first lockdown.

All primary schools, secondary schools and colleges were instructed to move to online learning. As a special school supporting vulnerable children (All students at Mountfield Heath School have an EHCP) as a provision we remain open. For those parents and carers who wish their child and/or Children to be absent from the on-site school, a reduced online programme or home learning pack will be offered bespoke to the student and or student's needs.

***"Special schools should continue to welcome and encourage pupils to attend full-time where the parent/carer wishes for their child to be able to attend. On occasion special schools may encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with vital specialist training. In these circumstances they should seek to resume as close as possible to the child or young person's specified provision as soon as possible. Pupil level risk assessments, which were used last spring, should not be used to filter children and young people in or out of attendance, but could be helpful to prioritise the provision a child or young person can get if full time provision for all is not possible.*"**

***If the parent of a special school pupil wishes for their child to be absent from school, the parent should let the school know in advance that the pupil will not be attending and that they are making an application for a leave of absence. The Department for Education expects schools to grant such applications for leaves of absence given the exceptional circumstances.***

This addendum of the Mountfield Heath School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## **Key contacts**

Remain as per the School Safeguarding Policy.

## **Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children’s social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children’s social care services or in the process of being referred to children’s services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET (‘not in employment, education or training’)
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - others at the provider and local authority’s discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a 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.

Mountfield Heath School 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: **Natalie Stevens**

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 Mountfield Heath School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

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

### **Critical workers**

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

### **Attendance monitoring**

In mainstream schools, all secondary-age pupils who are not expected to be in school, should be recorded as 'code X'.

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

Shielding advice is currently in place, all children deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

Mountfield Heath School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Mountfield Heath School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

Mountfield Heath School 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.

Phone calls will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

To support the above, Mountfield Heath School will, when communicating with parents and 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, Mountfield Heath School will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Mountfield Heath School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:** Lyndsey Jeffries

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is:** Natalie Stevens and Emma Tucker Gould

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, Sleuth 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.

Mountfield Heath School staff will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

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 includes making a report via Sleuth, which can be done remotely. This must be logged by 5pm on the day the concern is raised.

If a concern is raised out of hours, the staff member should report the concern on Sleuth and alert the Lead DSL, Headteacher or OFG Safeguarding Manager using the contacts outlined in the school safeguarding policy. If a response is not received, you must continue to exhaust all contacts in the key contact section of the school child protection policy.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their Sleuth from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher and the OFG Safeguarding Manager. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should use a yellow form to report the concern to the Headteacher.

If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally over the phone and followed up with an email to the head teacher to confirm the discussion. The OFG Safeguarding Manager must be included in this email.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors via email.

The OFG will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL should 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, at Mountfield Heath School, 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 consider 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 movement within the OFG group, schools should seek assurance from the OFG central team 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.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead training**

DSL training is unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus.

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.

### **Safer recruitment 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, Mountfield Heath School 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 (2020) (KCSIE).

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

Mountfield Heath School 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.

Mountfield Heath School 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, 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, Mountfield Heath School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

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, Mountfield Heath School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs in KCSIE (2020).

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

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

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

### **Children and online safety away from school and college**

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 staff code of conduct.

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

Below are some things to consider IF there are 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 specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

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



Mountfield Heath School 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, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on Sleuth (communication logs), as should a record of contact made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Mountfield Heath School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages via email and the school website.

Mountfield Heath School 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 Mountfield Heath School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

### **Home visits**

In the last partial school closures, some home visits were required where no contact could be made for a particular pupil or where deep concerns were in place.

The necessity for these home visits was established by the DSL/leadership by monitoring the vulnerable student calls, Sleuth safeguarding concerns and non-engagement.

The DSL will carry a template letter of authorisation signed by the Headteacher to validate essential travel. This letter should be carried by DSLs/colleagues should a home visit be required for colleagues to produce if they are stopped by police etc.

Leaders will continue to dynamically risk assess any home visit and seek advice from the OFG Safeguarding Manager or Headteacher if concerns arise around the safety of staff making the visit.

### **Supporting children in school**

Mountfield Heath School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Mountfield Heath School 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.

Mountfield Heath School 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.

Mountfield Heath School 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on their Covid PRA.

Where Mountfield Heath School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Regional Director Craig Ribbons or the OFG central team.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Mountfield Heath School 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 Sleuth and appropriate referrals made.

### **Support from the OFG central team**

The OFG Central Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

OFG will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.