

The Clere School



Annex to Child Protection Policy

COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy approved by Whole Governing Body

2nd April 2020

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL, the Deputy DSL or the Head of Year 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.

The current school position and local advice

From 20th March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and schools were asked to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response who could not be safely cared for at home. Schools and all childcare providers were also asked to provide care for children who are considered to be vulnerable.

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

Key Contacts and reporting concerns

Vulnerable Children

Supporting Children not in School

Supporting Children in School

Attendance Monitoring

Safeguarding Training and Induction

Peer on Peer Abuse

Online Safety

Allegations or concerns about staff

New Children at The School

Key Contacts and Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: [Ursula Coyle; u.coyle@clere.hants.sch.uk]

The Deputy DSL is: [Cheryl Wheeler; c.wheeler@clere.hants.sch.uk]

In addition each of the Heads of Year are DSL for their own Year Group as follows

Year 7 – Cheryl Wheeler; c.wheeler@clere.hants.sch.uk

Year 8 – Kathrine Waye; k.waye@clere.hanst.sch.uk

Year 9 – Heidi Fowler; h.fowler@clere.hants.sch.uk

Year 10 – Rebecca Vaughan; r.vaughan@clere.hants.sch.uk

Year 11 – Gary Tanner; g.tanner@clere.hants.sch.uk

The school's approach ensures the DSL or the deputy/Head of Year is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible, the DSL or Deputy DSL will be contactable and the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will email all staff by 9am to advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role together with contact details for the DSL or Deputy DSL.

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:

Hampshire Children's Services

Public phone number: 0300 555 1384

Professionals should complete the online [Interagency Referral Form](#). For urgent Child protection enquiries, professionals can phone: 01329 225379. The [FAQ](#) section includes detailed information regarding the Children's Reception Team (CRT) and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

If a professional believes a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, [significant harm](#), they should contact CRT directly using the professional's telephone number. Any telephone contact with CRT will need to be supplemented with a further [Inter Agency Referral Form \(IARF\)](#). Professionals can refer child protection concerns directly using the IARF.

The referrer should provide information, using the relevant local form, about their concerns and any information they may have gathered in an assessment that may have taken place prior to making the referral. The referrer will be asked to provide the following information:

- Details about the individual making the referral
- Details of the children, parents and or other significant adults
- The reason / nature of the concerns raised
- Any identified risk factors
- Any risk assessment tools that have been used
- The family background
- Outcome the referrer is seeking

If in any doubt and the Children's Reception Team are unable/have not responded then you must call 101 and be clear that it is a child protection concern and you are unable to reach the Children's Reception Team or if it is an emergency 999.

Identifying vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most 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 Care Plans. In addition to children who are identified by the Safeguarding team as being on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school. We will encourage our vulnerable children to attend school. We will maintain regular contact with the parents and carers of our vulnerable children. We will complete a weekly return to the Local Authority to inform them which children have attended school and any reasons for non-attendance.

We will ensure that any updated advice or arrangements from the Local Authority are followed and shared as appropriate.

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children – Currently Not Applicable
- Previously Looked After Children – Weekly phone calls home to check in
- Children subject to a child protection plan – If the Child is currently not in school the Social Worker is aware. A communication plan is in place for these children: We have an 'at least weekly' phone call with the family and check in with the child. We have made arrangements for the children to whom this applies to attend a local primary school where siblings attend. In addition we will make available of necessary transport to get the child to and from school should home become unsafe.
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker – including CiN/Early Help. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. If the Child is not presently in school the same arrangements apply as for those who are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Children with an EHCP – 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 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 with EHC Plans can safely remain at home. In addition weekly calls are made home to ensure that arrangements remain suitable.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker, or those who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school. The team of Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Leaders know who our most vulnerable children are. If the child is not presently in school the same communication plan for those who are subject to a Child Protection Plan is in place. We have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support. The Safe Guarding team will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working 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 Ursula Coyle.

In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school.

- Children of key workers who may attend school – we will continue to regularly check-in with parents to ensure that they know they can send their children into school if not doing so currently. For those children in

school The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

We 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 COVID-19.

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 and any concerns are recorded on CPOMs.

Were we have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our DSL, DDSL's, first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Local Authority.

- Children at home – Are contacted by their tutors to check in how they are getting on at least weekly. There is also the contact between pupils and subject teachers through email and SMH. The expectation is that pupils reply to these emails and parents have been made aware of this via parent mail. Where pupils have not responded the Safeguarding team in school make contact home via the telephone.

Attendance

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#). Where a child is expected and does not arrive the school will follow our usual attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL/Safeguarding Lead must be informed if not on site. We will then attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (Skype, FaceTime, through a relative etc) and if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider and then 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.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, [poverty](#), and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both [children](#) and their [parents and carers](#), informing the DSL/Head of Year about any concerns.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the [signs of peer-on-peer abuse](#), including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

We also address the issue of peer-on-peer abuse as part of our advice and guidance on keeping children safe online.

Risk online

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.

- The school continues to ensure [appropriate filters and monitors are in place](#)

- Our governing body will [review arrangements](#) to ensure they remain appropriate
- 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. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly.
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- 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 the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
 - [Internet matters](#) - 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
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements 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.

New children at the school

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This 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. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, 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 be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.