



Annex to Child Protection Policy COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

Updated January 2021

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the latest 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**
- **Contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure**
- **Children should be protected when they are online**
- **Safeguarding will continue to operate in line with statutory expectations outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020**

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 in light of Department for Education's guidance [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#) and local agencies. When school is open as normal, the school will refer to the provisions within the main Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding arrangements.

This document has been created in line with:

- DfE's Coronavirus (COVID-19):Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other provider's guidance (27th March 2020)
- DfE guidance Safeguarding and remote education during Coronavirus (COVID19)
- Guidance from Safeguarding in Education, Gloucestershire
- Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak – updated on 12th January 2021

Reporting arrangements

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Debbie Christopher

dchristopher@cirencesterkingshill.gloucs.sch.uk

Tel: 01285 651511

The Deputy DSL is: Jeremy Morland

jmorland@cirencesterkingshill.gloucs.sch.uk

Tel: 01285 651511

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always contactable while the school is open. All staff will be re-issued with contact details for DSL's during school closure and should

report any concerns via email or telephone Mrs Christopher direct. *A member of SLT will be on site at all times while school closures are in operation.*

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 the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are: **01452 426565** or by email childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Further details can be found at [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children executive escalation procedure, available here:

[Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)

Identifying vulnerability

The DfE guidance Children of Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings (8th January 2021) clearly identifies a significant number of pupils within our school who may be eligible to attend school during this lockdown. If these children do not attend school, in line with the Government requirements, they will be coded as absent and non-attendance will be followed up.

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

Where appropriate school will liaise with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Children in Care and those who have previously been Children in Care.

If the parents of these children who fall into the vulnerable category choose to keep them at home, risk assessments may be drawn up and regular contact with the pupil and parents will be maintained on a minimum of a weekly cycle.

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

- Children of at least one critical worker, may attend school if no safe alternative arrangements can be made as identified by the DfE on 8th January 2021.
- Children at home - further details below under the heading Supporting pupils at Home

Attendance

- The school is following the [School attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-attendance-guidance-for-schools)
- All pupils working at home will be coded X.
- Vulnerable children, including those with an EHCP, will be invited and encouraged to attend school. If parents choose for their child to remain at home, they will be coded as C.
- All children in school will be coded as present.
- The school will report to the DfE daily using the online form.
- Where a child is expected and does not arrive the school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family.
- If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider 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.

These arrangements will only be in place for children who have enrolled and are eligible for Emergency Childcare. For all other children school is closed.

Supporting Pupils at Home

- School will ensure that every pupil has contact information for key members of staff so they know they can raise any concerns. This message will be shared directly with pupils and with their parents via the Head's communication.
- Pupils are made aware of online safety guidance
- Pupils will have weekly contact with both their Head of Year and Tutor. They will also receive updates regarding useful support services e.g. Teens in Crisis+ and how to access this.
- Teachers will contact parents and pupils where they are not accessing their Teams lessons and will inform Heads of Year if the situation does not improve.
- For pupils on the SEND register (regardless of whether they are in school or not), a key worker will make a least weekly contact, in a few cases this may be daily contact. This and any feedback including concerns raised, will be logged.
- The contact details of the DSL and Deputy are on the school web site so parents can contact should the need arise.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance highlights that some children and young people will have been exposed to a range of trauma and adversity during the pandemic, which may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns.

The school recognises that the coronavirus pandemic may leave pupils and staff feeling anxious and concerned and will offer signposting and support as required.

- Line managers are encouraged to hold appropriately socially distanced meetings with their teams e.g. over the telephone or via Teams.
- Pupils will be provided regularly with resources that offer access to support, these will also be shared with parents.
- Pastoral staff including the Heads of Year and Christina will maintain support as deemed necessary or upon requests from parents or pupils.
- The school recognises that pressures placed on families are significant at this time and staff will pass on to the DSL any concerns they have following any communication.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

If children are not seeing trusted adults at school every day, it is even more important that staff are able to identify any child protection concerns and take appropriate action. For example, concerns may arise when:

- A staff member sees or hears something worrying during an online lesson
- A child discloses something of a safeguarding concern during a telephone call or via email.

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 about any concerns.

Incidences of Domestic Abuse are expected to significantly increase during the period of isolation as perpetrators will use this time as a “tool of coercive and controlling behaviour”, and victims and their children are consistently more vulnerable during periods of societal stress [see government guidance](#).

Operation Encompass will continue as normal with notifications being sent to the school's email address (encompass@). For further information please contact Halah Shams El-Din on 01452 328953 or by email halah.shamsel-din@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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.

- 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.
Parents and carers have information via the website about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. Parents may find the following links helpful:
 - [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [South West Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers 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 and can be found at

[The role of the LADO and the allegations management process - Safeguarding Children in Gloucestershire](#)

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.

New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- The member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- They have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- Where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment (see flowchart on

Page 40 of KCSiE 2019) to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
The school will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with [DBS guidance](#).
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by SLT of who is working in the school each day.
- 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.

This policy has been remotely approved by M.Richards (Governor with specific responsibility for Child Protection) on 17th January 2021 and is available on the school website.