QEH BRISTOL

Appendix 10

COVID-19 – Interim Safeguarding Guidance Addendum to the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
(Senior and Junior Schools)
Reviewed May 2021

1. Context

This document has been developed to reflect interim changes in practice as a result of a COVID -19 (Coronavirus) outbreak on a local level, any future school closure and to reflect site-specific arrangements at QEH.

Government guidance issued in relation to COVID-19.

The full collection is available on the government website. QEH has created this addendum to Safeguarding Policy to reflect changes made during lockdown or in the event of a further lockdown.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Nick Pursall	0117 9303061	npursall@qehbristol.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Robert Leighton	0117 9303353	rleighton@qehbristol.co.uk
	Richard Porter	0117 9303088	rporter@qehbristol.co.uk
Headmaster	Rupert Heathcote	0117 9303044	headmaster@qehbristol.co.uk
Nominated Governor for safeguarding	Caroline Bateson	0117 930 3049	bursar@qehbristol.co.uk
Chair of Governors	Paul Keen	0117 930 3049	bursar@qehbristol.co.uk

2. Return of pupils

The way which QEH is operating logistically in response to the coronavirus is different to business as usual. However, as children return to school, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- 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 should be available
- 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

3. Vulnerable children and attendance

There will be particular students who are more vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak and it is important that they are identified. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people with education, health and care (EHC).

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 by the school, 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 and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are.

QEH 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. Where it is unclear who the allocated worker is, Families in Focus will be contacted.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will be able to 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 falls into this category, the social worker and QEH will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

QEH will follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend but does not, in line with our attendance procedures.

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

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

4. Designated Safeguarding Leads

QEH has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Nick Pursall (Years 9-11).

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Robert Leighton (Years 3-8) and Richard Porter (Year 12-13 and Prevent)

It is important that all QEH staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to contact them.

If the DSL/ Deputy DSL is working from home they will be contactable by phone. These updated contact details have been made accessible to all.

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.

The safeguarding team will continue to engage with social workers, and attend any multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely. QEH will notify the safeguardingineducationteam@bristol.gov.uk if a change in DSL/Deputy has been made.

The RHSE Lead is Naomi Holcombe, and the Mental Health Lead is Rob Leighton.

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy.

Staff should be particularly vigilant on pupils return to school to identify new concerns or concerns which have become exacerbated during the period of lockdown. Staff will be given training on this.
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 report their concern directly to the Headmaster. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headmaster whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headmaster.

Concerns around the Headmaster should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

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.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). 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, or new volunteers enter QEH, 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

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.

7. 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, QEH 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 QEH 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.

QEH 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.

QEH 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 should 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, QEH will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

8. Children and online safety away from school

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 Safeguarding 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 QEH staff code of conduct.

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

QEH has issued separate guidance for distance and online learning for staff, parents and students.

Staff will be reminded of the staff code of conduct. The staff behaviour policy amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy applies equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

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

- Staff should do what they can to avoid placing themselves or a child in a vulnerable position on line, this means avoiding 1:1 interaction, unless there is no appropriate alternative. 1:1 interaction should be recorded (with the knowledge of all parties).
- 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 where possible the background should be blurred.

- Live classes should routinely 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 designated by QEH to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Whilst social distancing measures are in place it is important that settings consider utilising technology to support students in a safe way. Staff will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any concerns should be reported as soon as possible.

QEH will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. The School will complete/review a [Data Protection Impact Assessment](#) when planning to use virtual learning opportunities.

Recently published guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) , and internal guidance provided by Zak Verry can help plan online lessons and/or activities safely. Staff at QEH will take into account these steps when considering virtual learning.

9. Supporting children not in school

QEH 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 communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded in their safeguarding file, and records of contact made should be recorded on the spreadsheet. The communication plans can include; remote contact and phone contact. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

QEH 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, where appropriate, share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

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

The school counsellor will continue to support some children remotely, following the guidelines issued by their professional body and agreed with the DSL.

10. Supporting children in school

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

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

QEH 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 control measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

QEH recognises that although school is a protective factor for children and young people, in the current circumstances, attendance at school itself can cause anxiety which could affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at QEH need to be aware of this in their interactions with pupils attending school.

QEH will ensure that where we care for all children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

The school counsellor will continue to support children in a manner agreed appropriate for the individual.

11. Peer on Peer Abuse

QEH recognises that during school 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.

Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18. Some types of Peer on Peer abuse are identified through [s. 27 of KCSIE 2019](#).

Whilst many of the forms of physical harm will be reduced through social distancing, for some vulnerable learners, they may still be at risk of this. It is likely that there is a risk of peer on peer harm occurring more frequently online.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded on their safeguarding file and appropriate referrals made.