



Acorn
Education Trust

Annex to Child Protection Policy

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

27 March 2020

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our settings 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 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 Trust/School position and local advice

Acorn Education Trust Schools and nurseries are currently all open to our most vulnerable children and children of Key Workers who have no alternative child care. The school along with parents/carers will make assessments regarding attendance in school on a case by case basis of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils and students on an EHCP.

During the Easter break (including Good Friday and Easter Monday) there will be three Hubs open which can be accessed by key worker children.

We continue to take advice from Public Health England, The Department for Education and Wiltshire Local Authority regarding the changing situation in relation to Covid-19 and education.

Reporting arrangements

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Carole Godfrey, Head Teacher cg@heytesbury.wilts.sch.uk 07546 177145

If there is no School DSL/DDSL available (particularly during holidays) Acorn Education Trust's Safeguarding Lead, Jo Ronxin will assume the role of DSL and is available on ro@acorneducationtrust.com or 07787573962

The Deputy DSLs are: Mrs Caroline Bourne, cb@heytesbury.wilts.sch.uk

Acorn Education Trust has also appointed three DDSL who are as follows: Sara Edwards se@acorneducationtrust.com, Max Burr mb@acorneducationtrust.com and Stuart Porter sp@acorneducationtrust.com

The school's approach is that a DSL or a deputy is always available, either on site or by telephone.

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:

Wiltshire Multi-Safeguarding Hub (**MASH**) **0300 0456 0108** (08:45am-5pm Mon-Thurs and 8.45am -4pm Fri)

Emergency Duty Service: **0300 456 0100** (5pm – 8.45am)

If a child is in immediate danger or left alone, you should contact the police or call an ambulance immediately on **999**

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 partnership escalation procedure, available here: https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/wiltshire/p_escalation.html

Identifying vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children. This has included identifying all pupils who currently have a social worker (LAC, CP and CiN), children with a EHCP and those on FSM.

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

- Looked After Children – carers have been offered the option of the pupil attending school.
- Children subject to a child protection plan – the expectation is these children attend school daily. If they are absent the child's social worker is contacted by 9.30am.
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker – children who are described as 'Child in Need'. 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.
- Children with an EHCP - the Headteacher and SENDCo along with the parent/carer will make assessments on a case by case basis of the health and safeguarding consideration of a pupil on an EHCP. For most, they will be safer in education provision. For others, they will be safer at home.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker - where required these children will be offered a place at school.
- Other children the school considers vulnerable - more children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required.

Each of these children has an individual plan which has been shared with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Looked After and previously Looked After Children.

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

- Children of key workers who may attend school – as set out by the DfE.
- Children at home – teachers will make weekly contact for those pupils that they may have concerns about. Work is provided for all children at home.

Holiday arrangements

Acorn Education Trust will open three Hubs over the Easter Holiday for those children of Key Workers who have no alternative child care. The hubs will be based at: The Avenue School and Children's Centre, Clarendon School and Wansdyke School.

Attendance

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#) and the

Wiltshire Council Settings Attendance and Children with CiN or CP Plan (at end of this annex).

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 contact the child's social worker to report non-attendance. The DSL will attempt to contact the parent, but if necessary will arrange a home visit by 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.

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 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.

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.
- Staff should read the [20 safeguarding considerations for livestreaming](#) prior to delivering any livestreamed sessions
- 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 can be offered the following links:
 - [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
 - [London Grid for Learning](#) - 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:
01225 718079 / 01225 713945

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 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](#) 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 the **Headteacher (Karen Bannister, Angie Snelling and Janice Maunde, during the Easter holidays)** of who is working in the school each day.

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.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on 30.3.20 and is available on the school website.

Wiltshire Council

Setting attendance and children with a CiN or CP plan

'There is an expectation that vulnerable children will attend a setting, so long as it is safe for them to do so' (DfE).

Where circumstances arise, which mean that a vulnerable child does not attend a setting, the Manager/ DSL/ Childminder should take the following actions: