



COVID-19 Further changes to our Child Protection Policy

Revised May 2020

Response to COVID-19

In March 2020, a number of changes were required to our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people were now being educated at home and staffing was potentially going to be affected through illness and isolation. An annex to the School's Child Protection Policy was drawn up to reflect the changes to safeguarding at that time.

Now that the government has outlined the gradual return of children to school from 1st June 2020, we need to make additional amendments to the policy to reflect further safeguarding considerations. These are contained in this annex and based on the [guidance issued by the government on 20th May 2020](#).

As previously, 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.**

Reporting arrangements

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

Kirsti Ashman head@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk 01242 525616

The Deputy DSL/s are: Mel Richards melrichards@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk 01242 525616.

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The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always available or contactable while the school is open. This is the usual practise in school. All staff will be re-issued with contact details for DSL's during school closure and should report any concerns via internal phone call to notify that CPOMs message will be sent and CPOMs to those who need to know, in line with the current policy. This will ensure that the DSL knows about any safeguarding needs immediately. *A member of SLT will be on site at all times while school closures are in operation.*

As more children return, the DSL (or deputy) will always be available on site.

Staff and volunteers have access to the DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school. Where possible staff will try and speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff will be encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school site via school phones and devices. Under safeguarding procedures – calls should be made in school and not via personal devices unless this is approved by a Senior Leader in extreme circumstances and then staff should withhold their personal number.

If families cannot be contacted, a relative or agreed contact in our school personnel records will be contacted, then social care and/or the police will be contacted to do a home visit.

The DSL (and deputies) continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.

All schools will face unique challenges at this time, including as they welcome back more children. Where reasonably possible and where relevant, the DSL (or deputy) will consider these challenges in a child protection context.

Staff will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures 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 by staff due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Following the return of more children from 1st June, our school recognises:

- that staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following partial school closures
- we recognise that our DSL (and deputies) will need more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more children return and will allow for this
- we understand the importance of ensuring relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children (including returning children) remains accurate. In our school (led by the Headteacher/DSL or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to ask parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a child returns. 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.
- If we required we will revise our process for managing any report of peer on peer abuse given the different circumstances the school is operating in. The principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE will continue to inform any revised approach to managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.
- Our current arrangements will remain in place to keep children not physically attending the school safe, especially online.
- Staff will continue to read updated advice received from the local authority regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need
- We recognise there is continued importance for our school staff to work with and support children's social workers, the local authority virtual school head for children in care and previous children in care and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners

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

Schools relationships with the community mean we have identified children who may be classed as 'vulnerable'

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

- Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and Social Worker, mostly involving fortnightly contact
- Children who have previously been Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and SW, mostly involving fortnightly contact
- Children subject to a child protection plan/ Child in Need plan – places offered, if not taken this must be agreed by Social Worker and family. Visits will be undertaken 3 times weekly (to be agreed with Social Worker as to who will undertake these visits).
- Children with an EHCP – Individual Risk Assessments undertaken and consultations held with parents/carers, SLT and SENCO.
- 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 or individual contact plans will be agreed

More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. Contact arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers, SLT and DSL.

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.

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

- Children of critical workers who may attend school if not safe alternative arrangements can be made.
- Children at home – work packs sent home with regular updates provided by teachers. We have a school home learning page on the school website <https://hesterswayprimaryschool.co.uk/home-learning/>
- Teachers will contact parents with regards to home learning weekly or when needed

The plans in respect of each child in these groups will be reviewed regularly.

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 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.

From 1st June 2020, children in Reception, Year One and Year Six are expected to return to school. Parents and carers will however not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision.

The school will resume taking an attendance register from this date and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

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).

Mental Health

Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns. Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Where we have children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children returning to school from 1 June onwards, the school will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

The school will use guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools to help identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Support for pupils in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from specialist staff or support services.

Children in Year 6 have been asked to complete a transition survey (Pupil voice) just for Year 6's transitioning into year 7. This survey will take the children a maximum of 10mins to complete online and can be done by the children at home, or at school (if they are present as a Key Worker child or a vulnerable child.) The survey is anonymous and can be completed on any electronic device e.g. Ipad, smart phone, laptop etc.

Domestic Abuse

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@hestersway.gloucs.sch.uk. 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. 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:

- [Education for a connected world](#)
- [PSHE and Citizenship Curriculum v2](#)
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (www.ceop.police.uk)
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parental-controls-offered-your-home-internet-provider>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-technology>
- <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/age-content-ratings-apps-games/>
- Educate Against Hate is a useful government website to help parents and professionals understand the risks of children and young people being radicalised by extremists online and how to keep children and young people safe from this <http://educateagainsthate.com/>

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 Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk .

New staff or volunteers

All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 and part 5 of KCSIE. The important thing for these staff will be awareness of any new local arrangements, especially if these are being reviewed/changed as a result of more children returning, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

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 1, Part 5 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](#). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.
- 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. This will be more important than ever as more children and staff return. As such, the school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSiE.

In the event that the school needs to recruit new staff during this period, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSiE. In response to coronavirus, 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. 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 Home Office and Immigration Enforcement have also temporarily adjusted the right to work checks due to the coronavirus outbreak.

All staff and volunteers are aware of this new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy will continue to be made available publicly.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on (include date) and is available on the school website at <https://hesterswayprimaryschool.co.uk/>