



## Sacred Heart School Safeguarding Policy Annex February 2021

Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding during the national lockdown

### Statement of intent

We understand that we face a time of great uncertainty and, as a school, we are doing all we can to provide clarity and safety to the school community. This appendix includes provisions which the school will have due regard for during the coronavirus pandemic. The information in this section is under constant review and is updated to reflect changes to government and local guidance as it is released.

During the period of national lockdown, the school will allow only vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers to attend. All other pupils will not attend on-site provision and will learn remotely until February half term.

### Key definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will be utilised:

- **Children of critical workers:** critical workers are defined by the government as parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response and includes those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors as outlined below:
  - Health and social care, e.g. doctors, nurses, social workers and care workers
  - Education and childcare, e.g. teachers, DSLs and support staff
  - Key public services, e.g. the justice system, frontline workers in public services and charities
  - Local and national government, e.g. administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the coronavirus (COVID 19) response, and the delivery of and response to EU transition, as well as essential public services
  - Food and other necessary goods, e.g. those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sales and delivery
  - Public safety and national security, e.g. police and ministry of defence workers
  - Transport, e.g. those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response and EU transition
  - Utilities, communication and financial services, e.g. bankers, oil workers, and telecommunications (999 and 111 critical services and postal workers)
- **Vulnerable children:** children who:
  - Are supported by social care.
  - Are on the edge of receiving support from social care.
  - Have safeguarding and welfare needs.
  - Have child in need plans.
  - Have child protection plans.
  - Are LAC.
  - Are young carers.
  - Are disabled.
  - Have an EHC plan.
  - Are adopted.



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- Are living in temporary accommodation.
- Are at risk of becoming not in education, employment, or training (NEET).
- Are assessed as otherwise vulnerable by education providers or LAs.
- May have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study).
- Are care leavers.
- Are at the school and LA's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

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.

### **The role of the DSL and their deputies**

In light of the current pandemic, the school will have additional measures in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its pupils – this approach will be led by the DSL.

Wherever possible, the school will endeavour to have a trained DSL or their deputy on-site while pupils are attending school.

In circumstances where, due to operational challenges, it is not possible to have a trained DSL or deputy on-site, for example when working from home, a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school, or, where necessary, a partner school, will be available to be contacted via phone or online video.

Where a DSL or deputy are unavailable, e.g. due to illness, a member of the SLT will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding within the school. Their role will include:

- Updating and managing access to child protection files.
- Liaising with the offsite DSL or deputy.
- Liaising with children's social care services where required.

During the national lockdown, the DSL and their deputy will be responsible for:

- Sharing their time and resources with other schools, where necessary.
- Ensuring staff are kept up-to-date with the latest safeguarding information and developments, including via the safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.
- Being responsible for amending Appendix A (this section) in line with the continual changes to education policy released by the DfE and communicating all changes to staff and volunteers.
- Working with the VSH and wider LA to protect vulnerable children.
- Providing support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with pupils at home and their families.
- Ensuring staff are aware of reporting channels for safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring there is a consistent approach to safeguarding children throughout the coronavirus pandemic.
- Speaking to pupils directly where possible to identify any concerns and ensuring pupils are provided with clear communication channels so they can report any concerns they have, including reports of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Providing all volunteers and volunteer staff with copies of this policy.



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- Identifying a suitable member of the SLT to assume the role of temporary DSL should both themselves and their deputies become unable to work, e.g. due to illness.
- Sharing their contact information with the school community.
- Identifying vulnerable children and communicating additional safeguarding provisions to pupils and their families.

The DSL will report back to the governing board on all relevant safeguarding concerns.

The DSL will work with the local safeguarding partners to ensure pupils remain safe during the national lockdown.

Where pupils are required to return to remote learning, e.g. they must self-isolate or the school is required to limit attendance, the DSL will ensure that they, and other members of staff, exercise extra vigilance to ensure pupils remain safe while learning at home.

The school will ensure that the DSL and their deputies are given sufficient time and assistance to support staff and pupils with new safeguarding and welfare concerns and to handle referrals to relevant agencies where appropriate.

All online or telephone communication will be made using school accounts or telephone numbers. If any staff need to use their personal number, this is withheld.

### **Attendance**

From 8 March 2021, attendance will be mandatory and the school will have the power to issue fines for unauthorised absence – this will only be used as a last resort.

The school will resume its regular attendance register to record attendance after fully opening.

The school will follow up on absences of pupils who are expected to be in school but where a parent wishes for their child to be absent. The DSL or deputy DSL will discuss any concerns parents may have and work with them to achieve the best possible outcome for the pupil.

Parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school due to following clinical or public health advice to stay at home. Pupils will engage in remote learning where they are unable to attend school for reasons related to coronavirus, provided they are well enough to do so.

For those pupils not attending the school premises and learning remotely at home, the school will ensure that appropriate systems for checking attendance and levels of pupil engagement each day are in place, and work with parents to rapidly identify effective solutions where engagement is a concern.

The school will ensure that all pupils' emergency contact information is correct and encourage parents to provide as many contact numbers as possible.

If the school must limit attendance at any point, e.g. due to a local increase in coronavirus cases, in line with DfE restrictions, the school will ensure that priority to attend full time is given to vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers.



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### **Staff training and safeguarding induction**

The school will ensure that all existing school staff have read part one of the most up-to-date version 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE) and are suitably trained in this policy and any local safeguarding arrangements.

The DSL and headteacher will risk assess any volunteers or staff from other schools to determine their suitability to work with children.

Under no circumstances will volunteers who have not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The DSL and headteacher will ensure any volunteers or staff from other schools are suitably trained in safeguarding and ensure that they have read the relevant sections of KCSIE, are aware of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, and any additional local safeguarding arrangements.

The DSL and headteacher will use their professional judgement to assess how much additional safeguarding training temporary staff or volunteers require.

The school will follow safer recruitment processes, in line with the relevant policies, when acquiring new staff.

New staff or volunteers will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction and the most up-to-date copy of this policy.

Individuals who have not undergone suitable DBS checks will not be left unattended with pupils.

The school will carry out a check on any existing staff who cause a concern.

All staff will receive updates from the DSL regarding confirmation of local safeguarding processes and confirmation of the DSL and their deputy's arrangements, e.g. working schedule and contact information.

The school will report individuals who they consider a safeguarding risk to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) – all referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered but hearings may not be scheduled for the current time.

During the period of partial closure, the school will have a system which allows the headteacher to be aware of who will be in school at any one given time.

The school will ensure the SCR is kept up-to-date in line with KCSIE. The SCR will be used as a record of attendance for staff and volunteers as well as a log of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from other schools.

### **Online safety and security**

The school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect pupils when they are online on the school's IT systems, whether in school or at home.



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All online programmes used will be checked by the school's DPO and DSL to ensure they are reputable and GDPR compliant.

The ICT technician will work to ensure any loaned devices are secure and have the necessary antivirus malware protection downloaded.

Any online queries which require the ICT technician will be addressed over the phone or online as much as possible – face-to-face contact is kept to a minimum.

Where the ICT technician is unavailable, the school will seek the support of other ICT staff, either internally or from another school.

The DSL will report back to the governing board how they are ensuring pupils remain safe online during partial school closure.

Pupils will report any suspicious online activity they encounter to the DSL or headteacher.

Staff will adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct at all times when delivering education online.

Staff will continue to look out for signs of a child being at risk online and report concerns over a pupil's safety online to the DSL. Where relevant, the DSL will make referrals to the police and children's social care.

The school will collaborate with parents to reinforce the importance of online safety, and encourage parents to set age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites.

Pupils will be provided with useful information and contact details of individuals and organisations they can turn to should they feel unsafe online, e.g. Childline or the UK Safer Internet Centre.

### **Mental health and pastoral care**

The school understands how the coronavirus pandemic can cause pupils and staff to feel anxious and concerned and will offer any essential support required to those in need.

Staff will be aware that some pupils may return to school having experienced difficulties over the period of lockdown, including bereavement, mental illness and welfare harms, and will be vigilant with regards to indicators that a pupil requires support.

Pupils will be provided with different resources they can access to help them cope with their mental health, including Childline and other online services.

Face-to-face support will only be provided where two-metre social distancing can be adhered to.

The school will have due regard for the Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy when identifying early signs of mental health issues in pupils.

Teachers will have due regard for the negative impact the current pandemic may have had on pupils, especially when setting expectations for pupils' work.



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Pastoral support will be offered to any family who requires it.

The school will utilise funding from the DfE's Wellbeing for Education Return programme.

For pupils who are receiving education at home, the school will follow set timetables to provide parents and pupils with a familiar structure that includes time for education, playing and relaxing.

The school will consider one-to-one support for those who may benefit the most from it, e.g. for pupils with SEND.

### **Remote education**

Teachers will plan online lessons with the safety of pupils in mind.

Staff communicating with pupils or parents via videocall will do so from within the school, or from a quiet room with a neutral background if working from home.

Teachers will ensure all online planning processes for pupils who are working online will have clear reporting routes to the school and external agencies so they can raise concerns whilst online.

The school will collaborate with the LA where possible when planning online lessons and activities, and considering online safety.

The DSL will ensure every pupil has their contact information so they know how they can contact them about any safeguarding concern.

Pupils will be provided with online safety information by their teacher.

Pupils will be directed to practical online support, such as Childline, where they feel unsafe and require support outside of school.

Parents will be given a list of websites their child may access and any information regarding online sessions with staff that their child will be participating in.

Parents will be provided with the contact details of the DSL so they can report any concerns.

When communicating online, staff will:

- Communicate within school hours as much as possible.
- Communicate through the school channels approved by the SLT.
- Use school email accounts over personal accounts wherever possible.
- Use school devices over personal devices wherever possible.
- Not share personal information.

### **Peer-on-peer abuse**

The DSL will implement robust reporting procedures for peer-on-peer abuse and communicate these to all staff, pupils and parents.



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Reports made regarding peer-on-peer abuse will be risk assessed by the DSL on a case-by-case basis and, where required, investigated immediately and reported to the relevant authority, e.g. the police or children's social care services (CSCS) where required.

Both the alleged perpetrator and victim will be provided with support whilst the report is being investigated.

Pupils will be provided with the contact details of relevant bodies who can provide support to them during this time, e.g. Childline.

The DSL will keep the victim, the alleged perpetrator and their families up-to-date where necessary with details of the investigation, including the conclusion and how appeals can be made.

Individuals will be given a copy of the school's amended Complaints Procedures Policy to assist them with the appeals process.

Communications will be made online or by telephone unless face-to-face contact is unavoidable.

### **Pupils moving schools**

Where school pupils are moving to another setting, the school will continue to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

The DSL will ensure that the receiving school has access to pupils' EHC plans, child in need plans, child protection plans or, for LAC, their personal education plan, and is informed who the child's social worker is (and, for LAC, who the responsible VSH is).

### **Monitoring and review**

The DSL will be responsible for continually monitoring DfE updates and updating this appendix in line with any government guidance changes and up-to-date guidance from the local safeguarding partners.

Any changes to this appendix will be communicated to all staff, parents and relevant stakeholders.