



## **Annex to Child Protection policy – version 1.3**

### **Child protection during the COVID-19 measures**

#### **Context**

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This Annex to our Child Protection policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

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#### **Version control and dissemination**

This is version 1.2 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our DSL or a deputy DSL on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website here and is made available to staff by email

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can speak to them.

## Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

## Current school position

*Montpelier Primary School is currently open for children of our key workers families; our vulnerable pupils including: children on an EHCP, children who have a social worker and our young carers. We are open for those pupils who wished to return to school from Year 6, Year 1 and Foundation. A reduced number of staff (teachers, teaching assistants and non – teaching staff) are working at school whilst the remaining staff are working from home. Montpelier Primary School provides online learning using Google slides and regular opportunity to meet their class teacher through a virtual classroom environment. The links to access that learning have been emailed to parent's email address. The links can also be found on the school website.*

All staff and volunteers attending on site from outside our school will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of safeguarding risks and know how to act if they have concerns.

## Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our three safeguarding partners, and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting 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. The current advice is below.

*Identify pupils who we think may be at particular risk during school closure and outline how we can support them.  
Identify how our school plans for early identification of any other children who may become vulnerable during the period of school closure  
This information will be gathered and presented to the Local authority  
To continue to work with all three of our safeguarding partners*

## Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding in our school remain in line with our Child Protection Policy.

If possible, our DSL or at least one deputy DSL will be available on site during the school day. Where this is not possible, we will:

- have a trained DSL or deputy DSL available by phone and/or online video; or
- ensure we have access to a trained DSL or deputy DSL from another school or college by phone and/or online video.

Where our DSL or a deputy DSL cannot be on site, then in addition to one of the above options we will also ensure a senior leader from the school takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

**The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for child protection is Tracy Spragg**

Contact details: email: [tracyspragg@mpsplymouth.net](mailto:tracyspragg@mpsplymouth.net) 01752216160

**The deputy designated lead(s) are Aaron West and Sam Hunter**

Contact details: email: [aaronwest@mpsplymouth.net](mailto:aaronwest@mpsplymouth.net) 01752216160

Contact details: email: [samhunter@mpsplymouth.net](mailto:samhunter@mpsplymouth.net) 01752216160

**Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker, those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans and those children who are young carers.

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.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend school, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed 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.

We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Senior leaders in our school, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are, and they have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We will continue to work with children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. To do this we will ensure that the DSL, DDSL or a member of our inclusion team attend, all meetings arranged by any of our safeguarding partners, whether by conference call or video link. A record will be kept of any conference calls or

video link made from a member of staff's home address and how that call ensured confidentiality in the home location.

### **Increased vulnerability or risk**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

### **Attendance**

Where a child is expected but does not arrive at school, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed.

The DSL or a deputy will attempt to contact the parents through various methods, such as telephone, FaceTime, Skype or by contact a relative in the first instance. If contact cannot be made or if the DSL or a deputy DSL deems it necessary, we ask an appropriate agency to do so.

Where a vulnerable child does not take up their place, we will notify their social worker.

### **Reporting concerns about children or staff**

The importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff and volunteers will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures and advise the DSL or DDSL of any concerns they have about any child, including those who are not attending school.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that children may face from staff or volunteers. As such, it remains extremely important that any allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers attending our school are dealt with thoroughly and efficiently and in accordance with our school policy.

### **Staff training and induction**

For the duration of the COVID-19 measures, our DSL and deputy DSLs are unlikely to receive their refresher training. In line with government guidance, our trained DSLs and deputy DSLs will be classed as trained even if they cannot receive this training.

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any caused for concern

- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

### **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, we will continue to follow our Safer Recruitment policy.

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.

For volunteers we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to engage in regulated activity.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers are on our school site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness

### **Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and will follow the process set out in our Child Protection Policy.

### **Online safety**

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

On all of our home learning slides, children and parents are reminded of:

*Remember to always follow our e-safety rules when you are doing any home learning that involves being online*

*Ask an adult's permission before going online.*

*If you see anything that upsets you tell a trusted adult.*

*Only talk to people you know when you are online.*

*If you need help or are worried you can contact  
Childline on 08001111*

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in our Child Protection Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct including reminding staff that they will not be interacting with children on line. All staff will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

### **Remote Learning**

When recording stories or lesson from home, staff will need to assess any risks and take appropriate actions to minimise harm. Things to consider including where is the recording taking place? Teachers should be in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background.

Staff should always make sure that any learning platform, website links or Apps used are suitable for the children's age group. Teachers' will not use personal accounts and must check the privacy settings.

When organising any Google Meets with pupils, staff should:

- Be mindful that the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education continue to apply at all times. Familiarise yourself with the revised arrangements outlined in the new addendum to Montpelier Primary School's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
- Consider and apply the principles outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct and the Acceptable User policy which underpin the safety of children and staff working online.
- Apply the principles of data protection and ensure that you are safeguarding pupil's information particularly during online meetings.

All meetings should be recorded and parents informed that the meeting will be recorded. Contact should be made through school provide email addresses

Recording should be kept in the google drive folder called C19 / Pupil Meetings

Meetings should be conducted within the normal hours of the working day (8.30am - 5.30pm)

Only the teacher must set up the meeting: staff do not join a meeting set up by a pupil

The purpose of a meeting is to facilitate pupil discussion and interaction

If you wish to use Google Classroom, please email details to the Admin Team and they will set up the meeting invitations to Parents through email.

The location of the meeting should be considered. Teachers should be in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard.

Staff will need to ensure that they make contact with the pupil's supervising adult at the start of the meeting so that they are aware that the meeting has started.

Ensure that professional standards are maintained at all times. For instance:

- ensure that you are dressed appropriately,
- the visual background of your workstation is as neutral as possible
- a classroom standard of behaviour is expected and practised by all participants.
- Other members of your household should not be present during these meetings (e.g another adult, not a staff member; your children)

There should usually be a minimum of 2 school staff on any online meeting. However, on occasions when 1:1 ( teacher / child) meetings are arranged the second adult could be a parent/carer.

Be prepared for the meeting; have a list of items you wish to discuss and work through the list. Make clear at the beginning the purpose of the meeting.

Always apply the principles set out in the Staff Code of Conduct.

Be clear and concise and ensure the child (and/or parent/carer) understands your questions.

Make notes of responses and any actions required as a result of the meeting.

If you think the child with whom you are communicating may be at risk or if you become aware of any safeguarding or other concerns, report immediately using the normal channels as detailed in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and log your concern on CPOMS.

Plymouth Gateway Service can be contacted on 01752 668000; select Option 1 – Children's Services.

Alternatively, you can email the Plymouth Gateway Service at: [gateway@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:gateway@plymouth.gov.uk).

You can also contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. If a child, young person or an adult is at immediate risk of harm, please contact 999.

Ensure that the pupils understand how to report any concerns that might arise when they are working online

### **New children at the school**

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

### **Supporting children not in school**

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in school, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that child. Details of that plan will be recorded on CPOMS for that child. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

### **Children at home**

The school will maintain contact with children who are not yet returning to school. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify concerns.

When contacting pupils we will:

- Staff will follow the staff code of conduct
- Use parents' or carers' email addresses or phone numbers to communicate with children, unless this poses a safeguarding risk.
- Use school accounts to communicate via email or online platforms, never teachers' personal accounts.
- Phone calls will be made, where possible, from school during the working office time, and preferably in the administrative area of the school. This will ensure that family' contact details at home comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. All calls will automatically be recorded. A record of any phone call made from a member of staff's home location will be made. If staff use a personal phone they will withhold their personal number
- A brief summary of the conversation will be kept where there are safeguarding concerns and recorded on CPOMS

Children and young people may be worried about the impact of coronavirus, social distancing or self-isolation. Those who already have mental health difficulties such as anxiety might be finding things particularly tough. Where possible, we will continue to offer support for pupil's mental health. Parents will be directed to our home learning slides on wellbeing which are updated regularly or to further professional support.



We will also tell children and parents where they can go if they are worried about anything or need to talk to someone while school is closed.

*Childline and the NSPCC provides a range of online tools that young people might find helpful:*

- *information about coronavirus*
- *Calm Zone – activities to help let go of stress*
- *games to help take your mind off things*
- *information and advice on a range of topics including feelings, relationships, family and schools*
- *peer support message boards - Childline Kids, our website for under 12s.*

*Childline can also give confidential help and advice.*

Calls to 0800 1111 are free or children can get support online.

### **Children returning to school**

The DSL or DDSL will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before the child returns.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see the pupils in person. They will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupil's mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed.