

SAFEGUARDING POLICY - APPENDIX - April 2020

Interim Safeguarding Arrangements During School Closure due to Coronavirus.

Introduction

It remains essential that we continue to be a safe place for pupils during this period of uncertainty.

This guidance is designed to reassure the whole school community that we will continue to have appropriate regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2019) and will promote the welfare of all our pupils during this time.

Our Safeguarding Policy will be followed at all times.

- The best interests of children will continue to be our priority.
- If anyone in school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act immediately in line with existing expectations and procedure.
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy (DDSL) will always be available.
- Safer working practices will be maintained at all times

Presently we are continuing to provide care for a limited number of children, these are children whose parents/carers are critical to the COVID-19 response (keyworkers) and cannot be safely cared for at home.

As well as safeguarding the children who are being looked after in school, the welfare of children not in school will remain unchanged.

This document is an appendix to our more detailed Safeguarding Policy which still contains relevant. The details and information on recognising and responding to abuse and continues to be a source of reference.

As a school and in line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) we are committed to working in partnership with Stockport Local Authority and Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership and, where families reside outside Stockport, with other Local Authorities and Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.

We will ensure that a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is available to support staff or parents where they have concerns about a child.

Where we believe a child is at risk of significant harm or danger, the DSL or Deputy DSL will refer our concerns (by phone in the first instance) to Children's Social Care and follow our school Safeguarding Policy.

Child protection referrals to the Stockport Multi-agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) will be made via phone. The online referral will not be operating from 30.03.2020 until further notice. All referrals should be made by phone. Child protection referrals to other Local Authorities will be made following their current procedures.

Reporting a Concern

School staff will still have contact with pupils, and will offer support, advice and guidance, applying the principles of the school environment to offer suitable pastoral support.

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

The full responsibilities of the DSL and the Deputy are covered in our main Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding vulnerable pupils remotely

We remain committed to supporting any vulnerable pupils and will take the following steps:

- Where vulnerable pupils are not in school we will ensure that phone contact is maintained by the school with all vulnerable pupils at least once per week and for some on a daily basis.
- Where it is identified that a child or family are in need of additional support or guidance we will ensure that this is in place. This may include extra phone calls, signposting and referring to other services. All communications will be recorded and stored confidentially.

Supporting children in school

Stella Maris School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. We will continue to be a safe place for our children who are in school during this crisis.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site, that the staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety and that there is always a first aider on site.

We 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 measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19.

Online safety

Many pupils are accessing internet enabled devices more frequently whilst families follow the advice of the government to 'stay at home'. This is our primary source of contact with most of our students. Therefore it is important that we continue to support and educate children on staying safe online. Staff should be mindful of existing policies and the details described by the DfE in KCSIE 2019. Stella Maris School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems we are currently using during this period of home schooling is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Encompass

As an Encompass school we receive notifications from the Police informing us when there has been an incident of domestic abuse or violence at a child's home. This process is to continue, and we will actively monitor notifications, risk assess them in conjunction with other information we hold and escalate our concerns as necessary. We will make assessments on a case-by-case basis of the need to contact families following a notification.

Emotional wellbeing

We recognise the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis and the potential impact it may have on the emotional wellbeing of our pupils, parents and staff. We ask all parents and staff to be vigilant for signs of distress and to respond to them in line with our usual working practice. All parts of the school community will support each other in whatever way we can.

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