

Temporary Policy Addendum:

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for St Mary's C of E Halton

This Policy addendum is effective from 11th January 2021 – 12th February 2021

School Name: St Mary's C of E

Policy owner:

Date: 11th January

Date shared with staff: 19th January

Context

To support public health efforts during the rollout of the vaccine, schools will implement a strategy of remote teaching alongside support for vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers, followed by a potential phased return to face-to-face provision.

From 5th January 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

School opening is currently set as: 9-3pm for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

This addendum of the St Mary's Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Key contacts

At St Mary's, during this period of remote learning, the Designated Safeguarding Leads and their contact details are:

- Rachel Tainsh Head.stmarys@halton.gov.uk
- Lyndsey Charnley Lyndsey.Charnley@st-marys.halton.sch.uk
- Georgina Hulse DeputyHead.StMarys@halton.gov.uk
- Simon Owen simon.owen@st-marys.halton.sch.uk

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

St Mary's vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH – Sharon Williams) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Lyndsey Charnley

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and St Mary's will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent, with discussions, decisions and outcomes logged within the schools recording systems. (See full policy for details)

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, St Mary's or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

St Mary's will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are advised not to attend school.

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

Attendance monitoring

Schools should continue to record attendance in the register. Schools should follow up on absences of the pupils who are expected to be in school but where a parent wishes for their child to be absent. Schools should authorise the absence during this national lockdown period.

All pupils who are not eligible to be in school should be marked as **Code X**. As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know. Absence should be recorded as **code C** (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

St Mary's and (where relevant) social workers will agree with parents/carers whether Children In Need, on Child Protection, Children In Care, or who have an EHCP, should be attending school St Mary's –will then follow up on any pupil absence where the child is expected to attend.

St Mary's will also follow up pupil absence with any parent or carer who has agreed a school place for their children) who subsequently do not attend.

Phone calls will initially be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances. The frequency of these phone calls will be at least weekly, but can be more regularly if appropriate. If school are unable

to make contact with the parent/carer of a vulnerable child and they are not attending school as expected then a home visit may be made by school staff.

To support the above will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are c St Mary's correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child, who is open to Children's Social Care, does not take up their place at school, or fails to attend, St Mary's will notify their Social Worker.

St Mary's will report attendance in school to both the DfE and Local Authority.

Useful Information

Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools

Guidance for all schools in England January 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950510/School_national_restrictions_guidance.pdf

School attendance: guidance for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Rachel Tainsh

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Lyndsey Charnley, Georgina Hulse & Simon Owen

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and, as required, liaising with children's social

workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

St Mary's staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

The Family Support Worker will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely. This must be logged by 4pm on the day the concern is raised.

If a concern is raised out of hours, the staff member should report the concern on CPOMS and alert the DSL using the contacts outlined in the school safeguarding policy. If a response is not received, you must continue to exhaust all contacts in the key contact section of the school child protection policy.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern, without delay, to the headteacher.

If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally over the phone and followed up with an email to the head teacher to confirm the discussion.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

The Safeguarding Children in Education Officer will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations,

Safeguarding Training and induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). All staff have been provided with a copy of the code of conduct, guidance for safer working practice 2019 (including the 2020 Addendum) and other relevant policies, guidance and legislation. The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter St Mary's they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

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, St Mary's will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that: -

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

Where St Mary's are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out from paragraph 183 of KCSIE 2020. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

St Mary's will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 179 of KCSIE.

St Mary's will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any 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.

As such, St Mary's will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in KCSIE.

Volunteers

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis in St Mary's will be in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer, for example, is administering a COVID-19 test whilst un-supervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, the school will follow safer recruitment processes, including application and seeking of references.

Online safety in St Mary's

St Mary's will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. Please see the schools Remote Learning Policy for more detail on this area.

Children and online safety away from school and college

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care (iCART) and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the staff code of conduct.

St Mary's will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider during lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred, if possible.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, to avoid excessive periods of screen time.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by the school's IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school

St Mary's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS , as should a record of contacts made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

St Mary's and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

St Mary's recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.

Teachers at St Mary's are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

St Mary's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

St Mary's will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

St Mary's 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 COVID19.

St Mary's will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS.

Where school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Chair of Governors / Local Authority

Peer on Peer Abuse

St Mary's recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.