

# **Temporary Safeguarding Policy Addendum:**

## **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Court Fields School**

This Policy addendum is effective from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

School Name: Court Fields School  
Policy owner: Mrs Sarah Westwood (AHT & DSL)  
Date: 5th January 2021

### **Context**

To support public health efforts during the return to school in January, secondary schools will invoke a phased return to face-to-face provision at the start of term.

From 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, secondary age 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.

On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 8pm, the government has instructed schools to only open to Vulnerable students and those of critical, keyworkers until February Half Term.

This addendum of the Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

**Key contacts** remain as per the Safeguarding Policy.

### **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 and other pastoral staff 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.

Court Fields School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school headteachers for

looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this continues to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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 school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

### **Attendance monitoring**

In mainstream schools, all secondary-age pupils who are not expected to be in school, will be recorded as 'code X'.

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

Court Fields School will follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend. Phone calls will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Court Fields School will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Court Fields School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSLs.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:** Mrs Sarah Westwood

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are:** Mrs Sophie Heggadon & Mrs Vicki McCarthy

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 MyConcern 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.

Staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

The DSL or deputy will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all meetings, which can happen remotely.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Safeguarding Policy, which includes logging any concerns on MyConcern, which can be done remotely.

If a concern is raised out of hours, the staff member should report the concern on MyConcern. If this concern is urgent, the staff member should contact Somerset Direct on 0300 1232224.

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

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher immediately. Concerns about the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). 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 begin work, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will consider 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.

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the school's HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements. The Trust Safeguarding Policy will have already been read.

## **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, Court Fields School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

Where Court Fields School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Court Fields School 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 163 of KCSIE.

Court Fields School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of 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 or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

As such, Court Fields School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **Online safety in schools and colleges**

Court Fields School 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.

## **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 Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the guidance to staff. Court Fields School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

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

Court Fields School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children.

Where a member of the pastoral team has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral support in school, they should ensure that there is communication plan in place. 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.

Court Fields School 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.

### **Supporting children in school**

Court Fields School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Court Fields School 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 that staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Court Fields School 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.

Court Fields School 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.

Where Court Fields 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 Trust CEO.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Court Fields School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where the 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 Safeguarding 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 will be recorded on MyConcern.

## **Support from the Multi-Academy Trust**

The Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) designated safeguarding leads will continue to meet on a regular basis, with the Trust Safeguarding Lead. The Trust Safeguarding Lead will continue to provide half-termly supervision to the DSL and some deputies and other staff as required.