



**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**  
**PHASE 4**  
1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2020 -

**SAFEGUARDING &  
CHILD PROTECTION  
PROTOCOL**

## **THIS IS INTERIM GUIDANCE THAT APPLIES TO ALL SCHOOLS WITHIN NICHOLAS POSTGATE CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST.**

### **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

Schools must continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance and legislative functions as outlined in, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Schools must be safe places for children.

Safeguarding must continue to be everybody's responsibility.

In response to coronavirus (COVID-19), the following safeguarding principles remain the same:

- To always **act in the best interests of children.**
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern they must **continue to act in accordance with safeguarding practice** for the school and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and to act immediately.
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** or Deputy must be available. If not on site, they must be contactable.
- **Safer recruitment** practice is maintained to ensure that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the workforce and/or gain access to children.
- Children continue to be **protected when they are online.**

### **Role of the Local Authority**

Information sharing on the broader aspects of safeguarding from within the Trust and advice from the local authority must be directed through the Head of Attendance and Welfare. This will help to reduce any conflicting advice and duplication of practice.

The schools must collaborate with the local authority on their arrangements for the processing of referrals and facilitating meetings in accordance with statutory guidance. Multi-Agency Children's Hubs will continue to be the mechanism for making referrals, unless otherwise stated. Schools must ensure contact details within their child protection policy and on their website are current.

Child protection conferences, core group meetings and other meetings with social workers will continue through either conference call or video link. Schools must act as they would normally and complete the information required by the local authority. The school must report on all means of communication that they have undertaken to ensure the child's welfare whilst not in school. When preparing a report the DSL should ensure they have contact with the Trust

Attendance Manager allocated to their school, for any information held on the child from the support the central team have provided.

The local authority continues to be responsible for statutory intervention and the management of cases. Where there is an allocated social worker, they are the main point of contact for the case, or if the child is in the care of the local authority, it is the Virtual School Head.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The pathways in school for reporting any concerns about a child remain unchanged and this must always be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputies. Where the DSL is not on site, they should be contactable by telephone.

It is important that all school staff have access to trained DSL or Deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them. Where there is difficulty contacting the DSL or Deputy, the Trust Head of Attendance and Welfare must be informed.

Where staff are assisting in schools other than their own, it is the responsibility of the DSL at the receiving school to ensure that new staff are inducted on safeguarding processes.

The DSL also has a responsibility to ensure that staff are made aware of any changes to local safeguarding reporting structures. DSL posters in school, must be amended and displayed with the term, 'Coronavirus (COVID-19)'. This will ensure that all staff are assured of the current arrangements for reporting concerns and that there is updated photograph identification of any additional staff with safeguarding responsibilities.

The Peer on Peer Abuse policy must be revised to ensure that there are effective reporting mechanisms in place for children not attending school to report any concerns. This may include incidents occurring on social media. Staff must be appraised on the process for dealing with concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The DSL must ensure that there is a dismissal process in place at the end of the school day, whereby children are only collected from school by the parent or other authorised person. This must be shared with all staff and be part of any new staff induction.

Where there is an Operation Encompass call made to the school the DSL must notify the Trust by recording information on the central spreadsheet allocated to the school and if necessary, discuss the safeguarding arrangements for the child with the Head of Attendance and Welfare. Information provided may be shared by the Trust with local authorities to assist in arrangements for safeguarding

vulnerable pupils. The information of the incident and actions taken must also be uploaded to CPOMS.

## **School Attendance**

Schools must clearly establish which children are due to arrive on site each day.

As the wider opening of schools takes place, the Trust Attendance Strategy will be eased back into practice. At this time, parents will not be penalised for their child not attending school and attendance monitoring will continue to be aligned with safeguarding practice that ensures that schools remain in contact with pupils and parents and the child's welfare needs are being met.

## **Pupil Registration**

All schools should resume taking their attendance register from 1 June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

Pupil attendance and absence will be recorded on the schools MIS using the appropriate codes. This will include the registration of pupils in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006.

The administrative codes relating to enforced closure will be applied in the following circumstances:

- **For pupils that are eligible to attend**, if the arrangements are for pupils to return for part days, then the session that the pupil should not attend will be recorded as enforced closure, using the registration code #.
- **For pupils that are in year groups that are not eligible to attend school** the # registration code for enforced closure must be applied for both sessions.
- **For pupils that are self-isolating or shielding**, the # registration code must be applied for both sessions.
- **For pupils that are eligible to attend school but the parent does not send the child to school**, the Y registration code for enforced closure must be applied. The school should contact the parent to encourage the parent to send the child to school. The school should maintain at least fortnightly telephone contact with the parent, if the child does not attend.
- **For pupils that are eligible to be in school but are not allowed as it is not safe to do so**, for instance owing to the parent not adhering to precautionary measures and social distancing arrangements, the Y registration code for enforced closure must be applied.

First day absence calling will be undertaken by schools of those pupils that are expected to attend and are not in attendance.

Where a child that is eligible to attend school and does not attend without reason for absence this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (registration code O) until such time that the reason can be determined. At this time, unauthorised absence will not be recorded and the appropriate absence or administrative code must be applied.

Where there is no reason for absence provided for a pupil expected to attend school, the school must liaise with their allocated Trust Attendance Manager who will assess with the school the requirement for a home visit to be undertaken.

Where there are 3 consecutive days of authorised absence for pupils expected to attend school, the school must liaise with their allocated Trust Attendance Manager who will assess with the school the requirement for a home visit to be undertaken.

It remains the Trust's recommendation that a home visit must continue to be made by schools at least every 3 days where the pupil is defined as vulnerable with a social worker, or is 'otherwise vulnerable' as determined by the school and the parent is not sending the child to school. Where the social worker determines the frequency of a visit to be otherwise, the social worker must put this in writing to the school. This recommendation applies to vulnerable pupils across all year groups. The Trust central attendance team will support schools with any visits required of this nature.

In some cases it may be known to the school that parents are deliberately not abiding by precautionary measures or social distancing, which raises concerns around the increase in transmission of the virus to other pupils attending the school and the staff. Where this is the case, the school must speak with the parent about the risks to others and advise them that unless there is compliance the child will not be permitted to attend school. A risk assessment for the child to remain in school must be undertaken. If action is subsequently taken for the child not to be in school, the school should record the absence as exceptional circumstances for enforced closure, registration code Y. If the child is vulnerable with a social worker, the school must inform the social worker of any action that has been taken.

The school must have a process in place for managing pupils who arrive unexpectedly. The Trust central attendance team will assist in making home visits if the child is not eligible to be in school and the parent or other person so authorised, is unable to be contacted by telephone to collect the child. Children arriving at school that are not eligible to be in school, must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Timings of the school day**

The timings of the school day for all eligible pupils must be on the school website.

To allow for consistency of pupil attendance in accordance with the timings of the school day, pupils that arrive late to school after half an hour of the register closing, must be recorded as late (registration code L). At this time, unauthorised lateness (registration code U) will not be recorded.

### **Home visits**

It continues to be the case that where there is a need for a home visit, face to face contact with the child or parent must be avoided. Doorstep discussions are not encouraged. Wherever possible, the visit should be undertaken with the staff member remaining in their vehicle and talking to the parent using the telephone. There must be no entry undertaken by the member of staff into the child's home. If there is a need for physical contact with the child or parent, it is imperative that social distancing measures, as advised by the government, are undertaken at all times.

It is the Trust position that where the pupil is vulnerable with a social worker, the social worker must be contacted after a home visit has been made. Social Worker contact details must be available through the school. To ensure there is accuracy of information, this must be passed first hand by the person making the visit.

All home visits undertaken must be collated on the spreadsheet allocated to the school. This information will be shared by the Trust with local authorities to assist in arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable pupils. Information must also be uploaded to CPOMS.

### **Behaviour**

The expectations for pupil behaviour remain unchanged.

Any non-compliance or disregard of precautionary measures to control the transmission of infection within the school setting must be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy and the school must consider the potential impact on the health and safety of all pupils and staff. Such conduct may mean that it is unsafe to others for the pupil to be in school, and this must be discussed with the parent. Individual risk assessments must be put in place. Continued non-compliance may result in exclusion.

The deliberate coughing or spitting with intent, must be dealt with immediately by way of exclusion.

### **Communication**

School websites must be updated with the school mobile numbers and the emergency contact numbers, including Trust contact details.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everybody's responsibility. The Teacher's Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes Headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (*para 12, Part One: Safeguarding Information for all staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019*).

For pupils in groups that are not eligible to attend school, the Headteacher should continue to make every best effort that there is a fortnightly rotation of staff with responsibility to make contact with the parent of every child on roll at the school and to endeavour to speak with the child at the point of contact with the parent. This dialogue with the child may not always be possible, however if the child has failed to engage with the school for a period over this two week window the parent will be notified and all/any reasons for failure of engagement will be noted. These notes must be forwarded to the Headteacher who will determine next steps.

Where the child is deemed to be vulnerable and has a social worker, or is 'otherwise vulnerable', this contact must be more frequent; where practicable, daily. Naturally, the ongoing needs of the child will continue to be identified by the social worker.

It is important that schools have up to date contact lists. Where parental contact cannot be established there must be communication with all additional persons listed as a contact for the child.

### **Vulnerable children**

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected must be a top priority for schools.

Vulnerable children and young people for the purposes of continued attendance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak are those across all year groups 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 and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary

accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion.

The term 'all year groups' in this context for attendance purposes refers to children under 5 eligible for early years entitlements and children and young people aged 5 to 18 (or aged 5 to 25 for children and young people with an EHC plan).

With the wider opening of schools, it remains the expectation based on Government guidance that vulnerable children will continue to attend school everyday unless in consultation/discussion with a child's social worker and/or family by the dedicated school leader it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.

Failure for a child to attend school without prior knowledge by the school will precipitate a first day call. The school must adhere to safeguarding practice and follow up on the reasons for the child not being in attendance. Where there is resistance from a parent to send their child to school, the school should ensure there is discussion with the parent to reduce any anxieties they may have and follow up on this matter with the social worker. It is important to ensure there is transparency with the parent around the reason for visiting, which must be explained as a requirement of the school's safeguarding practice in ensuring children remain safe and supported.

If the Trust moves to an arrangement where children can move between schools, it is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that any information relating to the vulnerability of the child is shared with the receiving school. A risk assessment in relation to the child's needs must be undertaken by the receiving school.

If a child transfers school, the same arrangements must take place in relation to the transfer of information, using CPOMS, or by recorded postal delivery. In all cases, the DSL must have contact with the receiving school to ensure that the child is on roll. If allocated, there must be liaison with the local authority and social worker.

CPOMS must continue to be used for recording information.

### **Safer Recruitment & Volunteers**

Safer recruitment practice must continue to be in accordance with the Trust expectations. The Trust HR Team will continue to support schools and must be informed of any newly recruited personnel.

Staff induction and probationary periods will continue. It remains essential that people unsuitable to work with children are identified through the recruitment process and prohibited to enter the NPCAT workforce. The suitability of staff through the enhanced DBS identification checks must be undertaken in accordance with the revised government guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>

Schools should not be recruiting volunteers. This will ensure that the risks are reduced to our children, where a volunteer not requiring to be DBS checked is left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

If the Trust moves to a position where a member of staff from within the Trust temporarily moves to another school to support the care of a child, the receiving school must risk assess that member of staff in the setting. There is no expectation for a new DBS to be obtained.

### **Single Central Record/Contractors**

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that on any given day that the school is aware of the staff that are on their site. As such, the SCR must continue to be updated.

This is particularly important where contractors are being used for any work required on site, as usual contractors may not be available. In all instances of work being carried out, the appropriate checks of persons must be completed. Where there is contracted work taking place, the Trust Estates and Compliance Manager must be notified.

### **Allegations of Abuse Against Staff**

The provisions of the NPCAT Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers Policy must continue.

The Head of Attendance and Welfare must be advised in all cases where an allegation has been made.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency should be made by emailing, [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) .The TRA will continue to process cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

### **Safer Places**

Schools must continue to comply with guidance in ensuring that children that are attending school are kept safe. This includes:

- ensuring staff continue to wear identification badges with the appropriate coloured lanyards (green DBS check/red no DBS),
- if there are visitors to school, they are signed in and out,
- visitors that are not DBS checked must be accompanied at all times, subject to social distancing measures,

- hot drinks are not to be consumed in areas where children are present, unless all necessary precautionary measures have been undertaken that will minimise any risk of harm to the child.
- the school perimeter is safe from unauthorised persons gaining access or pupils being able to egress the site. This is particularly significant as internal doors within the school may be left open, where it is safe to do so, in order to reduce the transmission of infection from surfaces.

Accident and near miss reporting must continue in accordance with the school procedure.

First Aid and the Administration of Medicines must continue in accordance with school policy. It is important that staff comply with criteria in the school risk assessment that minimises the risks of infection when undertaking either of these activities.

There is an expectation that staff will continue to be vigilant with all health and safety requirements. In particular, adopting practice that minimises the risk of infection through coronavirus must continue, with facilities available for regular handwashing and surfaces to be wiped down after use.

### **Online Safety/Social Networking**

Children in all groups, whether eligible to attend school or not, must be reminded of the rules around keeping safe online. The school must ensure that websites are updated with the appropriate guidance, including an appropriate link for help and guidance for parents. Children and their parents must know how to report any abuse.

When parents are contacted by the school, staff must ensure that parents are advised of the requirement to keep their children safe online and be provided with the opportunity to discuss any concerns.

Where a concern is reported to a member of staff this must be escalated immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.

The following links are recommended by GOV.UK:

[Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)

[Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)

[Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)

[LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)

[Net-aware](#) (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC)

It is important that staff adhere to strict practice around social networking and do not leave themselves open to allegations of misconduct. This includes not sharing personal contact details with children or their families.

At all times, staff must continue to have regard to the NPCAT Staff Code of Conduct.

The NPCAT Visual Communication and Live-Streaming Policy must be followed where lessons are being delivered to pupils using this method.

## **Mental Health & Bereavement**

During this time, children may be feeling frustrated or lonely. They may also feel low, worried, anxious, or be concerned about their health or that of those close to them. The government has provided guidance around *Mental Health and WellBeing aspects of coronavirus*. Schools must include information on their website for children to access.

Communication with children is essential to their mental health and wellbeing. Where a child is known to be having difficulty with their mental health, the school must assess the child's needs around the frequency of contact with the school and take action with available staff who are willing to support those known to be struggling emotionally. This may include:

- Members of staff/counselling staff available to take calls from those who are 'worried'.
- Involving older children and young people in thinking of ways they can support others, such as painting rainbows and putting up in their windows, creating emoji's and sharing examples of their craftwork on school social media platforms
- Providing resources around mindfulness art worksheets for downtime.
- Listening to music.
- Encouraging fitness workouts at a set time each day.
- Tasking the child with creative thinking of ways to keep engagement high with the world beyond their home/bedroom.

Where there is concern identified around a child's mental health, this must be reported by the member of staff to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will assess for the appropriate action to be taken. For pupils that are not attending school, increasing or decreasing the frequency of calls by the school, may be helpful to allaying any fears that the child may have. If there is a social worker assigned to the child, the DSL must ensure that they remain apprised of the situation. All information must be recorded on CPOMS.

Where children have experienced the bereavement of a parent or close family relative, it is important that school allow the child to talk about their feelings. External agencies may be overwhelmed with referrals. If there is a delay in a child accessing services, this must be discussed with the DSL. The Trust Head of

Attendance and Welfare must be informed if this is an issue that cannot be readily resolved.