



The **STEINER**
ACADEMY
Hereford

COVID-19

School closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Steiner Academy Hereford

School Name: Steiner Academy Hereford

Policy owner: Kate Andrews

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Date shared with staff:

03.04.20

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible.

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.

This addendum of the Steiner Academy Hereford Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

1. Context	2
3. Vulnerable children	3
4. Attendance monitoring	4
5. Designated Safeguarding Lead	4
6. Reporting a concern	5
7. Safeguarding Training and induction	6
8. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff	6
9. Online safety in schools and colleges	7
10. Children and online safety away from school and college	7
11. Supporting children not in school	8
12. Supporting children in school	9
13. Peer on Peer Abuse	9
14. Support from the Multi-Academy Trust	9

Key contacts

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Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority (LAC). 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.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation SENDCO, parents (and local authority if required) to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college 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.

Eligibility for Free School Meals in and of itself should not be the 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.

Steiner Academy Hereford 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 head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The lead person for this will be: Wendy Lane (DSL)

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 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 Steiner Academy Hereford will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Attendance will be recorded following current DfE guidelines. Social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need (CIN) should be attending school – Steiner Academy Hereford will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

Steiner Academy Hereford will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

HOW WILL THIS LOOK IN OUR SCHOOL?

Communication

To support the above, Steiner Academy Hereford will, when communicating with parents/carers confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues to attend, Steiner Academy Hereford will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Steiner Academy Hereford has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Wendy Lane

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Carol Kirk

Steiner Academy Hereford will aim to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where illness/restrictions prevent this then the 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;
- updating and managing access to CPOMS;
- liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy);
- communicating with parents with any arising concerns;
- 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.

All staff and volunteers, whether in school, or working remotely from home will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) either by phone or by person.

The DSL 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 and promptly report the incident on CPOMS. Where this is not possible then staff should email the DSL, DDSL and the Principal;
- follow up with an immediate phone call if the level of concern is high to ensure that information has been passed over;
- where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should immediately report their concern to the Principal;
- if the concern is about the Principal then it should be immediately reported to the Chair of Governors.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). 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 this setting, 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 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.

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, Steiner Academy Hereford will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes.

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.

In the event that school utilises 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.

Steiner Academy Hereford 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.

If a concern has been raised against a staff member or volunteer we will continue to follow our usual procedures outlined in the Complaints Policy and Procedures or Allegations against staff – Procedures, whichever is relevant.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, 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, school name 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

Steiner Academy Hereford 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 by following the processes outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy and, where appropriate, referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

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

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons:

- All virtual lessons should take place as audio lessons: live video lessons should not be used;
- Exceptions to this is for pre-recorded lessons in which case staff should ensure that: suitable clothing is worn and that the recording has been made in an appropriate area, for example, not in bedroom or bathroom etc. If in doubt video backgrounds should be blurred;
- The live virtual classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the audio lesson can be reviewed;
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day;
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background;
- When it is necessary for staff to conduct 1 to 1 sessions e.g. for music performance, teachers will notify parents of the date and time of the session and the parent will ensure that the lesson takes place in a social area of the house: as above, these lessons will be audio only lessons and will be recorded;
- Staff should be mindful that when supporting pupils with their learning on Team's chat function, they also encourage pupils to balance their learning so that healthy routines e.g. meal-times, leisure time and sleep are not disrupted by excessive work;
 - If a member of staff has a concern following any online communication with a pupil, either following virtual lesson or other communication, they should use the usual safeguarding referral process to inform the DSL where appropriate as well as the Class Guardian and respective Phase Lead – this should be logged and actions that have been planned or have been taken on CPOMS.

Specific Pupil Guidance when Using Microsoft Teams or Similar learning platforms

- Language and conduct when using Teams must be professional and appropriate – in line with school behaviour expectations for when pupils are learning in class;
- When using the ‘chat’ function on Teams, pupils should use this to support their learning during lessons; it should not be used for non-related learning purposes;
- When using Teams to interact with each other outside of lesson time, pupils should be mindful of the nature of their interaction. The use of inappropriate language, information sharing (e.g. images or websites) or the use of aggressive or coercive interactions will be dealt with robustly in accordance with the school behaviour policy;

Parental Guidance

- if parents have any safeguarding concerns relating to online learning they should raise them immediately with their teacher, guardian or safeguarding lead. This includes inappropriate use of the learning platform by any pupil
- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child adheres to the guidance above.

Steiner Academy Hereford 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

Steiner Academy Hereford 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/support plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of the identified risk factors and ongoing support plan, along with any arising concerns and actions, will be recorded on CPOMS.

The support plans can include; contact by phone and/or email as well as door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

This plan will be individualised to meet the needs of the pupil and will be reviewed accordingly.

Steiner Academy Hereford 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 school name need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

Steiner Academy Hereford will continue to support certain groups of children in school, such as the children of key workers, and children who are considered to be vulnerable. The school will continue to ensure the safety and well-being of these pupils and will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

The Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Steiner Academy Hereford 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.

Contingency plans have been drawn up to manage the impact of staff absence, including the absence of key staff such as the Principal, DSL and First Aiders. If staff absence exceeds these plans then an immediate discussion will take place with available members of ALT to manage the situation.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Steiner Academy Hereford recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the guidelines set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of the procedures outlined in of the school Safeguarding Policy where possible. Alternative processes will be put in place to ensure that guidance around social distancing and self-isolation are followed.

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

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