

Appendix 5 - COVID-19 school closure / phased re-opening / full reopening arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection Updated 01.03.2021

School Name: Cottenham Village College

Date: 15/03/2021

Date shared with staff:

1. Context

The Prime Minister announced on 22nd February 2021, that all schools would reopen on 8th March, to all pupils, as part of the first step in the roadmap out of lockdown.

Until 8th March, Schools and all childcare providers have been providing 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.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) remains in force throughout the response to Coronavirus (COVID 19).

All Astrea schools continue to have a Covid19 Risk Assessment in place which is reviewed regularly and in accordance with any guidance changes, taking account of Safeguarding at every stage.

This addendum of the Astrea Safeguarding and Child Protection policy 2020-2021, contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in line with revised procedures from the local safeguarding partners and following guidance set out in:

[Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92121/restricting-attendance-during-the-national-lockdown-schools.pdf)

And

[Schools coronavirus \(COVID-19\) operational guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92121/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance.pdf)

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Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lisa Langley	01954 288765	Lisa.langley@astreacottenham.org
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Halsey	01954 288 777	Sarah.halsey@astreacottenham.org
Principal	Helen Cassady	01954 288944	headpa@astreacottenham.org
Deputy Director of Safeguarding	Nicola Law	07392 866262	Nicola.law@astreaacademytrust.org
Director of Inclusion	Nicola Crossley	07393 237674	Nicola.crossley@astreaacademytrust.org
Other DSL's at CVC	Ryan Nash Peter Holt Jos Abbott Helen Stearn		Ryan.nash@astreacottenham.org Peter.holt@astreacottenham.org Jos.abbott@astreacottenham.org Helen.stearn@astreacottenham.org

2. 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 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. Until 8th March 2021, senior leaders have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

The 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 head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting during the lockdown period, 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 the school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

The school will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

3. Attendance monitoring

Until 8th March

During the national lockdown, all pupils who are not expected to be in school, should be recorded 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). Schools and colleges should encourage vulnerable children to attend but if the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent from school, the parent should let the school know that the pupil will not be attending. The Department for Education expects schools and colleges to grant such applications for leave given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as **code C** (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

As with vulnerable children, critical worker parents and carers should let schools know if their child will not be attending and, if not, schools should grant a leave of absence **code C** given the exceptional circumstances.

The DSL and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – the school will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

The school 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.

Phone calls and/or doorstep visits will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

To support the above, the school will, when communicating with parents/carers and 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 (who has an allocated social worker) does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the DSL will notify their social worker.

Shielding advice is currently being re-issued and so all children still deemed clinically extremely vulnerable should receive further guidance from their GP, to shield and not attend school currently.

Following reopening on 8th March 2021, Attendance is again mandatory for all pupils.

Secondary schools may offer a staggered entry from 8th March, to accommodate the required mass testing of pupils. During this period, pupils not in attendance due to awaiting their testing allocation, can be **coded Y**.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Lisa Langley

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Sarah Halsey

The aim is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site, however 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. If necessary, DSL's may be required to support another Astrea school, if there is a need for DSL support, however, this will only be actioned when agreed on an individual basis with both the Principal's and the Deputy Director of Safeguarding.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader/nominated member of staff will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site **in line with the DSL/SLT rota**.

Day to day Safeguarding may include:

- Updating and managing access to child protection online management system, My Concern
- Liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy)
- 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.

It is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day that the DSL is not available on site, staff will be made aware of who to contact and how to speak to them.

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

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Astrea Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via My Concern, which can be done remotely where necessary. This must be completed without delay.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access My Concern, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy DSL or SLT on Rota and Principal. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay during the school day and when a concern arises out of hours.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Principal without delay in line with *Astrea Child Protection and safeguarding Policy*. This should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Principal.

If staff have a concern about the Principal, the staff member should report to:

Nicola Law, Astrea Deputy Director of Safeguarding and **Tracy Foster, Astrea Head of HR** without delay.

Astrea Academy Trust HR team and Safeguarding Lead will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL's must continue to access Local Authority DSL training, updated every two years. All Trust staff can access the Educare Safeguarding Training package to keep refreshed on Child Protection in Education and key safeguarding concerns.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 and Annex A 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.

Staff should continue to receive updates and reminders on safeguarding requirements and specific safeguarding concerns regularly.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction, virtually delivered by the DSL.

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 with 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 and externally from the Trust, schools should seek assurance that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training. Where there are gaps in learning, please ensure they access level 1 equivalent Safeguarding training (Educare) – for further support/guidance please contact Astrea Deputy Director of Safeguarding.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

7. Children moving schools and colleges

Children may not be able to attend their usual school during this time and therefore children may join the school for a period of time during their own school's closure period.

Whether another child temporarily joins the school, or a child who usually attends the school attends another setting, it will be important for any school or college to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving school with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the Virtual School Headteacher with responsibility for the child. The receiving school should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them.

As a minimum the receiving school should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the

responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders should take responsibility.

Whilst schools and colleges must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

8. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

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, the school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in KCSIE.

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, the school will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes in line with Astrea Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Astrea Recruitment Policy, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

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.

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

The 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.

The 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'. During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

9. Supporting children's mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils, their parents and staff. Teachers should be mindful of this, in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

DSL's must ensure that relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children remains accurate. Schools and colleges (led by the DSL or deputy) should be doing all they reasonably can to ask parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that

they should be aware of, in order to best support them in school and whilst accessing learning at home.

Government guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#), can help schools to identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school or college (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from Astrea Therapeutic / specialist staff or external support services.

10. Online safety in schools and colleges

The school will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of a filtering, monitoring and metering system. The DSL/ICT Leads will continue to monitor any notifications from this system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

The Acceptable Use Policy Agreement signed by all staff and pupils annually, is still in place during the period of school closure and has been updated to include remote online education and use of school devices in the home.

11. 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 Astrea Child Protection and 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 the school code of conduct and AUP for remote learning.

The school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Schools may wish to use these resources to understand more about ensuring online education is safe:

- advice from [NSPCC](#) on undertaking remote education safely
- guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on remote education

Guidance on [teaching online safety in schools](#) provides information to help schools ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online.

The school will support parents and carers during this time to reinforce the importance of children staying safe online. It's especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do, including:

- sites they will be asked to use
- school staff their child will interact with

Maintaining a safe online environment is of upmost importance and the school continues to encourage parents and carers to set age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites. These are usually free, but often need to be turned on.

Parents and carers can access the resources below to keep their children safe online:

- [Thinkuknow](#) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- [Parent info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Internet matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [London Grid for Learning](#) has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- [Let's Talk About It](#) has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

Childline and CEOP hyperlinks are accessible on all schools websites.

A Safeguarding Email inbox is set up and monitored by the DSL/duty DSL with a link on the school website to enable children to report concerns to a member of duty staff.

safeguarding@astreacottenham.org

To report any harmful or upsetting content Harmful, support can be accessed by:

- reporting harmful online content to the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- getting government advice and trusted resources from [Educate Against Hate](#) on safeguarding from radicalisation, building resilience to extremism, and promoting shared values

12. Supporting children not in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

During the period of school closure, the school will ensure that **all children are contacted by phone or doorstep visits at regular intervals as outlined below:**

- Weekly doorstep visits for vulnerable children and those on the edge of care (who have not continued to regularly attend school)
- Those not engaging with home / online learning should receive weekly doorstep visits
- Weekly calls for all other children (*in addition* to the home / online learning contact they will already be receiving)
- All those with Social Workers require a planning meeting to ensure that visits are coordinated in between agencies and to ensure alignment with statutory timeframes (weekly visits for those open to social care as agreed with social worker)
- Weekly contact logs to be kept which details the numbers of children contacted via doorstep visits / telephone / online contact, comparing ALL / SEN / PP / EAL / NSEN / NPP / NEAL with an expectation that contact will be made with all children

As outlined above, the DSL will liaise with all allocated social workers to ensure that children are regularly seen if not attending school – doorstep visits should continue to be conducted by social care and school on a weekly basis where required and agreed between services.

A door step visit is a home visit, being mindful of social distancing, where staff are not to enter the house of a child/young person but to stand at least 2 metres/6ft from the door and speak with both parents and child/young person.

Any planned CP/Multi-Agency review meetings to be accessed via phone/conference calls, as necessary.

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 following the guidance above. Details of this plan must be recorded on My Concern, as should a record of contact have made.

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

The school and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. The DSL and social workers will work together to ensure communication is regular, in line with any plans and may support one another to conduct visits where appropriate. Where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The 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. As stated in section 8, we continue to support children in and outside of school, making referrals to provide additional support where necessary.

The 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on My Concern.

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

13. Supporting children in school

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. Our school continues to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The 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.

The 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS.

Where the school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the trust.

14. Peer on Peer Abuse

The school 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 principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within Astrea Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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

Concerns and actions must be recorded on My Concern and appropriate referrals made.

Support and reporting Bullying or abuse online can be accessed via the school by sending a direct email to safeguarding@astreacottenham.org and by accessing the key agencies as listed below.

- the [National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection command](#)
- [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) for children who are being bullied

15.Support from Astrea Academy Trust

Astrea central team continues to be available to provide support and guidance to colleagues as appropriate.

The Deputy Director of Safeguarding continues to be available to all DSL's and Principal's in order to carry out their role effectively. This may include remotely accessing CPOMS files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

The Deputy Director of Safeguarding will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.