



Abu Bakr Girls School

COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

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COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

1. Context

Parents have been once again 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.

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

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Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Rumela Begum	01922 333786 Option 2	rumela.begum@abubakrschool.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Gita Patel	01922 333786 Option 2	Gita.patel@abubakrschool.org.uk
Executive Head teacher	Hasina Varachia	01922 333786 option4 (Contact to be made via Mrs Shamim)	Hasina.varachia@abubakrschool.org.uk
Chair of Trustees	M.Luqman	01922 333786 Option 2	mLuqman@abubakrtrust.org
Safeguarding Trustee	M.Luqman	01922 333786 Option 2	mLuqman@abubakrtrust.org

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. 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.

Schools are advised that those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, 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.

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

We will work with and support any of our 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 is:

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

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

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

Attendance Monitoring

Local authorities and education settings are not required to complete the usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

If we have any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon, as requested to do so by the DfE.

If our school has to close, we will complete the return once as requested by the DfE. We and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. We will follow up on any pupil that we are expecting to attend, who does not. We will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) who subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, we will, when communicating with parents/carers ensure 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, the DSL will notify their social worker.

Safeguarding Team

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Rumela Begum

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Gita Patel

We have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on our school site and in addition, a trained deputy DSL is 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 making contact with Seona Baker (Child Safeguarding Coordinator) or the LA (Local Authority). The senior leader will liaise with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required, liaise with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

All our staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL or deputy. On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

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 our school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this includes reporting a concern via email which can be done remotely.

Staff should ensure the concern has been received by calling the DSL.

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

Concerns around the Executive Head teacher should be directed to the Chair of Trustees:

Safeguarding Training and induction

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, we expect all trained staff to be fully compliant with the required training expected of them.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

If new staff are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. During this period, no new volunteers will be recruited.

Upon arrival, all new staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding policy and other relevant policies.

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

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

It is not expected that we will be utilising volunteers, however, should we need to 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.

We 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.

We 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 will be made by emailing:
Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

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

Online Safety

We will ensure we continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

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

Children and Online Safety Away from School

It is extremely 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 and Child Protection 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 our code of conduct.

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

Pupils should be reminded of Internet Safety rules and parents will be expected to manage their children's safety whilst at home.

Staff delivering online should listen for any cues that indicate a safeguarding concern and report these to the DSL as soon as possible. These cues might include:

- Comments or questions about child abuse or neglect
- Inadequate supervision at home
- The impact of food poverty
- The health status in a family and any young carers responsibilities children have.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring all pupils have clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to our school we will also signpost pupil to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

[Childline](#) for support

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content

[CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

[Internet Matters](#) - may help us, and our governing bodies understand more about the potential increased risks some groups of children can face online

[NSPCC](#) - provides us with useful support and training opportunities

We understand the importance of continued support to parents or carers for children who are not returning to school. We will provide parents and carers with regular advice support and guidance on how to keep their children safe online. We have listed some support websites for staff to swiftly access should support/guidance requested by families.

[Think U Know](#) - provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online

[Parent Info](#) - 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 and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games

[Lets Talk About It](#) - has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation

Virtual Teaching

- Only school registered accounts can be used.
- Only pupils for whom approval has been given, will access any live teaching.
- There will be no 1:1 teaching. All teaching will take place in groups only.
- Only sessions approved by senior leaders will take place.
- Staff and children will be expected to wear suitable clothing, as will anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used will be expected to be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred using the feature available. At no time should inappropriate images be visible.
- Pupils sitting in a live session are expected to have reasonable privacy from other siblings where possible and any other disturbance.
- At all times, language used will be expected to be professional and appropriate, including that of any family members in the background.
- Staff will only use platforms specified by senior leaders and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils.
- Under no circumstances should personal details be shared using the MS Teams school platform.
- Staff will log the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.
- Children on our SEND register will be provided with additional support from the SEND Co-ordinator where this is required.
- The live class will be recorded by the school for training purposes. At no time are pupils or parents permitted to record sessions.
- Live classes will be kept to a reasonable length of time.
- During sessions, the mute button will be kept on with the teacher turning it off during class discussions. Pupils may ask a question on the chat function at any time should they wish. Parents of younger pupils may make this request on their child's behalf.

Supporting Children Not in School

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our 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, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of these plans will be kept.

The communication plans may include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits (following social distancing guidance). Other individualised contact methods will be considered and recorded.

Our DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan will be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on our website.

We recognise that as a school we are a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers will need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting Children in School

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our pupils.

We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The head teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

At all times, we will refer to 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.

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

Where there are concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Trustees.

Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Our staff are made aware of this when considering the setting and expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where there are children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

The DfE's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services. You can read the [guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools here](#).

For wider information about context please try here:

[Mental health related to the Covid-19](#)

[Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

[Supporting pupils wellbeing](#)

Walsall Childrens services team are offering training and development opportunities to help all school staff support children and young people with wellbeing, anxiety and mental health issues. Virtual training is available to understand and support children who have faced trauma and bereavement due to the situation of Covid 19, and our school will access such training opportunities.

Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has launched a 24-7 support line for adults, older adults, and children and young people requiring urgent mental health support during the Covid-19 pandemic - 0345 646 0827 (press 2 for Walsall residents).

We are aware that Health and Social Care colleagues have reported an increase in service users reporting feelings of anxiety. Advice and support on managing anxiety can be found [here](#)

Peer on Peer Abuse

We recognise that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where we receive a report of peer-on-peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

We 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 Child Concern Forms and appropriate referrals made.

Domestic Abuse

Our school staff are aware and stay alert to domestic abuse, and that the potential for domestic abuse and violence to go unseen is high. We know that many victims will have reduced or limited opportunities to share what is happening to them. We are mindful that some children, whether returning to school, or remaining at home, will have suffered the impact of domestic abuse and we will be vigilant in our professional curiosity and ask those additional questions.

There are a range of resources available to support victims and those working with victims, Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website is being updated regularly and has lots of information on [domestic abuse](#)

Support from the Trustees

The Trustees will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

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

Key Contacts for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Executive Executive Headteacher: Hasina Varachia

Contact email: Hasina.varachia@abubakrschool.org.uk

Designated safeguarding lead: Rumela Begum

Contact email: rumela.begum@abubakrschool.org.uk

Telephone: 01922 333786 option 2

Deputy designated safeguarding lead: Gita Patel

Contact email: gita.patel@abubakrschool.org.uk

Telephone: 01922 333786 option 2

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Michelle Pinnock-Ouma

Contact email: michelle.pinnock-ouma@walsall.gov.uk

Telephone: 07432 422205

Local Authority Social (MASH):

Contact email: MASH@walsall.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 555 2866

0300 555 2836 (out of hours service)

Virtual Head: Lorraine Thompson

Contact email: Lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk

Telephone: 07825 860581

Helpline numbers

NSPCC Adults Helpline 0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

Refuge 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

NSPCC Childline 0800 1111

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Find your nearest foodbank

[Trussell Trust](#)

Links to associated school policies and procedures

Links to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy• Staff Code of Conduct• Behaviour Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEND policy• Allegations Against Staff (Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safer Recruitment/DBS policy• E-safety Policy• Safe Handling policy/procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anti-Bullying Policy• Acceptable Use Policy• Health and Safety• First Aid
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Links to DfE guidance

[Covid 19 - Managing safeguarding in schools, colleges and other education providers](#)

[Corona Virus – Covid 19, Guidance on Vulnerable Children and Young People](#)

[Covid 19 – Guidance for Schools about Temporary Closing](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): attendance recording for educational settings](#)

[This note is about managing social isolation](#)

[Keeping Children Safe Online](#)

[Staying Safe Online](#)

[Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)