



Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Priory Woods School & Arts College

Approved by: Janis French **Date:** 9.2.21

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Next review due by:

Summary of key COVID-19. related changes

In these unprecedented times we have written the following addendum to ensure that we have in place immediate measures for safeguarding and keeping children safe in the event of an enforced school closure or school being open only for the children of Key Workers.

It is important that all staff are aware of this addendum to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The addendum and revised policy will continue to be made available publicly on the school website.

Children with Child Protection Plans

All decisions around the safety and well-being of children that are the subject to a Child Protection Plan will be made in collaboration with the other members of the core group involved with the student. This includes a strict strategy in the managing of contact with them should they or their families be self-isolating or in the event of a Government imposed lock down.

Plans have been put in place around home visiting, (when possible, as advised by the LA guidelines and Government advice) and/or telephone contact. Any home visits/doorstep visits (if permissible) will be agreed in discussion with SLT and with the support of the local authority and social workers (and only upon confirmation that the family are not self-isolating due to the Coronavirus). Staff would always attend a planned home visit in pairs, or if a lone worker visit is conducted then staff will be following the school Lone Working Policy and staff will ensure that they adhere to social distancing regulations. Doorstep visits may be conducted on a lone worker basis with staff checking in with their phase leader before and after the visits.

School is responsive and reactive to;

- any updated advice received from the three local safeguarding partners
- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer (LADO) and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

Safety planning

To support those children who will be extremely vulnerable during this time of school closure/partial closure for those students that will be unable to access school provision, school have;

- Risk assessed known risk factors in the family home/or families risk taking behaviour have been risk assessed and previously communicated with the LA, Social care and Health what these potential risks are
- Identified how the risks can be potentially managed

- We have ensured that where practically possible that families can keep themselves safe and that they have all the necessary contact details for statutory support (social care or police) for national support (childline) and for school.
- Those students that are able to, are in contact with staff, via regular telephone conversations and contact, teams learning sessions and class Dojo and for those more able, with the facilities to do so, via email (some students in P16, G1 and G2).
- Any contact with students follows Priory Woods School & Arts College staff behaviour policy/code of conduct/safer working practices guidance for personal contact with children (where staff are using their own personal phone they are withholding details of their telephone number).
- When speaking to students, where this is possible, staff are aware to speak to students about how they might be feeling and explore any additional anxieties they might have and staff are reassuring as best that they can. In addition to this staff are reminding students/families of the necessity to remain safe online.
- Staff are contacting most students a minimum of once a week via telephone.

Children in Need

- The same advice as above except telephone contact with the student and family is twice weekly (this will be stepped up or stepped down based on school's level of concern regarding the family, as explored within SLT meetings where safeguarding is agenda item 1. Staff are contacting students a minimum of once a week via telephone and where able to, communicating through class Dojo.

Looked After Children

- The same advice as children in need except telephone contact and/or doorstep visiting (when permissible by the LA and Government guidelines) will be on an individual case by case basis, as deemed necessary by SLT when considering each case and when feedback is given within the SLT meetings.

(For example, children who are in care of family members, inclusive of older family members e.g. grandparents may require more support and contact. The support of the Virtual school and Virtual Headteacher maybe requested in this instance alongside the LA, social care and our safeguarding partnership arrangements as the local authority remain corporate parents for looked after children. Any Corporate parent's detail and contacts are held for all looked after children and confirmation will be sought on procedures from them in writing).

Early Help

The same advice as above except telephone contact will be on a weekly basis.

Children with Medical Needs or Disabilities

The same advice as above except telephone contact and/or doorstep visiting (when LA and Government guidelines allow) should be on an individual case by case basis, as deemed necessary by SLT.

School recognised that it is imperative that all families who have children with medical needs or disabilities have practical plans in place to manage the needs of their children should self-isolation or a Government imposed lock down occur. This includes primarily that they have all the necessary equipment and medication to manage their child's needs in the event of any

imposed isolation and have all of the practical access to provisions and pharmacies to meet their child's medication needs. If parents themselves have medical needs then if it is necessary Priory Woods School & Arts College will increase the level of contact with these families and also share any concerns with the relevant agencies; to ensure they are all safe and well and able to access services that they need. In circumstances of this level of need daily contact would be recommended by an identified agency and this will be monitored by school.

School Contact

As stated above, Priory Woods School & Arts College has taken action to ensure that children know, where this is appropriate/possible, what level of contact school will have with them and what to expect so that phone calls do not come out of the blue.

Some students are able to email and staff are also emailing them to maintain contact and check in on their wellbeing.

School regularly updates the school website, social media and school apps with information, positive news and as a form of contact to keep students and families updated and remind them that we are available remotely and via the school contact number.

Where appropriate staff have uploaded short videos, vlogs and also ideas for homework activities that students can regularly do at home in addition to accessing Lexia, RM Maths, Snappy Maths, Teams, activities on class Dojo for those students that it is appropriate to do so.

Some Key worker/Vulnerable students attending school are able to maintain contact and relationships with their peers who are home learning through Teams and they share their work on Class Dojo.

Safer Working Practices

There are clear guidelines under school's staff behaviour policy/code of conduct or safer working practices about our expectations of staff in maintaining contact with children. While appreciating that we need to be flexible with technology in these unprecedented times staff know that it is important that they remain professional at all times and ensure any personal mobile use is protected or schools use only school technology wherever possible.

Staffing

- Staff at risk from health conditions or with caring responsibilities have not been included in the staffing rota for providing care in school for the children of Key Workers/Vulnerable students. The CEV staff have risk assessments in place.
- All staff that are not on the working in school rota are currently working from home and are aware that should they have concerns or issues regarding the safety and wellbeing of students/families that they contact the DSL, Janis French, DDSLs Paula Smith, Hazel Souter, Emma Fox, Kendra Hatcher, Lisa Connor, Kat Hughes or Janet Coyle immediately and then record their concerns on CPOMs.

- All staff are aware of their responsibility for the continued importance of acting **immediately** on any safeguarding concerns
- SLT and the appropriate staff will continue to work with and support children's social workers, the Local Authority and the virtual school head (VSH, Victoria Banks) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Peer on Peer abuse - given the very challenging and different circumstances that school are operating within, a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform any revised approach)
- Should any staff/person, if they have concerns about a staff member who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns) **MUST** contact Janis French DSL or DDSLs Paula Smith, Hazel Souter, Emma Fox, Kendra Hatcher, Lisa Connor, Kat Hughes or Janet Coyle or should the concern be regarding the DSL then the Safeguarding Governor, David Mudd must be informed.
- School are contacting all students on a weekly basis and where possible are speaking with the students to check in with them and/or conduct regular doorstep visits to see the student.
- Esafety advice and links are available on the school website, facebook and Twitter. Esafety sessions have formed part of the curriculum diet for the students that are able to access and process this information within the formal part of the curriculum. For those students that it is appropriate for, they have been previously supplied with an Esafety session that was emailed, to ensure that they are reminded and are aware of their need to keep safe whilst online. Esafety advice will also be shared with parents via a video and some resources will be available on the school web site.

Any concerns regarding Esafety will be progressed with parents/carers, the young person and will be reported to Social Care and the police if necessary and potentially Ralph Jordinson, the LA Risk & Resilience Coordinator for his advice/guidance.

Designated safeguarding leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)

When providing care for the children of key working staff/vulnerable students attending school there is always a trained DSL or deputy available on site. It is recognised that this may have to change due to illness, self isolation etc so where this is the case there are 2 options that we have ensured are in place:

- When students of keyworkers/vulnerable students are accessing school during it's partial closure a trained DSL, Janis French or DDSLs Paula Smith, Hazel Souter, Emma Fox, Kendra Hatcher, Lisa Connor, Kat Hughes or Janet Coyle, one or more of whom are available in school and contactable via phone.
- It is planned that the trained DSL is always on site, in addition to this at least one DDSL will always be on site who will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on the school site. This might include updating and managing access to CPOMS and liaising with the

offsite DDSLs as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to information regarding children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments (when risk assessments and Government guidelines allow).

All school staff working in school during the COVID-19 partial closure will have access to a trained DSL or deputy and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

Vulnerable children

The Government March 2020 definition of Vulnerable children is;

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.

Those with an EHC plan should be risk-assessed by their school or college in consultation with the local authority (LA) 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.

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority both for the government and for school staff.

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. The Head Teacher works with the LA Lead Professional to identify those families which may be causing concern. These concerns are taken to the weekly Risk Stratification meeting and further support is discussed and put in place as required.

Senior leaders, especially DSLs (and deputies) know who their most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support.

- SLT have listed such students and will actively continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Attendance

During this time of adopting COVID-19 measures, school is completing their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance of Key worker and vulnerable children that have been allocated places in school during partial opening.

School will liaise with social workers/families and will agree with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school will then follow up on any child that we were expecting to attend, who does not.

School has a schedule of which students are expected to attend on which day. School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently doesn't attend.

Schools will ensure that when communicating with parents/carers to confirm that any emergency contact numbers held are correct and active. We will also 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 the social worker will be notified.

School office staff completes the DfE attendance form daily and records are kept for safeguarding purposes.

Going Outside

During school partial closure students will be reminded to follow the government's guidance on this. Parents should not be arranging park play dates or meet ups with multiple parents and children whilst not attending school. It is important to reinforce this with students and parents and look at practical things they can do, such as being out in their back garden or yard for fresh air and games. Going for walks in parks, recreation areas for the allowed one hour a day in their bubble.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. Staff are aware that they can report any safeguarding issue to the DSL or DDSLs.

If staff are concerned/worried about a child in the community, they know that they can report such concerns directly to the South Tees MACH (Tees Valley Hub).

School do not have any new staff that have not yet completed their safeguarding induction.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

Whilst the school is in the throws of the COVID-19 crisis we acknowledge our duty to ensure that it remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.

Should school recruit new staff, Priory Woods will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of 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. This will be followed and adhered to.

Priory Woods School has a policy that we do not accept volunteers but we offer work experience placement for a variety of educational settings and those students that require a DBS have one in place prior to commencing their placement. It is obviously not appropriate to provide such students with placement opportunities whilst COVID-19 procedures are in place and nationally, society is following social distancing protocols.

Current staff already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check will not require a new DBS should they be redeployed to another school/setting to support the care of children. School are aware that the type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting.

In such case Priory Woods will risk assess following the KCSIE guidance; following the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances should any person who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The onus remains on Priory Woods School to satisfy ourselves that personnel in our setting have had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if Priory Woods, as the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

We are aware of our duty as;

'Schools and colleges must continue to follow their 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.'

School are aware of our duty to 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.

All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that Priory Woods School is aware, on any given day, which staff are in the school and that the appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

Priory Woods School will ensure that we continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE. The SCR will also provide the means to log everyone that will be working in school on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other institutions or visiting professionals. The SCR will also be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on staff on loan from elsewhere.

Mental health

Priory Woods School are mindful that distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils, parents/carers. Staff are aware of this in setting expectations of students' set activities/work when they are at home/school and when speaking with students/families.

Staff are aware 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 our students in the current circumstances includes some email groups, Teams meetings, whats app communications and telephone calls depending upon age and phase. This may well require the additional support of other specialist staff or support services. There is further guidance available on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#).

Staff are also in close contact with each other to ensure the mental wellbeing of each other and will report any concerns to SLT. Staff are aware of the school insurance scheme that can also provide counselling if required which is private and confidential.

School will ensure when we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site (where appropriate to do so given the complexity and potential dangers of health issues), that we ensure that the appropriate support is in place for them to the best of our ability and resources. Staff are contacting parents/carers a minimum of once a week, CIN/LAC and CP more, in addition to any further contact when an identified need/concern is raised.

Online safety in schools and colleges

It will be more important than ever that schools and colleges provide a safe environment, including online. Priory Woods School & Arts College will continue to ensure that appropriate

filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what “appropriate” looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on the school IT systems or recommended resources. School have considered who in our organisation has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements (Glen Grout and Derek Evans) and we have the appropriate reporting systems in place.

School also has contingency arrangements if the IT specialists become unavailable. In School online access is filtered and monitored through Smoothwall, which is a shared resource with Outwood Academy (Priory Woods School & Arts College is on a shared site), so should this go down (then no one would be able to access the Internet in school, therefore not posing a safety issue). A named technician at Outwood Academy would resolve this.

School have Securus, which is specifically for Safeguarding. This is cloud based, in the event of this going down it would be fixed by Securus remotely.

With regards to accessing logs, a nominated senior leader has access, in addition to the rest of SLT should the need arise.

With regards to the network, the School IT specialist has a Onedrive shared with the School Business Manager that details all the network access instructions / passwords etc. In any eventuality that necessitates the identified Outwood Academy IT specialist can assist with access when Priory Woods School & Arts College key staff provide the login details.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre’s professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children’s workforce with any online safety issues they face. Local authorities may also be able to provide support.

Children and online safety away from school

Priory Woods School is doing what we reasonably can to keep all of our students safe online whilst they are away from school. Regular information around esafety is shared through the website and social media.

Staff are aware of esafety and of the potential risks that this poses. Staff know to continually monitor their interactions, including online, with students for any evident signs that the student maybe at risk.

Any concerns will be dealt with as per the Safeguarding/Child protection policy and where appropriate referrals will still be made to children’s social care and as required, the police.

Priory Woods have an expectation that not all students will be able to work remotely but some students will access activities through the website links and access activities such as Lexia, RM Maths and Snappy Maths where appropriate and some may join Teams sessions.

All of our students for whom it is appropriate are aware of the code of conduct and acceptable use of technologies within school and home, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) have helped satisfy that school staff behaviour policies are robust and effective.

Our policies apply equally to all existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced as a result of the COVID-19 virus.

Priory Woods School staff have ensured that they have followed and adhered to GDPR/ guidelines and systems are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Students are aware (where they have capacity to do so) that there are very clear reporting routes in place when accessing material online so that they can raise any concerns whilst online or to staff/parents should they encounter something that they are not comfortable with.

In addition to the reporting routes back to the school students are also signposted 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

Staff of Priory Woods School & Arts College are in regular contact with parents/carers. Such communications are also used to reinforce the importance of students being safe online. It is especially important for parents/carers to be aware of what their child is being asked to do online, including the sites they are asked to access and be clear who from the school or college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents/carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies. In school staffs' communications with parents and carers, school will emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Other useful safeguarding links;

Safer working practices document

<https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Sept%202019.pdf> NSPCC Childline
0800 1111 and www.childline.org.uk