

# Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

The Belsteads School

# The Belsteads School



*believe and achieve*

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| <b>Written by:</b>         | Daniel Garbutt                              | <b>Date:</b> 01.04.2020 |
| <b>Approved by:</b>        | Sandra Harrison -<br>Consultant Headteacher | <b>Date:</b>            |
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## Important contacts

| ROLE  | NAME   | CONTACT DETAILS   |
|---|--|---|
| Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)                                  | Daniel Garbutt   | <a href="mailto:dan.garbutt@belsteads.essex.sch.uk">dan.garbutt@belsteads.essex.sch.uk</a>                    |
| Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL can't be on site | Alec Cussell Manager and DSL of Little Belsteads. Safeguarding Governor. | <a href="mailto:alec.cussell@littlebelsteads.co.uk">alec.cussell@littlebelsteads.co.uk</a>                    |
| Headteacher (acting)  | Daniel Garbutt   | As above  |
| Local authority designated officer (LADO)                           | Essex  | 03330 139 797<br><a href="mailto:childrens.safeguarding@essex.gov.uk">childrens.safeguarding@essex.gov.uk</a> |
| Chair of governors  | Peter Adams  |   |

## 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our local safeguarding partners Andrew Hall and local authority (LA) Essex, Havering and Southend.

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

- Have a social worker, including children:
  - With a child protection plan
  - Assessed as being in need
  - Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

## 2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online

## 3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

## 4. DSL arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL can't be in school, they can be contacted remotely by: telephone, email or CPOMS entry.

We will ensure that DSLs, wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Alec Cussell. You can contact them by: visiting them in person, email, telephone.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school
- Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

## 5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners
- The local authority about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

## 6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure doesn't attend, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by telephone call
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. The most up to date details can be found on the schools Arbor system.

## 7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

All incidents / concerns will be logged using the CPOMS system.

DSL will follow up any incidents by communication with the responsible adult for those children.

Actions will be determined on a case by case basis.

## 8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

## 9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns

We currently do not have any pupils who would fall under the "not vulnerable" category due to receipt of EHCP.

## 10. Safeguarding for children not attending school

### 10.1 Contact plans

We have contact plans for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- They won't be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the child's best interests); or
- They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

These plans set out:

- How often the school will make contact? At least once per week.
- Which staff member(s) will make contact? DSL or DDSL
- How they will make contact? Telephone call and will ask to speak to the young person.
- All communication will be logged on the Arbor system.

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them once weekly.

If we can't make contact via telephone call, we will send through information via email.

## **10.2 Safeguarding all children**

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately. In particular, children are likely to be spending more time online (see section 11 below).

## **11. Online safety**

### **11.1 In school**

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

### **11.2 Outside school**

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff code of conduct and staff handbook

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

### **11.3 Working with parents and carers**

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

## **12. Mental health**

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

| What specifically is the risk?            | Who may be at risk                | Control measures  | Further action, if required   | Action by who?  |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Mental well-being impact of COVID19 fears | Pupils<br>Staff<br>Parents/carers | <p>Leadership team to regularly update website with latest government guidance and NHS support.</p> <p>School to provide specific information for the benefit of pupils such as Newsround articles and social stories.</p> <p>School to make regular email and telephone contact with all parents and carers and ask questions concerning their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their child.</p> <p>Following link sent to all parents/carers:<br/> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19</a> </p>   | Further advice given if and when necessary.   | Belsteads School leadership team  |
| Mental well-being impact of Isolation     | Pupils<br>Staff<br>Parents/carers | <p>Leadership team to make regular email and telephone contact with all parents and carers and ask questions concerning their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their child.</p> <p>GL PASS online questionnaire to be sent to parents. This online questionnaire is geared towards assessing the well-being of pupils. Results will be analysed by SLT and appropriate plans put in place immediately.</p> <p>Following Link sent to all parents/carers:<br/> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19</a> </p> <p>School continues to send parcels of craft equipment and learning resources to each pupil who is learning at home included in the parcels are small sensory toys and small gifts etc.</p> <p>Links to online activities are sent such as #PEWITHJO and link to other fun ideas to do around the home.</p> <p>The Belsteads School homeschool curriculum plans include interest based projects to enhance engagement.</p> | Results of Online wellbeing questionnaire to be acted on where appropriate.   | <p>Belsteads School leadership team</p> <p>Parents will be responsible to conduct the survey at home if their child is not in school.</p> <p>Curriculum Leads</p> |
| Potential deterioration of home stability | Pupils<br>Parents/carers          | <p>Regular and open communication methods through telephone, email and WhatsApp messenger ensure reasonable monitoring of home stability by school. In the event of a significant deterioration the school will offer a bespoke action plan based on the needs of the family and young person, this may include setting up provision on the Belsteads School site.</p> <p>If there are significant concerns, steps as outlined in The Belsteads School Child Protection and Safeguarding policy will be followed.</p>   | If there is a fear of immediate harm, to the young person or parent/carer then the emergency services will be called. | Belsteads School leadership team  |

## **13. Staff recruitment, training and induction**

### **13.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers**

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### **13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools**

It is currently not appropriate to loan staff from other schools due to the complexity of our pupils presentation.

Appropriate plans will be in place if and when The Belsteads School staff are seconded to other settings.

### **13.3 Safeguarding induction and training**

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

### **13.4 Keeping records of who's on site**

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'

## **14. Children attending other settings**

Due to the complexity of our pupils. It would not be appropriate at this stage for our pupils to attend other settings.

## **15. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 4 weeks by Daniel Garbutt. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## 16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Health and safety policy
- Online safety policy

List any other related policies and procedures that the school has here – for example, whistle-blowing or anti-bullying, if you have these separately.