



Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Up-dated January 2021

Context

From 20th March 2020 and through to the end of the summer term we were asked to keep the majority of 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 needed to attend. A peak in COVID cases and the impact of the new variant resulted in a further school closure, with the exception of vulnerable and key worker children with effect from 4th January 2021.

This addendum of the Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School Safeguarding Policy contains details of our safeguarding arrangements with reference to the areas identified by central government .

Key contacts

Name	Role	Email address
S Matthews	Assistant Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead	S.Matthews@hughfaringdon.org
K Harris	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead KS 3	K.Harris@hughfaringdon.org
G Craig	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead KS4/5	G.Craig@hughfaringdon.org
S Uttley	Headmaster/L3 Safeguarding trained	S.Uttley@hughfaringdon.org
B Winsor	Deputy Headteacher/L3 Safeguarding trained	B.Winsor@hughfaringdon.org
N Milsom-James and M McCartney	Co-Chairs of Governors	N.Milsom-James@hughfaringdon.org M.McCartney@hughfaringdon.org
A Johnson-Mitchell	Safeguarding Link Governor	A.Johnson-Mitchell@hughfaringdon.org

Links with Reading Local authority

The school continues to work closely with Reading LA (Brighter Futures for Children) to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend school safely during this and any future school closure. We continue to support the local authorities' crucial responsibilities in maintaining effective safeguarding and child protection services in this challenging time to ensure access to the support needed:

- We maintain close contact with Reading LA and have a named link, Kate Reynolds, with whom the Headmaster is in regular contact.
- The Headmaster is in regular contact with Headteachers in other Reading LA schools.

- The DSL has direct contact with Mo Galway and Alice Boon (Senior School Standards Officers) and with the LADO, Jeremy Curtis.
- The Designated Teacher for CLA has direct contact with Clare Houlton, Virtual Head.
- The DDSLs, SENCO and Head of the Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Resource have direct contact with the LA (SEND and children's social care) and CAMHS regarding EHCP and other vulnerable children in their care.

Safeguarding and clusters

We acknowledge that should we need to collaborate with other local schools and colleges, to host their students, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#) September 2020 and this guidance continue to apply. In particular, should we need to act as a hub we will continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required. We have established the following guidelines:

1. Should a school wish to use our facility we would require 48 hours' notice, the request be addressed to my Office Manager, Mrs Farrelly at admin@hughfaringdon.org.uk
2. For the days the students was to attend Blessed Hugh, the student would need to be accompanied by a qualified member of staff from his/her school on a 1:5 staffing basis. Please note that, for safeguarding purposes, this is an absolute requirement to access the site.
3. The visiting member[s] of staff would present their ID badges and their name[s] would correspond to the letter sent to Blessed Hugh, see point 8 below. Please note that, for safeguarding purposes, this is an absolute requirement to access the site.
4. We will not have any IT facilities available. The student[s] would need to be provided with this from their own school. We would provide a room in which the member of staff would need to remain. S/he would be responsible for supervising the student[s]. Visitor wifi would be available.
5. The visiting member of staff will have responsibility for being fully aware of any medical/safeguarding/behavioural needs pertaining to the student[s] in their care. They, and they alone will also be responsible for addressing these needs.
6. The member of staff would be given a basic induction into fire/emergency/safeguarding procedures by a member of Blessed Hugh staff.
7. 48 hours prior to the student[s] and teacher[s] arrival, we would need to have received an official letter from the Head of the school, addressed to the Office Manager, Mrs Farrelly, and sent via the above email to this effect:

Keeping children safe in schools and colleges

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance and we continue to have regard to this as part of our legislative duty to keep children safe. The way in which we are currently operating, in response to COVID-19, is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- we remain committed to ensuring the best interests of our children
- If anyone in school has a safeguarding concern about any child they must continue to act and act immediately and have been reminded of this
- The DSL, Headmaster or Deputy Headteacher is available, in school, each day the school is open to children and remain supported face to face or remotely by the DDSLs
- Unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the premises or gain access to children. The usual site security systems (main entrances locked with entry via key pass or intercom) are in place,

regular contractors are DBS checked and should a professional, not DBS checked, need to be on site he/she will be accompanied at all times

- Children continue to be protected when they are online, in school, via visual checks by the member(s) of staff in charge and our Securus subscription. Inappropriate Internet use will continue to be investigated and actioned according to the usual procedure (interview with the DSL or Deputy)
- We have social distancing measures in place in areas in which staff and children work and in social areas of the school and staff on duty to ensure these are respected by all
- Parents and carers are in possession of on-line safety guidance via our Heads Up Newsletter (disseminated electronically and copied to our website) and the new guidance issued on 27th March appears in the 3rd April 2020 edition.
- Students have been informed of online safety guidance via year group assemblies delivered by the DSL in the Autumn Term of 2019.
- Our lateral flow test centre is up and running and students and staff, in school, are being tested and monitored in line with government guidance.

Safeguarding Policy

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is up-to-date and reflects current guidance and the school setting. It was last up-dated in September 2020. The purpose of this Addendum is to ensure compliance in response to COVID-19 and the up-dated Central Government advice of January 2021:

It is open to any updated advice received from Reading LA regarding 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

- The reporting procedure for disclosures and safeguarding/child protection concerns remains unchanged, and a reminder has been circulated, with the exception that where the DSL and Deputies are not on site concerns identified on site should be raised, in the first instance, with the Headmaster or Deputy Headteacher on duty (both of whom are Level 3 Safeguarding trained and hold current, valid certificates).
- Staff have completed the online assessment on The Key to confirm that they have read and understand the requirements of the KCSIE September 2020 document and a record is kept centrally. Staff have valid Safeguarding at Level 1 as a minimum (the majority at L2 as they have completed the Educare online course) and L2 Prevent Certification, from the DSL. In addition, all staff, including PGCE trainees, have received face to face or remote training this academic year. For existing staff, this took place in September and, where staff have joined since, at their point of entry. Copies of the materials have been distributed by email and are stored in the Safeguarding file on SharePoint.
- Key policies have been up-dated and ratified and we are in the process (as at 14th January 2021) of ensuring that staff have read and understand them. The DSL is on hand to provide any clarification needed and staff know this.
- A new Disclosures/Allegations referral form has been produced for staff to advise the safeguarding team of concerns. This will be live from Monday 18th January with the current process of verbal/written referrals continuing in the meantime. The safeguarding team takes swift action to address these as appropriate.
- Parents were made aware of our safeguarding procedures as part of our year group-specific Curriculum Evenings during Term 1.

- The DSL (an AHT) and Deputies hold current, valid, Level 3 Safeguarding Certificates and Prevent L2. The DSL and the KS3 and KS4 DDSLs are in school on a rota basis and available via phone and on-line at all other times.
- The DSL is currently undertaking Level 4 Safeguarding training, with a completion date of 11th February 2021 after which she will be qualified to deliver training, both within school and beyond, up to Level 3.
- The usual communications with Social Services, parents/carers and CAMHS continue via phone, email and on-line including virtual attendance at Child Protection Meetings.
- Child on Child abuse – staff are being charged with reading the policy and acknowledging their understanding. They received face to face training this year (as outlined above) on how to spot the signs of such abuse.
- Where staff and volunteers have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children staff know that this must be reported directly to the Headmaster/DSL who will take swift action to contact the LA Designated Officer (LADO), investigate the matter and follow through to the appropriate outcome. The member of staff against whom the allegation/concern has been raised will be kept informed throughout the process.
- We have actioned government expectations to invite all vulnerable students into school, including those who are not engaging remotely and remain in contact with parents, BFfC and social services regarding students with an EHCP or social worker involvement.
- We have proactively embraced the central government initiative to provide disadvantaged students with a laptop/data access and can confirm that all such children, and some others without remote learning access now have a laptop. We are working to ensure data access for students who have a laptop but where several family members are using computers and this is impacting adversely on WIFI access. We are distributing the small number of SIM Cards provided by Vodafone, are alerting families to additional data available from a variety of network providers and have alerted them to the central government data access scheme.
- Where we deem students to be vulnerable but do not meet the criteria for Social Services/CAMHS support they remain supported by our counsellor, SENDCO, Head of the ASD Resource, DSL, DDSLs, Pastoral and Achievement Co-ordinator as appropriate. Educational Mental Health support is also in place and Clinical Psychologist Support available. Such children are invited into school.
- We ensure the safety of children working from home via welfare call contact from a member of staff (email/phone). Student attendance at remote lessons and remote tutor periods is monitored as the register continues to be taken on SIMS. Parents have been requested to report illness at the start of any school day as per our usual process such that we have a record of students unable to attend lessons that day. Our Attendance Officer produces a daily list of unauthorised absences such that these can be follow up in line with central government guidance. Our DSL and DDSLs are in contact with our link police officers who will conduct welfare checks as required. This includes but is not exclusive to our vulnerable children. Our EWO is kept informed of any such cases.
- Staff have been alerted to the need to advise the DSL and KS DDSL and of any new or mounting safeguarding and/or mental health concerns, including those resulting from bereavement, such that appropriate support can be provided promptly. Such concerns may be noted during welfare calls or face to face when students are in school.
- We remain in close contact with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to track students with a history of poor attendance.
- Key staff completed on-line bereavement and mental health training during the last academic year and this is open to all members of staff.
- Safeguarding Certification is up-to-date.
- Staff have been reminded of the signs that could demonstrate safeguarding and/or mental health concerns, both face to face and remotely, such that these can be identified where they

are not verbally articulated and the appropriate support put in place. Where internal expertise is not available the school will investigate external support via the Mental Health Support Team (MHST).

- A menu of staff expertise is in place.
- Key staff attended the Video Conferences run by the BFiC Senior Education Psychologists in the summer term of 2019 – 20 and further such opportunities will be disseminated as they become available. The termly Mental Health Surgeries continue.
- New concerns identified on student return to school will be referred to the appropriate member of staff or external professional.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)

We acknowledge that the optimal scenario for the school is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site and the following provision is in place:

- Whether on site or working remotely the DSL and DDSLs are available by phone, email or online video via Microsoft Teams
- Both the Headmaster and Deputy are L3 Safeguarding trained and will deal with concerns if the DSL or a Deputy is not on site at that time
- The option to share trained DSLs or deputies with other schools or colleges (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video) is a consideration
- A key to the safeguarding office and filing cabinet is available in a secure location known to the DSL, Headmaster, Deputy Headteacher and DDSLs should access to paper files be required. A limited access summary of the current position of any referrals is kept up to date, by the DDSLs, on SharePoint
- Our staff rota identifies the DSL (or deputy) on duty on each day the school is open to children.

Vulnerable children

As indicated, ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the school. Vulnerable children include those who have a social services support (e.g. social worker, Family Worker, Early Help Worker, Youth worker), children we have identified as vulnerable, children not engaging with remote learning, those who are benefitting from internal and/or EMHP support and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans.

All children in these categories, have been invited into school, along with the children of Critical Workers. The required attendance register is maintained and the parent/carer of any child expected on site and not present is contacted to investigate. The DSL is made aware of this and of the outcome. Should the whereabouts of the child be unclear, the DSL, either directly or via the DDSL, would intervene to ensure any action is taken. The DSL and deputies know who their most vulnerable children are.

We continue to work with and support children's social workers, family workers, youth worker and early help workers etc to help protect vulnerable children during the Covid 19 period

Attendance

The school office ensures that contact details are maintained up-to-date and this continues in the current period.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff are Safeguarding trained and have completed an assessment to demonstrate understanding of the September 2020 KCSIE Document. All new staff or volunteers (including PGCE trainees) are required to complete the L1 (or L2 if completing the online Educare course) Safeguarding and L2 Prevent Duty on-line training courses and receive safeguarding induction training at point of entry. Should it be necessary to employ any agency staff, during this period, the usual safer recruitment procedures will be followed as for new and existing staff.

We have a procedure in place (as above) for receiving children and staff from other schools and would follow the guidance of any receiving school should we have to temporarily close.

Children moving schools and colleges

As per normal practice files will be forwarded to the new school/college as required. EHCPs are stored electronically and paper Safeguarding Files will be accessed and forwarded securely.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

We continue to meet the requirements of Safer Recruitment in Schools and note the changes to the DBS to reflect the current circumstances. The DSL and safeguarding link governor meet with the HR Officer to review the process and records.

Mental health

We acknowledge that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils, their parents and staff. We take this into account when setting our expectations of work from students where they are at home. We recognise the intrinsic link between Mental Health and Safeguarding and have up-dated our policy accordingly. Staff were informed of expectations in the Safeguarding Training led by our DSL on 1st September as are new staff, volunteers and trainees joining subsequently.

Specialist staff remain available to support students as needed either face-to-face, when on site, or via phone, video conference or email. The Counsellor, SENDCO, DDSLs and Pastoral and Achievement Co-ordinator are members of the Mental Health Surgery and maintain contact with the link Educational Psychologist (EP) and Primary Mental Health Worker (PMHW) and keep the DSL updated.

The DSL is also our Senior Mental Health Lead, a key member of the Mental Health Trailblazer Project Board (which now continues under the co-ordination of Brighter Futures for Children) and has contributed to DfE/NHS guidance, for education providers on the role of the Education Mental Health Practitioners in supporting the mental health and well-being of students. We continue to support the training of these professionals and to ensure that additional support is both accessed and disseminated to students, parents and staff as appropriate.

Regular inserts on mental health and well-being will continue to appear in our Heads Up Newsletter as circumstances dictate. This is disseminated electronically and appears on the school website.

Our welfare call programme continues, during the current school closure, with each member of staff being assigned a group of students with whose family they are required to maintain contact via email, phone or video conference. Vulnerable students are assigned to an appropriate internal the professional and all staff are aware that any concerns raised should be reported to the KS DDSL.

Online safety in school

We acknowledge the importance of providing provide a safe environment, including where our children are working online and use our Securus subscription to ensure this when students are working on site. As part of the safeguarding training staff have been alerted to the expectations of the school in this regard and provided with guidance on how to spot the signs of inappropriate online activity and abuse.

Children and online safety away from school

Students have received training on being safe online in face to face assemblies, led by the DSL, or by their tutor using resources provided by the DSL in the autumn term of 2020 and parents were informed as part of the Curriculum Evening webinars.

Remote Learning

Our Remote Learning Policy meets safeguarding and mental health and well-being expectations, has been shared with staff and is posted on the website along with the 'Providing Remote Learning Information for Parents' guidance in line with central government requirements.