



THE CONSORTIUM  
ACADEMY TRUST

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Addendum – COVID 19

The Consortium Academy Trust (TCAT)  
An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee  
Company Number 07665828

Status:	Live
Policy Owner (position)	CEO
Statutory / Recommended	Recommended
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Advisory Committee	Trust Board
Linked Documents and Policies	Whistleblowing Policy Safeguarding Report to Governors Staff Code of Conduct Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers DfE 27/03/20 (removed guidance) updated on 06/01/2021 LA Health and Safety adviser 'SAFE WORKING METHOD' Blended Learning Policy

*\*NB – This document can only be considered valid when viewed on The Consortium Academy Trust website. If the copy is printed or downloaded and saved elsewhere the Policy date should be cross referenced to ensure the current document is referenced*

## **COVID 19 Addendum- Children Protection and Safeguarding (with effect from 04/01/21)**

There have been significant changes in our academies in response to the COVID-19 outbreak over the last 10 months. Once again many young people are now at home and staffing is significantly affected. Despite these changes, the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with our established procedures.

This addendum sets out some adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in school and following LA and Government advice.

On the 4 January 2021, the Prime Minister announced a new national lockdown. Parents / carers were asked to keep their children at home and for schools to remain open for vulnerable children and those of workers critical to the COVID – 19 and EU transition response, who absolutely need to attend.

All academies should, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow them to satisfy themselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their Child Protection Policy.

It is important that the Trust (led by our DSLs or Deputy DSLs, wherever possible) review and revise our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve. This live risk assessment is essential.

The way our academies are currently operating in response to the COVID-19 crisis is fundamentally different to business as usual, however a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- With regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children and young people must always continue to come first
- If anyone in the academy has a safeguarding concern about a child they should continue to act and act immediately
- A DSL or DDSL should be available
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online through platforms appropriate for educational use and alert systems
- We do not share personal details with learners and live streaming must abide by the safeguarding boundaries outlined in the associated policies

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers DfE 27/03/20 (guidance removed) updated on 06/01/2021

**'The continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns' (DfE)**

In response to the school COVID-19 guidance 04/01/21 the specific contingency plans and awareness raising measures are outlined in this addendum to the existing Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements. As such, these contingency arrangements are obligatory and must be followed by all staff. We all have shared responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Whilst the Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements and responsibilities outlined in the Trust strategic policy remain in place, in the current context specific and vital additional strategies are required to be implemented to ensure that continuity of support for vulnerable children and others attending school at this time.

We will endeavour to do all that we can to continue to provide a safe and caring environment for all children and staff attending school and support children not attending as much as practically possible.

We recognise that some of the children attending school are our most vulnerable who may be at even greater risk or stress at this time due to family problems or mental health concerns or issues.

Staff are aware of the possibility of the effect of the current situation on the mental health of children and young people. They should ensure that such concerns are about children attending school and any indications gathered remotely online or by other disclosures about other children or families are recorded and brought to the attention of the DSL/DDSL so that early help may be sought.

The Leadership Team and Governors are also aware and sensitive to the pressures that staff including themselves are under at this time, and recognise that they require support in order to be able to support the children they care for at school. This is particularly the case for staff such as DSLs, SENDCO, pastoral teams and designated LAC teachers who have such an important role to play in supporting our vulnerable children.

### **Health and Safety Aspects**

The Trust will follow the guidance issued by the LA Health and Safety adviser 'SAFE WORKING METHOD' to help maintain a safe environment for staff and children and young people.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Vulnerable Children**

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. We will ensure that the DSL or Dep DSL are contactable by phone if one or the other is not on site during the school day. If the DSL or Dep DSL are not in school, a senior member of staff or experienced member of the team will be identified as the lead on dealing with CP issues if they arise and will liaise with the DSLs. This will also continue to be logged on the academy's safeguarding system.

Where an academy does not have a DSL/DDSL who is able to be on site or work away from site, the Trust has made arrangements for other Academy DSLs to offer remote guidance and support to the identified Senior Leader on site.

Staff in school are reminded that in cases where a child has suffered or may be at risk of immediate harm that contact is made immediately to the DSL or Dep DSL in line with existing procedures. Staffing levels will be sufficient to enable this to be done and not risk compromising current social distancing arrangements and safe supervision of learners.

Staff will have access to pastoral staff on site who have contact arrangements to update or seek advice in the cases of urgent and immediate concerns if the DSL or Dep DSL cannot be contacted:

- The attached Social Worker or YFS worker where the child has one
- Safeguarding & Partnership Hub if it is a new concern
- S&PH out of hours in case of an emergency

SLT will therefore have access to a list of children attending school who access Social Care with their current Social Worker's contact phone number and the email addresses.

All staff also have access to the current Safeguarding Contact list containing the contact details for DSL/DDSL, LADO, Safeguarding & Partnership Hub / East Riding Safeguarding Children Board /Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safeguarding Governor and Chair of Governors.

\*PLEASE see P5 of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for all key contacts\*

Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns will continue to be recorded using the Trust's Safeguarding Policy and DSL and Pastoral Teams will be notified. If the concern is of a child at risk or who has suffered harm this recording will be in addition to, rather than instead of, direct contact to the DSL or DDSL.

If it is felt that the concerns are at the level of Early Help and support rather than CP or concerns about COVID-19, advice will be sort from the DSL, DDSL or other pastoral staff via the current emergency Early Help arrangements by contacting the FISH Team. (fish@eastriding.gov.uk)

Staff are aware of the possibility of the effect of the current situation on the mental health of children and young people and to ensure that such concerns about children attending school and any indications gathered remotely online or by other disclosures about other children or families are recorded and brought to the attention of the DSL / Dep DSL so that early help may be sought. We will continue to support the mental health and well-being of our learners through our support team but there will be stringent safeguarding systems in place and each case will be risk assessed for the appropriateness of continuing remote support.

## **Vulnerable Children- Operation Encompass- Domestic Abuse**

We will continue to liaise with and update Social Workers or Youth and Family support workers and other lead professionals who are involved with all children attending school.

Schools will keep in regular contact with key workers and update the academy's safeguarding system accordingly all children that are classed as vulnerable with priority for those on Child Protection Plans, CIN Plans and where Social Teams are attached. Pastoral teams will complete a welfare check via email/phone call to offer any support needed to any other learner classed as vulnerable (EHCP, LAC, mental health or any other previous safeguarding issue). Staff will prioritise this when in school and liaise with DSL/DDSL and Pastoral Teams.

We remain open and therefore we expect that children with a social worker and / or EHCP will attend, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. We will follow usual attendance procedures for learners we are expecting who fail to attend.

We will ensure that contact details for all children eligible to attend are up to date and adequate.

We are aware that in this period that vulnerable families may be under increased risk of domestic abuse or stress. Operation Encompass notifications continue to be emailed to the two designated members of staff (DSL/DDSL). Arrangements are in place to ensure that staff members in school are made aware of any such notifications relating to children attending school so that the child can be supported in the normal way following such notifications. Notifications involving children not attending school will be received and the DSLs will ensure that these are recorded on the learners' files.

Staff are reminded of the need to be alert at this time to indicators or disclosures of domestic abuse, which may not be notified to the Police. If there are concerns that domestic abuse or related matters may develop in particular families of children and young people attending school this must be recorded and brought to the attention of the DSL or Dep DSL who may seek Early Help or intervention.

### **Vulnerable Children not Attending**

DSL/DDSL and Pastoral staff will make 'check in' calls each week to families who are eligible to attend school but are not doing so. This will be extended to any others that we feel are 'on the edge of social care' involvement, have had an Operation Encompass alert concerning or if there are other such concerns.

We will note these calls on the child's file and make CP or Early Help referrals if appropriate.

## **Supporting Children in School**

The Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and well – being of all its learners. Trust academies will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The HT will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to learner ratio numbers are appropriate to ensure safety. Trust academies will follow Government guidance on social distancing and continue to follow public Health England advice on hand washing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID – 19.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

If there are incidents or allegations of peer on peer bullying, harassment or abuse (including online) we will follow the Trust procedures in investigating and dealing with them. If appropriate, this may involve referrals to other agencies. Parents/carers will be notified by phone, email or other virtual methods if possible. We would consider appropriate sanctions in the light of the current situation.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

From 4 January 2021 educational settings were again required to temporarily change their attendance recording practices and inform the DfE on an online form. We will carry out first day absence calls to children expected to attend unless the parents/carers or Social Workers have indicated that they will not be attending. In either case we will notify Social Workers or Y&FS workers if the child does not attend.

For any vulnerable children not attending full time we will attempt to contact parents/carers to check on how the children are and remind them that the school is open for their child.

We will use the DfE [daily online attendance form](#) to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows us to provide accurate, up-to-date data on the number of children taking up places.

The form is emailed to the DfE before 2pm. Local Authorities have been given access to the spreadsheet showing attendance data for educational settings in their area. For vulnerable children there may be additional information requested by each home LA to enable them to support the child/young person and family [cfsinfo@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:cfsinfo@eastriding.gov.uk) in-box (East Riding academies) and [CovidEd@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:CovidEd@hullcc.gov.uk) (for Winifred Holtby Academy)

## **Staff Training, Induction and Safer Recruitment**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place while there remains a threat of COVID-19 virus. For the period the measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or DDSL) even if the refresher training is missed.

All academy staff have had safeguarding training and have read KCSiE (2020) part 1.

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the workforce or gain access to children. If it is necessary to appoint new staff before normal school arrangements are in place we will follow the usual safer recruitment procedures as outlined in KCSiE Part 3.

The only exception will be that we would follow the specially revised guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking which is now in place.

Any new staff appointed before the emergency arrangements or since will receive appropriate induction training to cover the usual and updated current safeguarding arrangements before starting work with children and young people.

If a member of staff or other professional is deployed to work at this academy we will ensure that an appropriate induction is delivered and that the safeguarding arrangements are clearly explained and appropriate policies are provided.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any academy is aware which staff will be in and that appropriate checks have been carried out. As such, each academy will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in KcSiE (2020)

### **Volunteers**

We will not be using volunteers during the present arrangements. This stance will be reviewed at the appropriate time.

### **Online Safety in Schools and Colleges**

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of online filtering and blocking of inappropriate material and interactions and monitoring by staff of children's online activity. DSL/DDSL get daily Smoothwall notifications via email. The DSL/DDSL will be alerted to any concerns on and off site when using the school interchange.

We continue through our set work, social media and communication with all parents/carers to raise awareness of the need for on-line safety. All academies will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection / GDPR requirements.

### **Children and Online Safety Away from School**

All staff who interact with children and young people, including online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with following the Child Protection procedures as above and where appropriate referrals will be made to Children's Social care.

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

## **Remote Learning**

We will continue to provide a safe environment for students whilst accessing remote learning. The blended learning approach will combine online educational materials and opportunities for live interaction (using the digital platform identified by each academy). All staff will be asked to monitor daily engagement and attendance of learners whilst working from home. Any concerns will be collated within departments and fed back to pastoral teams, DSL and DDSL where welfare calls to parents/carers can be made and any further action to be taken recorded. This will be a further safeguarding check.

## **Safe & Appropriate Working & Allegations**

All new staff and existing staff are reminded that although the school is in an exceptional situation the requirement to follow the School Code of Conduct has not changed. Whilst interactions with children may be different appropriate and professional boundaries etc. will and must be maintained at all times. This includes any contact with learners not at school online or by email as part of agreed remote teaching and learning activities.

If a member of staff has concerns about the safe and appropriate behaviour or practice of a colleague, they will contact the Headteacher or other senior member of staff to discuss these matters. If the concern is about the Headteacher then the Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be contacted.

In the same way, if any member of staff has concerns regarding Child Protection or Safeguarding including those relating to the current COVID-19 special safety arrangements, the above procedure must be followed in line with the Trust Whistleblowing procedures.

## **Guidance and Advice**

We will continue to ensure that updated advice and guidance from the East Riding Safeguarding Children Partnership, East Riding Local Authority, Hull Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Hull City Council, the LADO and the Government departments are acted upon as appropriate.

## **Advice to Parents/Carers**

We will maintain communication with parents/carers and ensure that they are signposted via the academy website and Twitter to the following sources of advice particularly in respect to online safety at this time of increased use to support learning and social interaction.

- 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 carers 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

**Review of Policy Addendum:**

We will constantly review the operation of this addendum and make adjustments if identified and on receipt of further Government, DfE, ERSCP, ER LA, Hull City Council or other advice and updates etc.