



READING SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

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Contents

Important contacts	2
1. Scope and definitions	4
2. Core safeguarding principles	4
3. Reporting concerns	4
4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements	5
5. Working with other agencies	5
6. Monitoring attendance	5
7. Peer-on-peer abuse	6
8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer	6
9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns	7
10. Safeguarding for key worker / vulnerable children in school	
11. Safeguarding for children not attending school	7
12. Online safety	8
13. Mental health	9
14. Staff recruitment, training and induction	9
15. Children attending other settings	10
16. Monitoring arrangements	11
17. Links with other policies	11

Important contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Ms Lizzie Ayres	layres@reading-school.co.uk 01189015600
Deputy DSL	Rev'd Chris Evans, Deputy Headmaster Mr. Paul Teixeira, Boarding Housemaster	cevans@reading-school.co.uk pteixeira@reading-school.co.uk 01189015600
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Mr. Tom Evans, Ast Head Mr Greg Fairchild, Ast Head Mr. Alun Lloyd, Ast Head Mr. Dave McGall, Ast Head Mr. Dominic Taylor	tevans@reading-school.co.uk gfairchild@reading-school.co.uk alloyd@reading-school.co.uk dmcgall@reading-school.co.uk dtaylor@reading-school.co.uk 01189015600
Headteacher	Mr. Ashley Robson	arobson@reading-school.co.uk 01189015600
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Jeremy Curtis	07841 253871 0118 937 3555
Chair of governors	Mr. Bob Kenwick	bkenwick@reading-school.co.uk

SLT On Site

	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays
SLT on call	TE	LA	AL	GF	DMC

Key Contacts within the Local Authority

Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Procedures: <http://berks.proceduresonline.com/>

	Name	Address	Telephone contact	Email
Children's Single Point of Access	Duty Social worker	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 3641 Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours) Tel: 01344 786543 Fax: 01344 786535	cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Prevent Officer Thames Valley Police	Prevent Officer	Reading Police Station Castle Street Reading RG1 7TH	07788 307 178	Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk
Community Safety Partnership	Anthony Brain	Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 3179	Anthony.brain@reading.gov.uk
Service Manager for Early Help and Prevention (including early years)	Coriene Dishington	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 6012	Corinne.dishington@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Education Welfare Service	Shirley Moneanu	Brighter Futures for Children, The Avenue Centre, Tilehurst, Reading	0118 937 6554	Shirley.moneanu@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Local Authority Designated Officer	Jeremy Curtis	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	07841 253871 0118 937 3555	Jeremy.curtis@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Virtual School Headteacher - CLA	Clare Houlton	Brighter Futures for Children, The Avenue Centre, Tilehurst, Reading	07803 760667 0118 937 3504	Clare.houlton@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Virtual School Headteacher – Pupil and School Support	Gill Dunlop	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 4147	Gill.dunlop@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Safeguarding and Children Missing Education Officer (including exclusions)	Fiona Hostler	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 4336 07811 422419	Fiona.hostler@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners and local authority (LA). 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. From 5th January 2021 parents were 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. The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

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. 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. Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy. 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 immediately to the DSL/Headteacher. Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Bob Kenwick.

DSLs will continue to report concerns to the Children's Single Point of Access in the usual way.

During office hours call **01635 503190**

Out of office hours, Emergency Duty Team Tel: **01344 786543**

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 (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy 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 (or deputy) can't be in school, they can be contacted remotely by email or telephone. A list of SLT on-site and on-call is under the 'important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), 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. You can contact them by email or 01189015600, details listed in the 'Important Contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

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.

The following guidance is currently in place: 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 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. Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support, this may mean sharing resources with other schools. Reading School will continue to work with and support 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 will be **Ms L Ayres**.

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

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the school or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. Reading School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school.

6. Monitoring attendance

As tracking of attendance in remote lessons can highlight patterns and create a safeguarding picture for pastoral staff, we will use our normal record of tracking attendance. Teachers will take a register at some point in their lessons (not necessarily the start of the lesson) in order to enable a clear picture of each student's remote lesson attendance. Any concerns will be followed up by pastoral staff.

Where any child we expect to attend school site 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 / email
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

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

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy.

The school 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, and appropriate referrals made. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately. Investigations will continue to be made by the Head of House of the alleged pupil abusing another.

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 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 have the option to offer places in school to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this. If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 11.1 below.

10. Safeguarding for key worker / vulnerable children attending school

Reading School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. Reading School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headmaster will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. Reading School will refer to the 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. Reading School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded appropriately.

11. Safeguarding for children not attending school

11.1 Contact plans

Reading School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all of its 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, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. Details of this plan must be recorded on the pupils file. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, and door-step visits (observing social distancing). Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

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
- Which staff member(s) will make contact
- How they will make contact

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

11.2 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 12 below).

12. Online safety

12.1 In school

Reading School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded appropriately. We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

12.2 Outside school

Reading school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages. 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. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy. 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. Reading School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing student behaviour policy and e-safety policy. Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Use of online communication tools (eg. Zoom/Whatsapp) other than Microsoft Teams are advised against as monitoring is impossible and allegations are difficult to investigate;
- Where possible, keep all communications with a student in one channel ie. school email or Teams. If telephoning students, keep a brief log/record of discussion.
- Staff should use professional language at all times when present on audio, and use the 'Mute' button judiciously.
- Take care not to inadvertently display sensitive information on screen during screen-sharing.

12.3 Working with parents and carers

Reading School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. 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

We will do this by:

- Providing regular updates and communication of expectations and support through the headmaster's email update to parents.
- Providing links on our safeguarding page on our website.

13. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. The pastoral team and SEN department will continue give tailored support to individual students. We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time through our website <https://www.reading-school.co.uk/page/?title=Wellbeing&pid=90> and Microsoft Teams for staff and students.

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

14. Staff recruitment, training and induction

14.1 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 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. 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. Reading School 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. Reading School 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 should 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, Reading School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

14.2 Safeguarding induction and training

DSL training has been suspended whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training. All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so

they know what to do if they are worried about a child. Free online Safeguarding training is available for staff working from home.

- Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.
- 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
- 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements. We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

14.3 Keeping records of who is 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'.
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere.

15. Children attending other settings

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information. Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them.
- The child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the child's social worker
- Details of the virtual school head
- Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO can't share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

- We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

16. 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 Lizzie Ayres, DSL and Assistant Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the Executive Committee of the Governing Body.

17. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- E-safety policy
- Health and safety policy
- Anti-bullying policy

All staff will be sent this additional policy to read and to [sign an agreement](#) to say they have read and understood the content.

Approved by EXPC Committee of the Governing Body: 1st February 2021