

**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at
Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School**

March 2020

1. Context

From 23rd March 2020 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 ([advice from government](#)). There has been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak with many young people now at home and with staffing likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, our Safeguarding Policy and Procedure is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This additional Appendix of Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School Safeguarding Policy details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Key contacts

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lynn Pennington	head@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Caroline Witts	cwitts@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk
	Matt Smith	msmith@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Tessa Pemberton	chair@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk

Whilst the partial closure is in place, the school site will remain open for vulnerable children and those whose parents are key workers when requested.

2. Vulnerable children

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 will be risk-assessed in consultation with parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are and will ensure provision is offered to them whilst the school is in partial closure. Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. The lead person for this will be: Lynn Pennington (Headteacher).

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker can 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 Woodchester will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the DSL or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School leaders will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school.

- Children of critical workers who may attend school if no safe alternative arrangements can be made.
- Children at home – work packs sent home with regular updates provided by communication from the classteacher using Class DoJo and Dropbox
- Helpful information linked to Coronavirus and community support will be posted on the website.

3. Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#). Where a child is expected and does not arrive, school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

These arrangements will only be in place for children who have enrolled and are eligible for Emergency Childcare. For all other children school is closed.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School leaders and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether any will be attending school and then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, we will notify their social worker.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

When Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School is partially opened, a DSL or Deputy will be on site. Should this not be possible due to illness or self-isolation, they will be contactable by phone.

It is important that all staff have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot have a direct conversation with the DSL or a Deputy DSL, they should email them to ensure that the concern is received. Staff should contact the DSL via her mobile telephone in the first instance.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are: **01452 426565** or by email childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Further details can be found at [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children executive escalation procedure, available here:

[Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: chair@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place 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 will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

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.

7. Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements, young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged and can be found at [The role of the LADO and the allegations management process - Safeguarding Children in Gloucestershire](#)

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

8. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment (see flowchart on Page 40 of KCSiE 2019) to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

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.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary 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.

We 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 will 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, Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- The school will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with [DBS guidance](#).
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by SLT of who is working in the school each day.

9. Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and [other risks online](#) and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place
- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on safe remote learning and guidance for [safer working practice](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium.
- Staff have recognised the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance

Parents and carers have information via the website about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [South West 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

- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms agreed by the Senior Leadership Team to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

10. Supporting children not in school

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all 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.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary school and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary 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 at Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary 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.

11. Supporting children in school

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary 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.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary 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.

Where Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the Local Authority.

12. Peer on peer Abuse

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Children who are in school during partial closure will be supervised at all times, to ensure they feel safe.

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 and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi- agency partner required ensuring the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on 31st March 2020 and is available on the school website at [Woodchester Endowed CE Primary School Website](#)