

CHOSEN HILL SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 CRISIS

Due to the frequent updating of statutory and non-statutory guidance this Appendix will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Version 1 (V1) 2 April 2020

Version 2 (V2) tbc

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Chosen Hill School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, June 2019
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2019
- [DfE Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Safeguarding in Schools, Colleges and other Providers](#) (please note: due to the frequent updating of statutory and non-statutory guidance this reference will be regularly reviewed and updated; first published - 27 March 2020; updated - no current update)

At all times - the safety and well-being of all Chosen Hill students must remain the highest priority, but balanced at the same time with the well-being and health of all staff. The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Safeguarding Team in line with the school's established safeguarding procedure.

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1. EFFECTIVE COVID-19 SAFEGUARDING RESPONSE

Chosen Hill School will continue to provide an informed and effective Safeguarding response to the Coronavirus pandemic. As a reminder, the school would like to reiterate the Government and NHS guidelines about maintaining frequent excellent hygiene; only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work; continually operate social distancing – staying at least two metres away from other people outside of your household.

2. PURPOSE

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remains everyone's responsibility. Consequently, everyone who comes into contact with a child, whether it is those in school during this 'time of closure' but remaining open for the vulnerable students and those of key workers or those students working from home, has a role to play in safeguarding and child protection. In doing so, all staff and volunteers should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, *what is in the best interests of the child*.

It is important to remember whether Chosen Hill remains open or becomes part of a hub model consolidated onto one site, staff should still follow the guidance of their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASH) and DSLs and DDSLs should ensure that all staff are aware of those issues and systems for reporting and provide local safeguarding updates.

In accordance with statutory and non-statutory guidance this policy sets out the school's procedures for safeguarding and child protection during the COVID-19 emergency response.

If in the near future, Chosen Hill School collaborates and students and/or staff from multiple settings are receiving their education provision in a hub school, the principles in *Keeping Children Safe In Education* (KCSIE, 2019) and this guidance continue to apply. In particular, the school or college that is acting as the hub in the cluster should 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.

3. VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Vulnerable is identified as: students who have an assigned social worker (Level of Need 4 at Chosen Hill School) and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). 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.

Attending education settings is known as a protective factor for children receiving the support of a social worker. It is right that the school prioritises support for those who will benefit the most. The school will continue to balance this carefully with the urgent need to reduce social contact right across society to support the work to reduce the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

School Leads and especially Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads know the most vulnerable children best and will offer additional places to those on the edges of receiving children's social care support based upon risk assessments and need. Eligibility for free school meals in itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

It is important to note that some students that have not been 'at risk' previously become more at risk in this new COVID-19 context; the expected rise in Domestic Violence has begun and the school in liaison with Children's Services must respond by considering who should be offered places in school provision and by keeping in regular contact with the student's home. Students potentially suffering from Domestic Violence, Neglect, Abuse, Child Criminal Exploitation or Child Sexual Exploitation will be elevated to the daily contact list to ensure that a referral can be made as soon as there is a concern raised. During the emergency COVID-19 measures the majority of the Chosen Hill School student population will not be seen by staff at school, therefore it is essential that everyone is observant and listening to the *voice of the child* during any contact.

The school will continue to work with and support students' social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting students' social workers and the local authority Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after students in line with the safeguarding partners detailed in the safeguarding and child protection policy.

For Level of Need 3 and 4, students with an EHCP, Look After Children, Young Carers and any additional students identified as particularly vulnerable, the school carried out a risk assessment for each of them. Monitoring systems were established for the DSL, DDSLs, Inclusion Manager and support staff to regularly telephone the families identified and where necessary the assigned social worker of those families who declined their place at school. The school continues to engage with Early Help and Social Services to ensure that for particular families a risk assessment is carried out, to determine the level of statutory contact/ visits undertaken. All welfare calls carried out by the school are recorded on the *COVID-19 Master Spreadsheet*. Where necessary a detailed chronology is recorded on *My Concern*.

4. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CHILD CONCERNS

Despite the emergency nature of the current situation everyone in school has a role of recognising and responding to potential indicators of abuse and neglect, all action should be taken by those with statutory powers to help the child. Early contact and close liaison with such agencies are therefore regarded as essential by Chosen Hill School.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for ensuring that children are identified, and the appropriate agency involved if there is actual or suspected cases of child abuse by adults, parents, or any other adult. The DSL and DDSL are responsible for ensuring that children are identified, and the appropriate agency involved.

In the future, if appropriate, for all students coming into a hub school from another school, with a known safeguarding or child protection need, a summary of needs and interventions MUST be provided by the 'sending' school safeguarding core team. Access must be given to Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans, ECHPs, or for Looked After Children their Personal Education Plan (PEP) and any other formal, relevant information. The name and contact details of the social worker must be provided for every vulnerable child and the name and contact details of the Virtual School Lead responsible for any Looked After Child.

The DSL and DDSL will attend any reviews called by the Local Authority by video conferencing or other means of social distancing and may call on appropriate members of staff for reports. It may be necessary to rely on School Safeguarding Leads to attend reviews where necessary.

For the time being Chosen Hill School will maintain the current electronic record keeping procedures using My Concern - a 'Safeguarding' file will be created or maintained for each child, all reports of concerns, details of contacts, referrals, actions and updates to profiles will be electronically recorded. In the future the Chosen Hill will be responsive to individual students if arrangements are implemented in the Local Authority for potential host and hub schools.

In the future, if a student from Chosen Hill School is attending a hub school in another setting that isn't using 'My Concern', the safeguarding file will be held on paper and stored in a locked cabinet. As soon as is possible the record will be transferred securely to Chosen Hill School.

5. POTENTIAL ABSENCE OF DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD/DEPUTY DSL

The optimal scenario is to have the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher on site. Where this is not possible the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher will be available to be contacted via phone or through Microsoft Teams (for example, when they are working from home). Where possible the school will seek to include the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher in each shift in the rota.

Whatever the scenario, it is important that all staff and volunteers have access to the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher. **On each day, staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them if the DSL or DDSL is not on site.**

Where the DSL, DDSL or Headteacher are not on site, in addition to the above, the assigned two senior leaders will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding in school. The two senior leaders will liaise with the offsite the DSL, DDSL and as required liaise with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments in school. The senior leader will also ensure that all the responsibilities of the DSL listed above will be met.

6. ONLINE SAFETY

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate communications and online material. As such, the school will ensure appropriate procedures, filters and monitoring systems are in place in accordance with the following:

- E-Safety Protocol
- Mobile Protocol
- Web Filtering and Device Monitoring

Where students are using school equipment at home, the ability to filter access is limited. Filtering will be provided to the extent that is possible within the technological constraints the current crisis allows.

Students should be reminded of Internet Safety rules and parents will be expected to manage their child's safety whilst at home.

Staff delivering teaching online, responding to SMHW correspondence or submissions, engaging in email correspondence with students should read, recognise or listen for any cues that indicate a safeguarding concern. The concern should be referred as soon as possible by completing the Chosen Hill School "Safeguarding Referral Form" to enable the DSL or other named persons to respond in an appropriate timely way.

Cues to be aware of might include:

- Comments or questions about child abuse or neglect
- Inadequate supervision at home
- The impact of food poverty
- The health status in a family and any young caring responsibilities children have

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring students who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school or college this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

[Childline](#) - for support

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content

[Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command \(CEOP\)](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

7. INTERACTING WITH PUPILS ONLINE THAT ARE NOT PRESENT IN SCHOOL

It is important that all staff who interact with students, including online, continue to look out for signs that they may be at risk of harm or experiencing harm. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Chosen Hill School *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy* and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the staff Code of Conduct.

The school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

When the school is in contact with parents and carers, communication will additionally be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access.

8. INCREASED RISK

The pressures on students and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL or DDSs about any concerns.

Incidences of Domestic Abuse are expected to significantly increase during the period of isolation as perpetrators will use this time as a “tool of coercive and controlling behaviour”, and victims and their children are consistently more vulnerable during periods of societal stress ([see government guidance](#)). Operation Encompass will continue as normal with notifications being sent to the school's email address encompass@chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk

9. RISK ONLINE

Students will be using the internet more during this period. The school is also using online approaches to deliver education, training and support. Staff need to be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same safeguarding practices as when students were learning at the school.

The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place. Staff should consider the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and be reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.

The school will continue to communicate with parents and carers about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community

Further Information and support:

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

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

[Net-aware](#) - support for parents and carers from the NSPCC

[Parent info](#) - support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online

[Thinkuknow](#) - 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](#).

10. PEER ON PEER ABUSE

The school recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where the school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, it will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Chosen Hill School *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy*. The school will listen and work with the student, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that student.

Concerns and actions will be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

11. CONCERNS ABOUT AN ADULT

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with a student in school, they should continue to refer their concern to the Headteacher. Concerns about the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors. If any of these professionals are unavailable due to the COVID-19 context, then colleagues must refer the matter to Nigel Hatton (LADO). The matter will then follow usual safeguarding procedures.

The 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 September 2019*.

The school will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of *KCSIE September 2019* 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

12. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, the DSL, and DDSLs who have completed the Level 3: Safeguarding Children DSL training will continue to be classed as a trained DSL or DDSL even if refresher training is missed. However, where the training lapses it will be necessary to refresh DSL training as soon as possible after the COVID-19 situation is deemed over.

All existing staff have completed the "SSS Learning: Child Protection Refresher" and have read part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2019*. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will communicate with staff about any new local arrangements and ensure that they know what to do if they are worried about a child. In addition, staff will be required to complete further online Safeguarding training as part of the school's annual Safeguarding CPD offer.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction including signing to say that they have read and understood relevant documentation.

Chosen Hill School staff could move between educational settings on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. If the school receives staff from another setting, the DSL or Headteacher will judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required. The minimum will include health and safety related to the school, contacts for the DSL/DDSL and leadership team and how to make a safeguarding referral. The school will seek assurance that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training and undergone appropriate safer recruitment checks by checking their photo identification from their school.

13. SAFER RECRUITMENT/VOLUNTEERS AND MOVEMENT OF STAFF

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the school will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of *KCSIE, September 2019*.

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. EPM will support and advise on how to keep records of where non-face to face checks have taken place so that they can be followed up when the COVID-19 context is no longer relevant.

Where Chosen Hill is utilising volunteers, the school will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of *KCSIE September 2019*. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in *KCSIE September 2019*.

14. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Statutory Guidance stipulates that Local Authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. The DfE has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of key workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows the school to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the Department on the number of children taking up places.

The school is completing day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Where a student was expected to attend school, and did not attend, a member of support staff will phone the relevant parent or carer to establish that the child is safe and well and the reason for non-attendance. This will be recorded and updated on the Vulnerable and Key Workers master spreadsheet.

To ensure the above, the school will communicate with parents and carers of students attending school to re-confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

The DSL, DDSL or Headteacher is responsible for overseeing that pupil attendance is monitored and safe and well checks are in place to allow timely safeguarding referrals to be made or actions taken, should they be required.

In all circumstances where a child categorised as vulnerable (see above) does not take up their place in our school, or discontinues after a period of attendance, we will notify their social worker and Virtual School Headteacher.

15. SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Chosen Hill School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. All attending students (currently Vulnerable and of key Workers) will continue to be provided with a safe space to enable them to attend and flourish. The Governors and Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Chosen Hill 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 COVID-19. Staff will ensure that where the school cares for children of Key Workers and Vulnerable children on site, appropriate support will be in place for them.

16. MENTAL HEALTH

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents. Colleagues are made aware of this when considering

the setting and expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. This will follow the DfE's guidance and the school's protocol on providing education remotely.

The DfE's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for Level of Need - 4 students for Wellbeing concerns in the current circumstances remain with the school counsellor through online video and telephone consultation. The school will continue to monitor the wellbeing of students in and out of school and will respond accordingly. The school will continue to sign post both students and parent carers to local and national Mental Health Support.

For wider information about context please try here:

[Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Responding to the coronavirus: resources for mental health and wellbeing](#)

[Gloucestershire County Council: look after your wellbeing](#)

17. KEY CONTACTS FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Chosen Hill School

Headteacher: Kirsten Harrison; contact email: ht@chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk; telephone: 01452 713 488

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jonathan Bardgett; contact email: safeguarding@chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk; telephone: 01452 713 488

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Karen Chodera; contact email: safeguarding@chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk; telephone: 01452 713 488

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Leia Rosenberg; contact email: safeguarding@chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk; telephone: 01452 713 488

Safeguarding Administrator: Jacqui Henrikson; contact email: safeguarding@chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk; telephone: 01452 713 488

External Agencies

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Nigel Hatton – 01452 425017
- Local Authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): Help Desk - 01452 426565; email enquires - childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- The Virtual School: Headteacher, Jane Featherstone - 01452 328360; email enquiries - virtualschooladmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- Operation Encompass: Halah Shams El-Din, MASH Safeguarding Senior Officer – 01452 328953

18. HELPLINE NUMBERS

[NSPCC](#) Adults Helpline: telephone - 0808 800 5000; email - help@nspcc.org.uk

[NSPCC Childline](#): telephone -0800 1111

[Refuge](#) 24-hour National Domestic Abuse: telephone helpline - 0808 2000 247

[Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service \(GDASS\)](#): telephone helpdesk - 01452 726 570

[Gloucestershire Young Carers](#): telephone - 01452 733060

[The Family Information Service Directory](#): telephone - 01452 427362 / 0800 542 02 02

[Trussell Trust](#) (Find the nearest foodbank)

19. LINKS TO ASSOCIATED SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Links to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy• Staff Code of Conduct• Behaviour Management Policy• Safer Recruitment/DBS policy• E-safety Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SEND policy• Allegations Against Staff (Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures)• Anti-Bullying Policy• Mobile Device Acceptable User Protocol

20. LINKS TO DFE GUIDANCE

[COVID-19: Managing safeguarding in schools, colleges and other education providers](#)

[Coronavirus: COVID-19: Guidance on Vulnerable Children and Young People](#)

[COVID-19: Guidance for Schools about Temporary Closing](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): attendance recording for educational settings](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): What is self-isolation and why is it important?](#)