



# **The Thomas Adams School & Sixth Form**

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding: COVID-19 Addendum**

Reviewed January 2021

Reviewed by Governors

## Contents

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

## Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Rowena Turner	<a href="mailto:rt1@thomasadams.net">rt1@thomasadams.net</a> 07958065851
Deputy DSL	Mark Cooper Jennifer Whitfield Gavin Sterry Nicola Cooper Julie Squire Darran Tunnah Terri-Ann Plant Donna Peel	<a href="mailto:mc@thomasadams.net">mc@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:jw@thomasadams.net">jw@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:gs@thomasadams.net">gs@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:nc@thomasadams.net">nc@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:jes@thomasadams.net">jes@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:dlt@thomasadams.net">dlt@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:tap@thomasadams.net">tap@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:dp@thomasadams.net">dp@thomasadams.net</a>
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Tom McAleavey Peter Neale  There will always be a member of SLT on site; this will vary daily. If not a Deputy DSL, the member of SLT will be able to contact the DSL or a Deputy, who will be on call whilst school is open.	<a href="mailto:tm@thomasadams.net">tm@thomasadams.net</a> <a href="mailto:pn@thomasadams.net">pn@thomasadams.net</a>
Headteacher	Mark Cooper	<a href="mailto:mc@thomasadams.net">mc@thomasadams.net</a>

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Ellie Jones	lado@shropshire.gov.uk
Chair of governors	Jo Hickson	hicksonjo@aol.com

## 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 (Shropshire Council, Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, West Mercia Police) and local authority (LA) Shropshire.

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.**

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

Have a social worker, including children:

- With a child protection plan
- Assessed as being in need
- Looked after by the local authority

Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

## 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 (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- 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.

Throughout this time, our normal reporting mechanisms remain available to staff, chiefly being the use of the safeguarding icon on all Thomas Adams Laptops, or use of the email address [safeguarding@thomasadams.net](mailto:safeguarding@thomasadams.net); in addition all staff have been issued with a direct telephone number to contact the DSL in the case of an emergency (07958065851). From here, all concerns will be recorded on our Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS), will be reviewed by the DSL and actioned appropriately.

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.

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed by email as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

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.

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:

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers (DfE, 2020)**

## **6. Monitoring attendance**

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school 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 making telephone contact, and following this up with a text message and/or email if no response.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. All parents and carers will be asked to confirm attendance at school before the young person arrives on site, and will be asked to verify contact details at this time.

## **7. Peer-on-peer abuse**

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately.

All pupils are able to contact individual members of staff using the Microsoft Teams System (please see 11.2 for further guidance regarding this) to let them know of any concerns with work, social issues, or problems with their peers using this system. If the concern is raised to a staff member other than the child's head of year (HOY), then this staff member will ensure the HOY or alternative member of the pastoral team as appropriate. Investigations will then be carried out, and contact made with parents as and when required.

## **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, following our Whistleblowing Policy.

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](mailto: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 do not 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. These could be children who have previously had a social worker, or about whom we have raised safeguarding concerns previously, where a threshold has not been met; in addition these could be children who receive a higher level of support from our School Counsellor or Pastoral Team.

The majority of these vulnerable students have been allocated a key worker. Daily or weekly contact will be made by the key worker as appropriate. Details of all communication is logged on the school's safeguarding platform – CPOMS. This is monitored daily by the DSL. Any concerns arising from these communications (or a failure for communication to be made) will be followed up to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child and their family. We will work closely with the Education Access Service and with our allocated Educational Welfare Officer to ensure that any concerns are escalated appropriately, and will undertake a multiagency approach to following up on these concerns.

If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10.1 below.

## **10. Safeguarding for children not attending school**

### **10.1 Contact plans**

A text message and a letter has gone out to all parents/carers advising them of the contact details required if they need to report any child protection or safeguarding issue.

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
- How this contact will be recorded and shared with the DSL, who will monitor.

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them as appropriate as the situation develops.

If we can't make contact, we will firstly ensure all means have been tried, including close liaison with other schools linked to the family, and also via the involvement of the Education Access Service and our allocated Educational Welfare officer who will carry out home visits where necessary. If contact remains unsuccessful, where appropriate, we will inform children's social care or the police to request a Safe and Well check is carried out.

## **10.2 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 11 below).

# **11. Online safety**

## **11.1 In school**

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

If IT staff are not on site, they are contactable and can resolve any issues remotely.

## **11.2 Outside school**

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing staff code of conduct and the Home Working Policy that has been specifically written school closure as a result of COVID-19. All staff will continue to look out for signs that indicate a child may be at risk online and will report and respond to concerns in line with procedures set out in section 3 of this addendum.

All Staff have been advised to use Microsoft Teams for any communication with children during this period. This can include one-to-one conversations about work, or, if children want to discuss any concerns regarding their welfare and/or emotional health. Staff are required to inform the safeguarding team (via the means outlined in section 3, of any non-work related conversations, including a direct transcript of that conversation where necessary. All such communications will be recorded on our secure CPOMS site, and reviewed by the DSL.

Staff have been advised that if they receive communication from a child that they deem to be inappropriate, they are to inform the child immediately that the conversation will be terminated, stating the reason, they must then alert a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and appropriate action will then be taken, which will include communications with the parent of the child, with offers to view the direct transcript where required.

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.

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.

### **11.3 Working with parents and carers**

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 are publishing regular letters to parents which are available on our website and signposted on our social media platforms.

## **12. Mental health**

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all students. This includes access to pastoral staff, our School Counsellor, Anxiety/Anger Management mentors and peer support.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time, for example Kooth and BEAM.

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.

## **13. Staff recruitment, training and induction**

### **13.1 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 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.

### **13.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools**

We do not intend to use staff from other schools but, if we do, we will undertake all appropriate checks by liaising with the school from which they have come.



### **13.3 Safeguarding induction and training**

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

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, and associated questionnaire to ensure understanding.

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

### **13.4 Keeping records of who's 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

## **14. Children attending other settings**

If any child is 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.

## **15. 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 Rowena Turner, Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This Addendum, and any alterations, is to be approved by the Chair of the Local Governing Body, having been recommended by the Head Teacher. This delegated authority to the Chair of the Local Governing Body has been granted by the Chair of The Priory School Trust and needs to be noted at the next LGB meeting.

## **16. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- IT Acceptable Use policy
- Health and safety policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Home Working Policy