

COVID-19 DPA's Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

This Policy addendum is effective from 6th January 2021

Key Contacts

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Context

Due to a national lockdown from January 6th 2021, parents and carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible.

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.

DPA Opening from 6.1.21

Reception: 8.45am to 2.50pm for a maximum of 15 children

Y1, Y3, Y5: 8.30am to 3.00pm for a maximum of 15 children per year group

Y2, Y4, Y6: 8.40 to 3.10pm for a maximum of 15 children per year group.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children and young people include 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, eg 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.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Leaders, especially the Designated and Deputy Safeguarding Leads and DSL contacts, 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.

DPA 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), Jeremy Mannino, for Our Children (looked-after and previously looked-after children). **The DPA lead person for this is Diane Nixon.**

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 puts them at increased risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, DPA will encourage the child's attendance, including remotely if needed, and notify the social worker to explore any reasons for non attendance directly with the parent. Undue pressure will not be applied for the child to attend. Appropriate staff will endeavour to understand each family's circumstances so as work supportively with families.

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

Critical Workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections.

Attendance Monitoring

In mainstream schools, pupils who are not expected to be in school during the weeks commencing 4 and 11 January, should be recorded as 'code X'.

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

Children who should be onsite, but not attending, must be marked as 'C'.

Daily attendance is reported to the Trust **before midday** using the MicroSoft form link: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EIPtrcvGGk6VzhagziBpx-L2wcUY1fhBtMryeWNWm8dUMzIFV0IDUVdFUzRPU1ZDWIIDSFJVMzdSUS4u> ; and to the **DfE, by 2pm daily**, using the official DfE **educational setting status form**.

Shielding advice is currently in place in Tier 4 areas, and so all children still deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

DPA and social workers will agree with parents and carers whether children in need should be attending school. DPA will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not; and will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the

child(ren) subsequently do not attend. Phone calls, then emails, dojo messages will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

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

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Supports

DPA has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Diane Nixon

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Lesley Graham

The DSL Contacts are: Dan Simm

DPA has a trained DSL or Deputy available on site, when this is not possible the DSL or Deputy DSL is available by telephone.

If, for any reason, a trained DSL (or Deputy) can not be on site, in addition to the above, the most senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection online data, My Concern or liaising with the offsite DSL (or Deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at DPA.

The DSL Team will continue to engage with social workers and attend multi-agency meetings, digitally wherever possible.

Reporting a Concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in DPA's Safeguarding Policy. This includes making a report via My Concern, which can be done remotely. The DSL must be informed immediately of the concern and this incident or disclosure must be logged on My Concern by 3.15pm on the day the concern is raised by the initial member of staff.

If a concern is raised out of hours, the staff member should report the concern on My Concern and an email will alert the DSL. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access My Concern from home, they should email the DSL, Deputy and Headteacher to ensure that the concern is received and acted upon.

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 DPA, they should email the DSL and Headteacher immediately, attaching the Whistleblowing Policy to record their concerns.

If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally over the phone and followed up with an email to the head teacher to confirm the discussion. The Trust Safeguarding Manager must be included in this email.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors, Rev David O'Brien.

The Sea View Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations through the CEO, Angela Holdsworth.

Safeguarding Training and Induction

All existing DPA staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL has communicated with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

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

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to DPA, we will consider 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

For movement within our Trust, schools should seek assurance from the respective Headteacher that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

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.

Safer Recruitment, Volunteering and Movement of Staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, DPA will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

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

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

DPA 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.

DPA 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.

Anyone engaging in regulated activity, including volunteers, working at DPA and having access with children, have appropriate checks carried out prior to commencing employment / volunteering at DPA. Pre-employment risk assessments can be used to manage new staff and volunteers whilst awaiting DBS and other checks, having agreed this with SLT.

As such, DPA will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Volunteers

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity at DPA.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis at DPA, will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, RLA will follow safer recruitment processes.

Online Safety at DPA

DPA will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where pupils use devices in school, appropriate supervision will always be in place.

Children and Online Safety away from DPA

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 our Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals must still be made to Children's Social Care and as required, the Police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in DPA's Online Safety Policy.

DPA will ensure that any use of online learning tools, devices and systems are in line with privacy and data protection and GDPR requirements. When teaching via virtual lessons, live or recorded:

- The presenter must record any live session so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed. Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household, and position themselves so as to maintain professional dignity.
- Any devices used should be in appropriate areas, eg not in bedrooms, with a blurred or neutral background.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background. Inappropriate behaviour or language must be reported to the DSL.
- Staff must only use official platforms, approved by SLT, to communicate with pupils.

Supporting Children not in School

DPA is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children. Where leaders identify a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral - type support at DPA, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person, utilising the support of the learning mentors or pupil welfare officer where appropriate.

Details of contact must be recorded on contact logs and My Concern – if any concerns arise. The contact can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. If concerns arise they will be referred to other agencies as appropriate.

DPA will share appropriate safeguarding messages, links, services on its website and social media pages.

We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people; and that the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teaching staff are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting Children at DPA

All DPA staff are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and pupils and will continue to be a safe, nurturing space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety and effectiveness in our core offer delivery.

Leaders continuously refer to Government and Trust 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.

The Headteacher, or in his absence, the Deputy Headteacher, is responsible for the regular review

DPA staff will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and identified vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on My Concern as appropriate.

Where we have concerns about the impact of staff absence on our provision – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with our Trust CEO.

Peer on Peer Abuse

DPA recognises that during reduced openings, 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 our Child Protection Policy.

Appropriate staff will listen and work with the child, their parents or carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on My Concern and appropriate referrals made.

Support from the Sea View Trust (SVT)

The SVT Central Safeguarding Team, comprising all setting's DSLs, are available to support a setting's provision, providing support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively. In the event of DSL Team absences, this may include remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

The SVT also provides regular group and individual support to the schools within the Trust. This currently takes the form of regular on-line meetings with legal support (Forbes, Preston)

