

## Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy 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 annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

## The current school position and local advice

Heathcote School and Science College is currently closed apart from for those families outlined below. We are following government advice and procedural guidance from the London Borough of Waltham Forest along with the 3 safeguarding partners, all of which are being regularly updated. The school are remaining responsive to any change in guidance and this is checked daily. The school has maintained a skeleton staff in place for those pupils attending the school with the vast majority of staff tasked with working from home to maintain social distancing guidance.

## Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding/Child protection policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Mr Neil Hutchins, 0208 498 5110 - [nhutchins@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk](mailto:nhutchins@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk)**

The Deputy DSL is: **Ms Emma Austin, 0208 498 5110 - [eaustin@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk](mailto:eaustin@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk)**

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a Deputy, or fully trained staff member, is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance, this is not possible the DSL or Deputy DSL will be contactable and remain in a working capacity to receive any correspondence from staff, external agencies and parents via phone and/or email.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. Safeguard is checked regularly and at least daily. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

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 children's services are:

### **Waltham Forest Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (WF MASH)**

Phone: 020 8496 2310

Mon-Thurs, 9am-5.15pm and Fri, 9am-5pm

Out of Hours: 020 8496 3000

Email: [MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk)

N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a same-day phone response during normal business hours.

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 partnership escalation procedure, available here:

### **Corporate Director Children's Social Care (CSC)**

Inter-agency Escalation of concerns beyond escalation to Team Manager for Children's social care intervention

Phone: 020 8496 1907

Email: [cspahub@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:cspahub@walthamforest.gov.uk);  
[amana.gordon@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:amana.gordon@walthamforest.gov.uk)

## **Identifying vulnerability**

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children. The School Head teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and members of the Senior Leadership Team alongside the SEN coordinator and Inclusion Manager are jointly tasked with collating a comprehensive list of all pupils and families considered vulnerable. This will incorporate all persons, over which, the school has a duty of care. This is also expected to consider

contextual safeguarding given the details surrounding the schools closure and how the situation could affect families.

All of the pupils falling into the categories below have been offered a school place during the school closures put in place by government. In the event that the offer of a school place is declined, the school will endeavour to establish weekly telephone communications with the pupil themselves in addition to the parent/carer. In addition to regular communication the school will also carry out weekly home visits to see the most vulnerable pupils within Heathcote's school community. The school will also carry out safeguarding welfare visits to any pupil if the need arises. Staff safety must not be compromised given the individual circumstances of the visit. We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups.

- Looked After Children will all be offered a school place. If the place is declined a weekly communication will take place with carers.
- Previously Looked After Children will all be offered a school place.
- Children subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan will be offered a school place each week. If the placement is declined, then social workers must be contacted to inform them. In the event of placement declined the child is to be contacted each week and receive at least one home visit, ideally two after liaison with social workers.
- Children who have a social worker (CIN) will also be offered a school place each week. If the placement is declined, then social workers must be contacted to inform them. In the event of placement declined the child is to be contacted each week and receive at least one home visit, ideally two after liaison with social workers. (There is an expectation that children with a social worker must attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.)
- Children with an EHCP will be contacted and offered a school place if the home environment is not deemed suitable to provide adequate educational access.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker will be offered a place at school (or another school by arrangement). If the offer of a placement is declined, then childrens' services/ social care are to be informed. The school is to follow up with weekly calls and a direct communication with the pupil is to be requested during the call.
- Other children deemed vulnerable may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required.

Each of these children has an individual plan which has been shared with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Looked After and previously Looked After Children.

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

- Children of key workers who may attend school are to be provided with educational resources to enable these pupils to continue their learning and maintain some routine whether in school or at home. These pupils are to be treated with extra vigilance given the stressful circumstances that will be expected at home in light of key worker employment status
- Children at home are to be provided with educational resources suitable for their ability whilst adequately challenging. Home learning platforms are to be suitably monitored so as staff can ensure adequate levels of educational engagement during a school closure. In the absence of access to the home learning resources, teaching staff will be expected to investigate whether there are any supportive measures that can be put in place. Staff developing home learning resources are tasked with ensuring that any resources are as purposeful, interesting and engaging as is necessary to develop greater educational curiosity and foster an enjoyment of learning.

The plans in respect of each child in these groups should state how often they are to be reviewed.

## Holiday arrangements

Educational provision will be made available to all pupils that are entitled to attend. The provision may be at an alternative educational establishment if the school does not remain open over the Easter Break. This information will be communicated to all parent/carers who request a place over the Easter Break.

## Attendance

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#). Where a child is expected and does not arrive the 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 (Skype, FaceTime, through a relative, etc.) 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.

The school will also follow the above attendance procedure if contact proves impossible with children at home. Further follow up communication attempts will be made through all platforms that the school has at their disposal. If this does not bring about any contact resolution within 24 hours the school DSL/DDSL will make a referral to the WF MASH team.

## Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children 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 about any concerns.

## Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the [signs of peer-on-peer abuse](#), including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

We also address the issue of peer-on-peer abuse and cyber-bullying and Online Safety in our remote learning curriculum, guidance and support is also available on the school website. Pupil activities and learning tasks around these topics is available for all pupils under the PSHRCSE curriculum on the 'Show My Homework' (SMH) home learning platform.

## 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. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly. All staff are to follow the guidance outlined regarding online conduct. The SEN department have been permitted to utilise face to face online communications and we have ensured all parental consent specific to this communication has been sought. All relevant parents have signed the schools' Virtual Learning Platform protocols document. This protocol dictates that there should be an adult present with the pupil at all times during the online communication. All

communication is to be via school approved platforms, ie. Zoom, Show My Homework, Google Classroom, Lgfl Mail.

- Staff have discussed 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.
- Staff have read the [20 safeguarding considerations for livestreaming](#) prior to delivering any livestreamed sessions
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#).
- Parents and carers have received information 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 requested 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
  - [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers 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](#).

## **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 will follow the process below;

### **WF LADO team**

Phone: 020 8496 3646

Email: [lado@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:lado@walthamforest.gov.uk)

N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a same-day phone response during normal business hours.

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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

## New staff or volunteers

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](#) 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.

New starters will read and understand **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 Part 1** and the **Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children May 2019** document. These are available via the school website under the policies section. Staff will also complete the initial Safeguarding online course with High Speed Training - <https://lms.highspeedtraining.co.uk/> within the first week of employment commencing during any closure.

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 the schools Human Resources (HR) manager, Ms Fleetwood who is working on the school systems each day.

## New children at the school

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

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.

New admissions into the school have been put on hold during this time, as per Waltham Forest Guidance.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on 4.4.2020 and is available on the school website at <https://www.heathcoteschool.com/assets/Uploads/News/2019-2020/20200323-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Annex-to-Safeguarding-Policy-APRIL-2020.pdf>