

Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Reviewed: February 2022 Next review: February 2023

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020. It reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners - the Police, health commission and Redbridge (LA)

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of coronavirus, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

This addendum is subject to change, in response to any new or updated guidance the government may publish. We will keep it under review as set out in section 15 below.

In this addendum, where we refer to measures to protect pupils who are at home, this means those who are learning at home for reasons to do with coronavirus – for example, due to clinical and/or public health advice, such as if there's a local lockdown or if they need to self-isolate.

In this addendum, where we refer to vulnerable children, this means those who: (According to DfE's now-withdrawn COVID-19 safeguarding guidance

- Are assessed as being in need, including children:
 - With a child protection plan
 - With a child in need plan
 - Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or LAs, for example those who are:
 - On the edge of receiving support from children's social care services
 - Adopted
 - At risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - Living in temporary accommodation
 - Young carers
 - Considered vulnerable by the school and/or LA

2. Core safeguarding principles

We will follow the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

We will always have regard for these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should 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, both for children at school and those at home using the **welfare concern form** (<https://forms.gle/q5koFn2Me1Wp3j27A>)

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.

If our DSL (or deputy) can't be on site, they can be contacted remotely by email to contact@apexprimary.co.uk

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding. This will be Sanel Haskic – Deputy Head teacher. You can contact them by school email.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with our 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
- Liaise with parent / carers where appropriate

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children (it is unlikely we will have looked after children), and with any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners, to help keep children safe.

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:

6. Monitoring attendance

We will resume taking our attendance register. We will also follow [guidance](#) from the Department for Education.

All pupils of compulsory school age will be expected to attend school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health advice, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

Where any child we expect to attend school doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by phone
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

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. This is done at the admission stage via the admission form.

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 – about both children attending school and those at home.

8. Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher 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 – whether those concerns are about staff/supply teachers/volunteers working on site or remotely.

Contact can be made with the LADO Monday - Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm by emailing LADO@redbridge.gov.uk or phoning 020 87085350. Initial contacts will be taken on by the LADO or the duty LADO when she/he is not available. Any suspected immediate risk to any child or children should be responded to immediately and the case referred to the Police on 999 or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0208 708 3885 if the LADO cannot be contacted. If it is outside of normal working hours the Emergency Duty Team should be contacted on 020 8708 5897. 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 for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

9. Contact plans

We will have contact plans for children with a social worker, and other children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where the child is at home.

Each child has an individual plan, which sets out:

- How often the school will make contact – this will be at least once a week
- Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
- How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone, doorstep visits, or a combination of both

We will have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them every half term.

If we can't make contact, we will contact children's social care or the police

10. 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 line with the procedures set out in section 3 above.

10.1 Children returning to school

The DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before children return.

The DSL (and deputy) will be given time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as children return to school.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see pupils in person.

10.2 Children at home

The school will maintain contact with children who are at home. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home. Or, if necessary they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.

Staff and volunteers will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

11. Online safety

11.1 In school

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

11.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing policy on staff code of conduct, Remote learning policy and E-safety policy (section on Social networking between staff and pupils in and out of school) which states that staff must not:

- Exchange accounts with pupils
- Add pupils to their account as “friends” or encourage them to do so
- Enter chat rooms with pupils
- Correspond with pupils using personal email Addresses e.g. Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo
- Exchange personal mobile phone numbers with pupils
- Take photographs or videos of pupils without parent/guardian consent
- Take photographs or videos of pupils for non-school purposes
- Send or exchange images or videos of school staff, pupils or any aspect of school operations without authorisation or approval
- Download and store inappropriate images or other inappropriate material on teachers laptop/computers (if applicable) outside school hours and off school sites.

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, where relevant, 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 teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

All information to parents will be communicated via the school newsletter and children's Learning plans which are sent out on emails and available on Classdojo and school website.

12. Mental health

12.1 Children returning to school

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupils' mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed.

On returning to school there will be a focus to settle back into school for all children, through plenty of opportunity for discussions and talk.

12.2 Children at home

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils through online google meet calls and emails via school email or phone calls for younger children.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents/carers and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

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.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to mental health concerns in children who are at home, and act on these immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum .

13. Staff and volunteer recruitment

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that staff 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.

When carrying out DBS checks and right to work checks, we will follow the latest guidance from the DBS, Home Office and Immigration Enforcement as appropriate (for example, with regards to the process for verifying documents). We will inform candidates about the intended process as soon as reasonably practicable.

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 Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14. 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 in line with the expectations of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or Department for Education is updated,

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child protection and Safeguarding policy
- Staff code of conduct
- E-safety policy
- Health and safety policy
- Remote learning policy
- Anti- bullying policy
- Behaviour policy

Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Meherun Hamid	contact@apexprimary.co.uk 0208 554 1208
Deputy DSL	Melanie Hodgson	contact@apexprimary.co.uk 0208 554 1208
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Sanel Haskic	contact@apexprimary.co.uk 0208 554 1208
Headteacher	Meherun Hamid	
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Andrew Mountfield	LADO@redbridge.gov.uk 020 8708-5350
Chair of Trust	Imtiaz Ahmed	contact@apexprimary.co.uk 0208 554 1208