



THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST

Annex to Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

COVID-19 changes to our Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

5th January 2021

Subject to change, ensuring we are compliant with Government guidance

Version control and dissemination

This is version 4 of this annex. It will be reviewed by our Head of Safeguarding on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website and is made available to staff via the Safeguard Software System.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can to speak to them.

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 Safeguarding/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 local agencies.

The current school position and local advice

This guidance has been updated to reflect the announcement on 4th January to close schools to pupils except for vulnerable children and young people, and the children of critical workers who are expected to access on-site education provision.

We remain committed to supporting those children and families that are most vulnerable and this includes where there may not be an allocated social worker.

The DSL will inform Medway Local Authority, as agreed, by responding to schoolslist.covid19@medway.gov.uk by midday each day to advise of identified vulnerable pupil's attendance.

Staff training

The DSL and deputy DSLs are up to date with their training and will attend refresher training online with the Head of Safeguarding for the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

All current school staff have received whole school safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education. When new staff are recruited or volunteers join us, they will receive a safeguarding induction in accordance with our Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

Academy DSL and deputy names and contact details:

Academy Name	DSL and Deputies	Email address
New Horizons Children's Academy	Mrs D Hearn DSL Mrs J Bacon Deputy DSL Miss S Morgan Deputy DSL	D.Hearn@tsatrust.org.uk J.Bacon@tsatrust.org.uk S.Morgan@tsatrust.org.uk
Head teacher Mr C Murphy		

All staff have access to the Safeguard software system used to raise, monitor and record all matters of Safeguarding. Staff will continue to use this as per normal where there are any concerns raised. The designated safeguarding lead will continue to process these concerns as per our normal safeguarding procedures and in line with our Safeguarding policy. The LA arrangements for referrals remains unchanged.

The local authority designated officer are operating as usual and should a concern be raised about adults working with children, the normal robust process for managing allegations against staff will be implemented.(see also section on managing allegations below).

Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our safeguarding child protection policy.

The Thinking Schools Academy Trusts approach ensures that there is a DSL or a deputy always available while the school is open. All staff have access to Safeguard, the software system used to alert DSL's and deputies of any concerns raised by staff, including remotely. Where there is a concern regarding a child who is not a member of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, but attending one of our schools, electronic/paper record of concern forms are available to staff who will then pass this on to the DSL or deputy DSL on duty. The Thinking Schools Academy Trust also have a Head of Safeguarding, Mrs Lee Lucas who is on call as well as her deputy Mrs Debbie Clarke-Basrai and who can both access Safeguard.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding lead immediately about concerns they have regarding any child, whether in school or not. 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:

For children who are at risk of immediate harm or where a clear disclosure has been made, please call Children's Services First Response Service on 01634 334466.

Alternative telephone numbers where you have concerns about a child.

NSPCC 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk

Child Line 0800 1111

Medway Police 01622 690690

www.msrb.org.uk/worriedaboutachild.aspx

National Domestic Violence helpline 0808 200 0247

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: [Policy](#)

Identifying vulnerability

The DSL within our school has worked together with the Head Teacher, SENCO and relevant pastoral staff to ensure that any child who is considered vulnerable will continue to be supported. Consultation with the relevant professionals will have taken place with the DSL and arrangements agreed in the best interests of the child. We 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) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put 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, the social worker, any other relevant professionals and DSL will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Any non-attendance will be followed up with the parents and relevant outside agencies. Non-attendance for those children where on line learning is available or failure to supply work to staff will also be followed up in the same way using the same processes as non-attendance at school.

Pupils may fall into one of the following groups however this is not an exhaustive list and any child considered vulnerable and therefore benefiting from this support as deemed by the DSL and Head teacher will be offered support. This may result in telephone communication, referrals to outside agencies and relevant charities, offer of attendance at school etc.

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 (for example 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

Supporting children in school

All schools within the Thinking Schools Academy Trust are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. On site, there will be either a Head teacher or a member of staff who has leadership responsibility as well as either the DSL or Deputy DSL.. The school will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. Staff 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 COVID19. Any concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will be immediately discussed with the Head Teacher and any necessary appropriate action will be taken to ensure everyone’s safety and wellbeing.

We acknowledge that there may be an increase of support required and this will include identifying new safeguarding concerns. Staff are aware and have been given resources on the impact on mental health and seeking support for children and families.

Where children are not accessing the school site, contact will remain in place and wherever possible staff will speak directly to the child allowing opportunities to discuss concerns and any support that may be required. Such concerns will be shared by staff with the DSL in order to ensure appropriate actions and support are sought.

Holiday arrangements

Schools are currently closed to all pupils except vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers until February half term when this will be reviewed by the Government. As we become aware of any updates announced, this annex will be amended accordingly.

Attendance monitoring

- As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). Schools should encourage vulnerable children to attend but if the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent from school, the parent should let the school know that the pupil will not be attending. DfE expects schools to grant such applications for leave given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.
- As with vulnerable children, critical worker parents and carers should let schools know if their child will not be attending and, if not, schools should grant a leave of absence (code C) given the exceptional circumstances.
- All pupils who are not expected to be in school should be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice.

If we have any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

If the school has closed, we will complete the return once as requested by the DfE.

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.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay

Peer on peer abuse

All staff 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.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in Keeping Children Safe In Education and of those outlined within of the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

Staff will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on Safeguard and appropriate referrals made.

Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. 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
- We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly

Children and online safety away from school

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 the 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 Thinking Schools Academy Trust code of conduct. Staff will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

TSAT Top Ten Tips for Digisafe 'Live Learning'

1) Always follow the protocols within the ICT Acceptable Use policy and the Social Media policy

2) Always use the devices supplied by your school. Ensure that you are logged into your MS 365 account so that e-safe security can run.

3) If you are delivering a 'live' session via MS Teams, do so from a safe and appropriate place (not a bedroom) and ensure that there is a clear background. Use 'background effects' to blur or change your background.

4) Wear suitable clothing and ensure the camera angle is straight ahead, stable and focused on your head and shoulders.

5) Ensure that you will not be interrupted inappropriately by other family members.

6) Language must be professional and appropriate including any other adults or children in the vicinity.

7) If you are recording the session, make this explicit to the participants and ensure that incoming videos are turned off. Do not capture images of children.

8) When students join your live sessions, remember to use the participants window to check they are 'attendees' (see the TSAT guide steps 21-26 to remind you) - this will ensure students cannot take control of presentations or microphones. If there are any concerns about students' behaviour, follow the consequences process put in place by your senior team.

9) For over 13s you can conduct a live learning session on a 1-2-1 basis if needed, but you should record the session. At the start, record yourself seeking and obtaining consent to make the recording. The video must be stored securely and not shared.

10) If a child raises a safeguarding concern during an online session, they should be immediately directed to use the 'Report it' link on the school website front page. Staff should also record via Safeguard as well.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- 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 are aware of [Safe-Lessons-by-Video-and-Livestream.pdf](#) when 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](#). Available as well on New Horizons Children's Academy website and TSAT website.

Parents and carers will receive 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 asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

New Horizons Children's Academy have shown commitment to protecting our pupils online by working with **National Online Safety** - providing resources for all parents and carers, details of how to access this are available from the school. The resources include Parents & Carers courses (presented by Myleene Klass), online video resources and weekly guides covering a huge range of topics.

Parents are also 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 carers 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
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- 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 Head Teacher/DSL. If the concern relates to the Head Teacher Mr L Miller Deputy CEO must be informed.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

Maisie Adkins (LADO Manager) maisie.adkins@medway.gov.uk - 01634 336204

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 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

Safer recruitment/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, the relevant safer recruitment processes will continue to be followed for the setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

New starters will receive an induction. They must read the school safeguarding/child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. 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.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- 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 of who is working in the school 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 circumstances 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 if required, 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.

Support from Central Services HR/Head of Safeguarding

The Central Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively. This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction. We will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.