



“Let your light shine brightly.”

Matthew 5:16

COVID-19 Annex 1: school closure arrangements for child protection and safeguarding

To be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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COVID-19 school closure arrangements for child protection and safeguarding at Christ Church CofE First School and Nursery

This Annex to the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy sets out the changes and new systems put in place to safeguard children during COVID-19 school closure.

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1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response – who absolutely need to attend.

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.

This addendum to the Christ Church Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the areas covered below.

2. Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Child Protection Officer (CPO)	Rupert Kaye	School telephone: 01373 463781 School mobile: 07395 946362	School email: sch.152@educ.somerset.gov.uk FAO the person you wish to contact
Deputy DSL/CPO	Ali Bowden		
Deputy DSL/CPO	Sarah Daffurn		
Headteacher	Rupert Kaye		
Chair of Governors	John Price		
Safeguarding Governor	John Price		

3. **Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who:

- have a social worker;
- have education, health and care (EHC) plans;
- have a Child Protection Plan;
- are looked after by the local authority (LA).

A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the LA and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy DSLs) 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.

Christ Church 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 LA virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be **Rupert Kaye**.

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 put them at 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 and Christ Church will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Christ Church or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Christ Church will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

4. **Attendance monitoring**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

Christ Church and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Christ Church will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Christ Church 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. To support the above, Christ Church will, when communicating with parents/carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

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

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Christ Church has a DSL and two Deputy DSLs.

The DSL is **Rupert Kaye**.

The Deputy DSLs are **Ali Bowden** and **Sarah Daffurn**.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via telephone or online video, for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to a child's confidential Child Protection Chronology and 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 the school or college.

It is important that all Christ Church staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff are on the school premises, they will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings. This may be done remotely via telephone and/or video-conferencing media.

6. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in Christ Church's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This includes making or updating a child's confidential Child Protection Chronology, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access and update a child's confidential Child Protection Chronology, they should email the DSL and/or the Deputy DSL immediately.

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 the school, they should use a yellow form to report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors, **John Price**.

7. Safeguarding training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part one of *Keeping children safe in education* (DfE, Sept 2019) (*KCSIE*). The DSL should communicate 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 Christ Church, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting (e.g. within Frome Learning Partnership, LA or Diocese) 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.

Christ Church will seek assurance from the relevant HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, the redeployed staff member will be given a copy of Christ Church's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

8. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, Christ Church will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part three of *KCSIE*.

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

Where Christ Church utilises 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.

Christ Church 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*.

Christ Church 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.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing **Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk**

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Christ Church will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 155 in *KCSIE*.

9. Online safety in school

Christ Church will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

10. 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 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 Christ Church's Code of Conduct.

Christ Church will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

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

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family "getting on" with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.
- Staff must only use platforms provided or approved by the LA to communicate with pupils.

11. Supporting children not in school

Christ Church is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its children and young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan and a record of contact made must be recorded on a child's confidential Child Protection Chronology.

The communication plans can include remote contact via telephone and/or video-conferencing media. Other times of contact, such as when parents/carers collect food and/or learning resources from the school premises, are to be recorded. (In line with joint union guidance, we do not believe that it is the role of school staff to carry out home visits. If necessary, this is something for the LA and Children's Services team to consider.)

Christ Church staff, DSL and Deputy DSLs will liaise with other stakeholders and external professionals to discuss any safeguarding concerns and maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and, where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages. Christ Church recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and in the current circumstances, prolonged time away from school can adversely affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at Christ Church need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

12. Supporting children in school

Christ Church is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its students. Christ Church will continue to be a safe 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.

Christ Church 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 COVID-19.

Christ Church will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child. Where there are historic and/or ongoing and/or newly identified safeguarding concerns, a Child Protection Chronology will be initiated/updated and the DSL (or deputy) will be informed.

Where Christ Church has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our DSL or First Aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the LA.

13. Peer-on-peer abuse

Christ Church recognises that during the closure 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 five of *KCSIE* and of those outlined within the Child Protection Policy. The school 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 a child's confidential Child Protection Chronology and appropriate referrals made.

14. Support from the local authority

Somerset Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL and Deputy DSLs to carry out their roles effectively.

For the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction, this includes discussing safeguarding records, for example a child's confidential Child Protection Chronology.

The LA will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.