

Elstree School COVID-19 Safeguarding Policy

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

2. Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. 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 Local Authority 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) 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, this may mean sharing resources with other schools.

Elstree School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children (where applicable none registered March 2020) . 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. The lead person for this will be **Sarah Attwood**

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 school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Elstree School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school.

3. 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.

The School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school –The school will follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend who does not.

The school will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged for their child/children to attend school who subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, The School will 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, The DSL will notify their social worker.

The Department for Education has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Elstree School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and five Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Sarah Attwood**

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead are: **Sid Inglis, Simon Attwood, Alice Holifield, Iain Hepburn, Vikki Thornburrow and Emma McGrath (Safeguarding Governor)**

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site 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, which can be done remotely.

Best practice 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 phone 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 member of the senior leadership team will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection files and liaising with the offsite DSL. If you have children attending from another school, liaising with the DSL from their school, and if required, liaising with children's social workers.

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy.

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 report immediately to the DSL/Headteacher

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: **James Sunley**

DSLs will continue to report concerns to CAAS in the usual way.

During office hours call **01635 503190**

Out of office hours, Emergency Duty Team Tel: **01344 786543**

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training has been suspended 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 I of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Free online Safeguarding training is available for staff working from home.

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

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

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.

7. Safer recruitment/volunteers 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, Elstree School 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 (2019) (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.

If the school 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.

Elstree School 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.

Elstree School 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, **Elstree School** will continue

to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Elstree School 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.

8. Children and online safety away from school and college

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 contact should still be made to CAAS

Elstree School 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:

- Live lessons are not recommended from a Safeguarding aspect. It blurs the usual explicit lines about contacting pupils via webcam, and leaves pupils vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.
- Apps such as Zoom are not auditable, so if a pupil makes an allegation it is difficult to investigate.
- Pre-recording lessons against a plain background is recommended.
- When emailing pupils copy in a parent/carer and a member of the senior management team.
- Do not use whatsapp to contact pupils, parents or to have professional discussions with colleagues, it is not GDPR compliant and may blur professional lines. In these circumstances School email addresses should be used.
- Staff should dress appropriately and always use professional language.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and participation of any sessions held.

All staff at **Elstree School** should remind themselves of the following policies:

- Staff code of conduct
- ICT/Acceptable use policy
- Social media guidance.

9. Supporting children not in school

Elstree School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all of 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 must be recorded on the pupils file.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, and door-step visits (observing social distancing). Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

10. Online safety in schools and colleges

Elstree School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to 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.

Elstree School recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Elstree School 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 and recorded appropriately.

11. Supporting children in school

Elstree School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Elstree School 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.

Elstree School 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.

Elstree School 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 and recorded appropriately.

12. Peer on Peer Abuse

Elstree School 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 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of 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, and appropriate referrals made.

All staff will be sent this additional policy to read and to will sign to say they have read and understood the content.

If staff are working from home they will be asked to email confirming the above.

Sarah Attwood, DSL 2nd April 2020