



Annex to Child Protection Policy

COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

Created: April 2020

Amended: May 2020

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

Best Futures School is currently open to pupils. However some parents are currently choosing to keep their children at home.

Update May 2020: Due to Government Guidance, some children are expected to attend school from the 1st June 2020.

A joint risk assessment between school, parents and the Local Authority has been completed on each pupil to determine whether they are safer at school or home.

Best Futures School is closely working with the safeguarding partners to ensure that all pupils remain safeguarded regardless of whether they are attending the school or not.

Reporting arrangements

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Kimberley York**

Email: kimberley.york@bestfutures-school.co.uk

Tel: The DSL's phone number has been circulated to all staff. Parents can also contact the DSL by calling the office mobile.

The Deputy DSL:

Kara Bradley kara.bradley@bestfutures-school.co.uk

Tel: The Deputy DSL's phone number has been circulated to all staff. Parents can also contact the DSL by calling the office mobile.

Cover Deputy DSL:

Dawn Best principal@bestfutures-school.co.uk

Tel: The Cover DSL's phone number has been circulated to all staff. Parents can also contact the DSL by calling the office mobile.

CIC Board representative for Safeguarding:

Kath Vincent kath.vincent@bestfutures-school.co.uk

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always available while the school is open. This will be in person or via telephone.

Update: May 2020.

[Department for Education](#) guidance states "As more children return, it is expected that schools and colleges will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible.

In this instance, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be contactable via phone and/or online video during school hours. A senior leader should take responsibility for communicating any safeguarding concerns immediately to the on-call DSL. However, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and any staff member can contact the DSL or a deputy for safeguarding advice or to share concerns.

Staff may notice new safeguarding concerns as pupils reintegrate back into school. All safeguarding concerns must be communicated with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy without delay

Best Futures School recognises the impact that Covid 19 can have on the pupils and families, such as the impact on parental mental health, pupil mental health, money concerns, food concerns and many other associated concerns.

Best Futures School will continue supporting families. This may be through contact with staff (ie for SEMH support), supplying strategies and resources as well as signposting to relevant agencies as needed.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedures and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about 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.

All safeguarding concerns will be recorded on CPOMS in the usual manner.

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:

North East Lincolnshire - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

01472 326292 (option 2).

mash@nelincs.gov.uk

The MASH consultation line is also still open for professionals. The consultation line is able to offer advice and guidance on safeguarding concerns. They are also able to direct professionals to support, for families where food or other worries are presenting.

Tel: 01472 323145

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 follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure, available here:

<https://www.safernel.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Escalation-Procedure.pdf>

Further information regarding [North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)'s policies and procedures, available here:

<https://www.safernel.co.uk/nelsafeguarding-children-partnership/policies-and-procedures/>

Identifying vulnerability

Updated May 2020: Due to updated Government guidance, schools are being asked to encourage more pupils back into school. Best Futures are following Government guidance, liaising with parents, relevant agencies and the Local Authority on which pupils are being encouraged to attend school.

Government Guidance correct at the time of writing (April 2020):

Children and young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

Government guidance states: “We are asking local authorities to work with educational providers, families and the child or young person to carry out a risk assessment to judge whether the child or young person’s needs cannot be met safely at home.

Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be safer at home, our recommendation is that they **stay at home**. Where the risk assessment determines a child or young person with an EHC plan will be as safe or safer at an education setting, our recommendation is that they **attend the education setting**”

Children and young people who have a social worker

Government guidance states “Children and young people assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child.

These children and young people are encouraged to attend provision, unless their social worker decides that they are at less risk at home or in their placement, for example, due to underlying health conditions”.

For further information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Best Futures School have completed a joint risk assessment with school, parents and the Local Authority. The risk assessments have been completed for each pupil who attends Best Futures School. The risk assessments are then sent to the Special Educational Needs Department (Nelincs).

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups for those pupil's who it is deemed will be safer at home and/or who's parents choose not to send their pupil's to school due to COVID 19:

Looked after children, previously looked after children and children who have or previously had a social worker.

The pupil's social worker will be informed of the parent's decision to keep their child off school. Agreement will need to be sought from the social worker. The social worker's views will be included in the joint risk assessment between parents, the local authority and school.

Pupils which fall under the above categories are called three times a week for welfare calls. Support will be offered to parents at each welfare call.

If contact can not be made with the parent then a home visit will be completed.

A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider 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

A weekly home visit will be completed by two members of staff. This will be completed with social distancing procedures being carried out (ie 2 meters away, staff are not to enter the property).

Parents have access to the office number and email addresses for the DSL and case workers.

Parents can also receive support via the school's Dojo system.

Any concerns that arise will be communicated with the relevant agencies, ie social worker.

Children with an EHCP.

Pupils which fall under the above category are called twice a week for welfare calls. Support will be offered to parents at each welfare call.

If contact can not be made with the parent then a home visit will be completed.

A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider 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

A weekly home visit will be completed by two members of staff. This will be completed with social distancing procedures being carried out (ie 2 meters away, staff are not to enter the property).

Parents have access to the office number and email addresses for the DSL and case workers.

Parents can also receive support via the school's Dojo system.

Any concerns that arise will be communicated with the relevant agencies, ie social worker.

Update May 2020:

Due to changes in Government Guidance of schools being asked to encourage more pupils to attend school, Best Futures will be updating the joint risk assessments with the Local Authority and parents.

Parents who choose not to send their children to school will continue being supported as detailed above. Please see above: Looked after children, previously looked after children and children who have or previously had a social worker and Children with an EHCP.

Holiday arrangements

Best Futures School will follow advice provided by the Government in respect of offering holiday provision to vulnerable pupils and those pupils whose parents/carers are key workers.

Pupils were offered holiday provision for the Easter Holidays, in line with Government advice.

In the event that parents do not want to use the holiday provision parents/carers will be offered activities for the pupils to complete.

It is planned that a member of staff will complete a home visit during the Easter holidays.

Normal Best Futures safeguarding procedures are to be followed. Any safeguarding concerns must be shared with the DSL or a deputy immediately.

Attendance

Update May 2020: Due to changes in Government Guidance Best Futures School will resume taking the attendance register from 1 June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#).

Daily attendance figures are sent to North East Lincolnshire Council, through the “record of children in attendance form”.

Where a child is expected and does not arrive the school will follow our attendance policy and procedures and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9.30am The DSL will be informed, and the school will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent and emergency contacts. If contact cannot be made a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency will be carried out to establish that the pupil is safe and well.

A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider 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 attendance procedure if contact proves impossible with children at home. The school will follow North East Lincolnshire’s Children Missing from Education procedures:

<https://www.safernel.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Children-missing-from-education.pdf>

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.

Any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse must be reported to the DSL or a deputy immediately.

Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period.

As a school we will not be operating live video lessons eg Zoom to deliver learning. Work will be completed through work packs delivered to the pupil's home address (2 members of staff, whilst following the social distancing protocol).

Work may also be completed online through age appropriate websites, suggested by the teacher. Additional resources and support will be offered to parents via the Dojo System.

Oak and Willow Pupils have access to dojo accounts where they can receive support from teachers with their work.

All communication on the Dojo system can be monitored by the Dojo Administrators who are Hayley Butts (Deputy Head) and Jayne Dodd (Teacher).

Any concerns must be shared immediately with the DSL or a deputy.

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](#)
- 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. As well as [Online safety in schools and colleges: Questions from the Governing Board](#).
- We have reviewed the code of conduct accordingly.
- 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.
- Children and young people accessing the internet 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. Children will be accessing age appropriate and suitable content for online learning.

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
- [Gov guidance on staying safe online](#) - Advice for parents

Update May 2020: Parents have also received further guidance through the Dojo app on topics such as

- Digital safety during COVID-19 - safeguarding from harmful influences online (radicalisation/Prevent)
- [Think U Know home education resources](#)
- Child Exploitation/Internet safety
- [NSPCC online safety guidance](#)

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 Principal or DSL.

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

Email: csrs@nelincs.gov.uk

Telephone: 01472 326118

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 2019 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning. 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.

Our child protection procedures:

- 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 which is 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.

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 school 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.

This policy has been remotely approved by CIC on 22.05.2020 and is available on the school website.