

## Annex to Safeguarding Policy

### COVID-19 changes to our Safeguarding Policy

January 2021

#### Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our school 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 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

St Lawrence College is currently offering Key Worker and vulnerable children schooling and there is a separate Key Worker School policy. There are no children currently within the school with an EHCP plan. KCC safeguarding team are available throughout this period for Thanet the contact number is 03000 418503. SLC will also take advice from the BSA, ISI, NAHT, HMC and IAPS.

#### Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies are as documented on the safeguarding policy which is available on the school website.

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always on site (including residential school accommodation) while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible, the DSL or Deputy DSL will be contactable and the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will email all staff by 9am to advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role together with contact details for the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure 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.

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 as documented at the end of the Safeguarding policy.

## Identifying vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children. We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children and Adopted children - Key Worker School available
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker - Key Worker School available
- Children with an EHCP –Key Worker School available
- Other children the school considers vulnerable including those not accessing remote learning adequately. This will be monitored by teaching staff, DSL and SLT.
- In the Senior School, pupils in the greatest need are categorised as red with the DSL or relevant HSM to arrange regular 1:1 contact with the pupil and parents/guardians as appropriate. Any pupil currently involved with social services has been automatically included in this category. Amber pupils are those in need of pro-active contact and monitoring from HSMs; those who have had involvement with social services in the past year have automatically been included in this category. Blue pupils are those who may be in need of further pastoral support due to events such as bereavement. HSMs should proactively contact these pupils and/or their parents/guardians at least once each half term.

In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school.

- Children of Key Workers who may attend school. (See separate guidance on the running of Key Worker School). The school will follow Government guidance to identify Key Workers. Children in Year 7 and above attending Key Worker School will be undertake a lateral flow test prior to their first attendance and weekly thereafter.

## Attendance

The school is following the attendance guidance issued by government. Where a child is expected on the College site and does not arrive, the school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (Skype, FaceTime, through a relative etc) but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. 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.

## 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.

In addition to general safeguarding updates, within the limitations of remote teaching, staff will be vigilant to observe and anticipate any indications of increased risk such as recognising the symptoms of deteriorating mental health in children and young adults and managing bereavement. Staff will be proactive in reaching out to these pupils and their families both offering support and signposting wider professional and charity support networks.

## 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.

We also address the issue of safeguarding through our AUP and JS and SS remote learning guidance to pupil and parents.

## Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. 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 where possible that [appropriate filters and monitors are in place](#)
- The School Governors will [review arrangements](#) to ensure they remain appropriate
- 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](#). We have reviewed the code of conduct and WFH policy 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 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](#).
- Parents and carers can access information about keeping children safe online via the school website. 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. Parents have been offered the following links:
  - o [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - o [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - o [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
  - o [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - o [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
  - o [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers
    - Parents will also be reminded of the need to check the suitability of any additional online education or support they plan to use for their children, for example online tutors.
    - 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](#).

## **Mental Health and wellbeing**

Where safeguarding is supported through services such as the independent listeners, alternative options will be presented to students in order to ensure they continue to receive support. Some of the approaches that may be taken include:

- Sending links to verified websites offering free professional online counselling such as The Mix, YoungMinds and Childline
- Passing on numbers for free phone and/or text chat services offered by charities to support mental health
- HSMs and/or DSL/DDSL to monitor and offer pastoral support as outlined above in the 'Identifying Vulnerability' section of this annex.
- The School Chaplain will co-ordinate with DSL and contact any families that may appreciate his support.

## **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 safeguarding team.

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 as per the Safeguarding policy.

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 paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

## **New staff or volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. This may be conducted remotely depending on resources and availability. 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.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- 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 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
- Any speaker who may be invited onto the school online platforms will be subject to the usual restrictions and checks of the school visitor policy.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on 7 January 2021 and is available on the school website.

- Other relevant SLC policies:
- Working From Home (WFH)
- Key Worker School
- School Visitor Policy
- Welcome to G Suite Education Letter
- Acceptable Use Policy

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Version No.

Revision Date

Summary of change

Approved by

Updated by