



**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for
Safeguarding and Child Protection at
Woodland Academy Trust**

Trust Name: Woodland Academy Trust
Policy owner: Woodland Academy Trust
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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.

Although restrictions were eased on school attendance, from January 2021 these restrictions have been reintroduced in full.

This addendum of the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Trust Contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ms N Bradley	01322334 638	nbradley@nhp.bexley.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Miss C Ingrams	01322 332379	cingrams@pwp.bexley.sch.uk
Head teacher	See below- Individual School contacts		
Chair of Governors	Mrs S Butterfill Mrs J Smith (Acting)		chair@khp.kent.sch.uk rgbchair@nhp.bexley.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor / Trustee	Mrs A Mullen		amullen@nhp.bexley.sch.uk

Individual school contacts:

School	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Board Level Lead/Nominated Governor	Chair of Governors
Peareswood Primary School. 01322 332379	Ms K Yiannadji	Mrs C Ferla	Mrs A Mullan	Mrs J Smith (Acting)
Willow Bank Primary School 0208 320 1900	Mrs N Roscoe	Mrs M Malhi	Mrs A Mullen	Mrs J Smith (Acting)
Northumberland Heath Primary School 01322 334638	Mrs L Rogers	Mrs G Beale	Mrs A Mullen	Mrs J Smith (Acting)
Knockhall Primary School 01322 382053	Miss C Strudwick	Mrs C Riley	Mrs A Mullen	Mrs S Butterfill

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children at Woodland Academy Trust include those Children who have a social worker and those children 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 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 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.

Schools within the Trust 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. The lead person for this will be: Ms Nicole Bradley-Executive Head teacher

In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

The School Inclusion Team is in regular contact with vulnerable families and their social workers.

Contact will be maintained between the school and named social workers for the duration of these measures.

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

The Trust will encourage our vulnerable children to attend school, including remotely if needed. All children will have access to remote learning during term time.

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.

Where the Trust has children in attendance in its schools (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 a school has closed, we will complete the return once as requested by the DfE

- The school will regularly contact all families that it deems vulnerable and will liaise with families and social workers of CP/CIN children frequently.
- This contact will be on a graduated basis depending on the level of need.
- 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 care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

This contact will take the form of:

- Voice to voice check-ins
- Arbor use
- Inclusion Leads, CLOs, Wellbeing Coaches to use a School or Trust mobile to contact families.
- All conversations to be logged on CPOMs and overseen by Heads.
- Initial phone calls to take place between 9am -10am so that Heads can check all initial entries by 10am and any actions needed, implemented by lunchtime.
- This process is part of our procedure for contacting all our vulnerable families at this time.

To support the above, the school 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, the school will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each School within the Trust has a designated Safeguarding Lead and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead who are overseen by Designated Executive Head Teachers.

Each school aims 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.

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

This can include updating and managing access to the child protection online management system, CPOMS, 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.

It is important that all Trust staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL for each school, will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head teacher and the Executive Head Teacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 the concern to the Head teacher and record their concerns on CPOMS as soon as possible.

Concerns around the Head Teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors:

Mrs J Smith-Bexley Schools.

Mrs S Butterfill –Knockhall Primary School

Woodland Academy Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place in a face- to- face situation 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- The Trust has ensured that on-line training has taken place through The National College.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL in each school will 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 the Trust, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to one of our schools, 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

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Trust's HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

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 Trust 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 -2020 (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 the schools 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.

The Trust 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.

The Trust 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 the Trust is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in its schools, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the Trust will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety in school

The Trust 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.

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 the Trust Handbook.

The Trust will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirement.

- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils.

- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) has been referred to when planning online lessons and activities.

Supporting children not in school

The Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children.

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

Details of this plan is recorded on CPOMS, as is a record of the contact made.

The communication plan can include; phone contact, remote contact (via Arbor) and door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods are recorded.

The Trust and its Central Safeguarding Team 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 Trust will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

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

Public Health England has updated the [Every Mind Matters](#) platform with specific advice on maintaining good mental wellbeing during the outbreak.

Supporting children in school

The Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The schools will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head teacher in each school will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The Trust 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.

The Trust 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 on CPOMS.

Where one of our schools has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – the SLT will discuss them immediately with the Trust.

Children Moving Schools

Where our Schools collaborate and children and/or staff from other schools are clustered in hubs, the principles in [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#) will continue to apply.

If children are required to attend another setting, the school will provide the named DSL with relevant welfare and child protection information. The Virtual Head for Looked After Children will be informed of any changes to settings.

As a minimum the receiving School will, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This will happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders will take responsibility.

Whilst the school must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR this does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE

Peer on Peer Abuse

The Trust recognises that during school closures 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 child/ren, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of the child/ren.

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

Support from the Woodland Academy Trust

The Trust 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.

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