

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at The Carey Federation

- Policy owner: The Carey Federation
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1.0 **Context**

This appendix has been developed in response to and aligned to DfE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers> published 27th March 2020.

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for vulnerable children and those 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** (see para 2), and
- children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This appendix of the Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements during this period of time and is likely to be reviewed at regular intervals particularly when new advice is released by the LA or DfE. This appendix of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will also be reviewed should school play 'host' to a collapsed provision or direct pupils/staff to a 'cluster' school. The review will then consider any information about 'hub' working issued by the DfE, and consideration will be made for example on, the sharing of vulnerable pupil information, the reporting of concerns and updating of safeguarding files.

It remains the case that **safeguarding is everybody's responsibility**, therefore this additional information needs to be shared with all staff and volunteers who in turn must read, digest and seek support from their DSL team or school leaders if further clarification is required. All staff should continue to have access to the Child Protection policy, Code of Conduct and KCSiE 2019 where further details and information can be found.

The schools' safeguarding team (DSL, Safeguarding Governor etc) and their contact details can be found in the main body of the Schools Safeguarding Policy. Changes to the DSL and DDSL during these exceptional circumstances can be found in para 3 of this appendix. Any changes will be shared with all staff and volunteers of the school.

2.0 Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker (including children in care) and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care plans (EHCPs). A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed (by the school, or other professional) 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 SENDCO, 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 and available, 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.

School leaders must also consider the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and all other children attending the setting. If a child is unwell, or showing the symptoms of Covid -19 (as defined by current government guidelines) they will expect the child to remain at home and the school will offer provision and support remotely informing relevant partner agencies. This will include establishing regular contact with the family until such time as they have adhered to guidelines enabling the now well or symptom free child to return to school. Staff will phone parents to collect pupils immediately if they show signs of COVID-19.

If the school has information that parents are not following current government guidelines Leaders will use their professional discretion, working with any partner agencies and LA officers to agree appropriate action. This will firstly take into account the child's safety however where other exceptional circumstances exist whereby a child compromises the health, wellbeing or safety of staff or other children, then appropriate action will be agreed by the school together with the social worker/LA.

The Carey Federation 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. If current plans and support packages exist for these pupils the school will continue to provide for these as best as possible in conjunction with the relevant agencies. The lead person for this will be: Ruh Alford

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 Carey Federation or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if not possible by other means.

2.1 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. Key staff and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need and those on CP should be attending school – we will then follow up (**Schools**

Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19) on any pupil that we were expecting to attend, who does not.

The Carey Federation 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.

School will complete a return online so the DfE can monitor who is in school and who isn't by midday everyday https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings?utm_source=15dbdd08-0355-41cd-a731-77d42d9cf9a9&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

The LA has a duty to monitor vulnerable children's attendance and The Carey Federation will be completing the necessary spreadsheets and returning to schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk daily. Sarah Revers has been delegated this responsibility.

2.2 How will this look in our school?

To support the above, The Carey Federation 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 Carey Federation will take the actions described in the **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart.**

2.3 Those vulnerable children not attending school

Those vulnerable children who are not attending school will be contacted on a regular basis so that school are satisfied that they are safe. School will follow the **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart** along with that from other agencies working with the pupil and family. The DSL or Deputy DSL will review their RAG ratings for this group at least weekly taking into account any reported concerns from school contact or any information from partner agencies such as ViST reports. Any changes will be recorded on the schools central vulnerable group spreadsheet and shared with the Headteacher if not DSL and recorded on CPOMS. **Any changes in the RAG rating will be sent to the LA on this link so the master records can be updated.** [**schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk**](mailto:schoolsdailyreturns@devon.gov.uk)

Rosie Cawsey (SENCO +DDSL) has been delegated to telephone vulnerable pupils.

3.0 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Carey Federation has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs During this extraordinary situation their contact details are as follows. Please note below whether they cover both schools in the Federation or just one – this is important with regards confidentiality.

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead – The Carey Federation	Ruh Alford	<u>execheadashwater@halwill.devon.sch.uk</u>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – The Carey Federation	Rosie Cawsey	<u>rosie2@halwill.devon.sch.uk</u>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Halwill Primary School	Jayne Miners	<u>jayne@halwill.devon.sch.uk</u>

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Halwill Primary School	Alix Rothery	alix@halwill.devon.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Ashwater School	Carole Gleed	carole@ashwater.devon.sch.uk

3.1 DSL cover in school

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 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 senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection records 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. The Carey Federation will endeavour to ensure a DSL/DDSL is on site when children are in school, if this is not possible on a particular day, staff on site will be advised to telephone the DSL or DDSL should a concern arise.

3.2 Informing staff

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy), or the named school leader, The Carey Federation will inform all staff and volunteers of changes to the details above.

The DSL or DDSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely or seek support and liaise with Early Help professionals.

Any changes to the DSL will also be shared with those staff working from home via email / messenger

Any changes to the Safeguarding team details will also be shared with Babcock LDP and Devon County Council.

4.0 Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy which can be done remotely via CPOMS, private messaging using initials only or through telephone. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access any electronic system from home, they should email or privately message using initials only the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher or Safeguarding contact. This will ensure that the concern is received. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. All staff should follow the escalation process as laid out in **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart**.

4.1 Reporting a concern about an adult/the HT

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should 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 immediately.

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

John Lawlor, chair@halwill.devon.sch.uk

5.0 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 have or will miss their refresher training. All existing school staff who have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019), are similarly likely to not receive whole staff training during this time. DSLs should therefore communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. This should be achieved through emails and similar electronic means.

Where new staff or volunteers are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction via video conferencing and sharing of powerpoint presentation.

6.0 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, The Carey Federation 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. Where The Carey Federation 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. Volunteers will not be given access to given access to learning platforms which involve on-line communication with children. Volunteers will not form part of the supervision rota of Critical Worker children during COVID-19 school closure.

The Carey Federation 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 Carey Federation 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, The Carey Federation will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Where staff are required to work in schools that are not their normal place of work, senior leaders 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

There is no requirement to list such individuals in the schools SCR, unless leaders choose to do so as long as such written confirmation is received. The Carey Federation will retain this evidence until such time as the current restrictions on schools are lifted and in line with our current data and information retention policies.

Upon arrival, they must have access to a copy of the receiving setting's Child Protection Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements and contact details.

7.0 Online safety in schools and colleges

The Carey Federation 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. Students will be reminded about the principles of internet safety.

7.1 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 or suffering abuse. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy (and where appropriate the **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart**). Referrals should still be made to MASH/social worker and as required, to the police. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct.

The Carey Federation 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, unless as a result of risk assessments confirmed with the Headteacher. This may for example involve having the parent in the room.
- 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.
- 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 must only use platforms agreed by school leaders
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance for live lessons including Zoom sessions.

Principles of Using a Learning Platform (Class Dojo)

Learning Platforms involve remote teaching and learning and therefore there will be communication, photos and videos shared between staff and children. The above principles should be adhered to and include the following:

- No staff member should send videos or photos privately to an individual child / parent
- If any photos / videos of children received by a staff member are deemed inappropriate e.g. including nudity, should be declared immediately to Headteacher and a note made on CPOMS, parents to be informed that image inappropriate, image to be deleted (unless evidence for a police or MASH investigation)
- If the Headteacher receives an inappropriate photo/video, they should declare to DDSLs, note on CPOMS and inform parents of inappropriateness
- If the above 2 points cause a concern that abuse is taking place, the threshold tool should be consulted and if appropriate, a referral to MASH should be made
- Staff can comment and praise children's work
- Normally, protracted conversations with children on-line would be discouraged but in this situation (where children are not seeing teachers) children may want to talk to their teacher so teachers should be careful not to 'brush off children'
- If conversations have become protracted, teacher should declare to Headteacher and note on CPOMS. If Headteacher is in this position, declare to DDSLs and note on CPOMS
- Headteacher has access so can oversee all classes. This will safeguard teachers as no conversations are 'private'.

7.2 Online safety at home

School will continue to support parents, sharing online safety information, websites and resources for them to utilise on the school website and in school communications and updates. E.g. links to CEOPs, ThinkUKnow

Headteacher to raise online safety in initial whole Federation assembly at the start of home learning and teachers have been asked to regularly remind children of these.

7.3 Use of Social Media

Social Media is a useful form of communication with families during school closure as it allows The Carey Federation to easily share messages with families and to promote and share learning and activities undertaken by children at home to engender a sense of community cohesion. Both schools in The Carey Federation have Facebook pages. These principles must be adhered to:

- All GDPR must be adhered to, parents must consent to sharing of their children's photos and images. Parents must be made aware that the Facebook pages are public
- Only the child's first name should be used if a parent has sent the name in with photo/video
- Only fully clothed images should be shared.
- If any photos / videos of children received by a staff member deemed inappropriate e.g. including nudity, should be declared immediately to Headteacher (or DDSL if received by Headteacher) and a note made on CPOMS, parents to be informed that the image is inappropriate, image to be deleted (unless evidence for a police or MASH investigation)
- If photos or images cause a concern that abuse is taking place, the threshold tool should be consulted and if appropriate, a referral to MASH should be made by DSL or DDSL
- Staff and adults associated with The Carey Federation must only comment appropriately and professionally on posts
- No private conversations should be had between staff or adults associated with The Carey Federation and children or their families
- Any instigation of private conversation from a child or family must be declared to Headteacher

8.0 Supporting children not in school

The Carey Federation is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children. 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, as should a record of contact. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits (if appropriately risk assessed). The plans put in place will as a minimum reflect the **Schools Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children During Covid 19 flowchart**). Other individualised contact methods should be carefully considered, ideally working with families, and recorded.

The Carey Federation and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. Any such plan must be reviewed at least weekly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate. The school will share safeguarding messages on its website, social media pages and learning platform. The Carey Federation 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 and carers

All staff at The Carey Federation need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home and show understanding if parents are struggling with children's learning at this time. The Carey Federation 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 follow the learning set for pupils learning at home. The Carey Federation is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. We 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. A minimum of two members of staff will be on-site. For the duration of school closure for COVID-19, all schooling of Ashwater School and Pre-School vulnerable and Critical Worker children will take place at Halwill Primary School. Rota allocations will ensure a known adult is present for Ashwater pupils and ratios considered for Pre-School children.

The Carey Federation will continually refer to the most recent 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. Where staff have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – they discuss them immediately with senior leaders.

8.1 Telephoning Families

The Carey Federation has taken the decision that all families will be telephoned fortnightly by a teacher or teaching assistant. The purpose of phone calls is to see how Class Dojo and home learning are going, keep connected, engage parents and motivate children. Teacher / TA should speak to children if the parent and child would like them to, again to keep connected. Additionally, this will be to identify any safeguarding concerns,

- SENCO calls all the ‘vulnerable’ families. This has been recommended by Devon County in Risk Assessment document. This is in addition to below.
- Senior Leaders have put a document to explain process of calling all families, once a fortnight
- Dial 141 before calling to block staff number, use free calls if possible but make a log if this is not and Federation will reimburse
- If speaking to a child, ask to be on speaker phone to safeguard self
- Make a log of call and if any safeguarding concerns arise, log on CPOMS and alert DSL and DDSLs.
- Let Headteacher know if can’t get through repeatedly AND child is not engaging via Class Dojo

9.0 Peer on Peer Abuse

The Carey Federation 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 multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.