

Appendix 1

Child Protection COVID-19 school closure arrangements

Annex Date: 1st June 2020

Key contact details

	Name
Head Teacher	Lisa Salters
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lisa Salters
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Debbie Foy Peter Allen
Chair of Governors	Eithne Proffitt
Link Governor for Safeguarding	Eithne Proffitt

This annex provides guidance to all adults working within the school whether paid or voluntary or directly employed by the school or by a third party.

Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory safeguarding guidance we will continue to have regard to as per our legislative duty. The government has provided additional guidance to support governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in order that they can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep their children safe. The additional guidance for the COVID-19 period can be found here:

<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>

Please note: the government is preparing additional guidance for hubs or school clusters.

This annex should be read alongside St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School's Child Protection policy, Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, and in conjunction with Part 1 of the School Improvement Liverpool Schools Safeguarding Handbook which is made available to all staff and volunteers.

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 the government asked parents to keep their children at home and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response where those workers have no other safe arrangements for the care of their child/ren.

Schools were also asked to provide care for additional children. These children were identified by the government as being vulnerable due to social care involvement, or as a result of Special Educational Needs or Disability. Further detail is specified in section 2 below.

During this time, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School is doing what it reasonably can in order to keep all of our children safe. In most cases, the majority of our children will not physically be attending the school. It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that a child may be at risk and they are doing so extremely well. Any such concerns will be dealt with in line with our main Child Protection policy and local safeguarding arrangements. Where appropriate, referrals will still be made to children's services and as required, the police, **without delay**.

Across Liverpool it was agreed that the Local Authority would adopt a Hub model for providing care to the key groups of children of primary age. A number of school sites were identified to remain open, with all other schools closing. The Hubs are strategically located across the city and are staffed by members of staff from schools within their locality. Children needing care have been signposted to their nearest Hub, but parents are also free to choose the most convenient Hub location. Further information regarding the response by Liverpool City Council to COVID-19 can be found here:

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/communities-and-safety/emergency-planning/coronavirus/>

Our school site is open (as of 1.06.2020) and is operating as a childcare Hub for the critical workers and identified vulnerable children.

This addendum to our Child Protection policy specifies the details of our safeguarding arrangements during this time, until school is instructed it can safely fully open again.

2. Vulnerable Children

During school closures due to COVID-19, schools are required to provide care to children identified as being vulnerable.

The government defines vulnerable children as those who have a social worker and those children and young people up until the age of 25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).

Further information about vulnerable children can be found here:

<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>

Children who have a social worker include children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be considered vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children with an EHC Plan have been risk assessed to determine 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. Many children with EHC Plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals is not a determining factor when assessing vulnerability.

The government expects that vulnerable children with a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions which put them at increased risk. Within Liverpool, all children open to Children's Services have been assessed by their social worker and manager, and a priority list has been agreed. Children have been matched with their nearest Hub setting. Children on this list have been contacted by their social worker and will be supported to attend a Hub provision. Where a parent does not want to bring their child to a Hub setting and the child is deemed vulnerable, the social worker will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

In conjunction with the Virtual Headteacher, Looked After Children have also been risk assessed and a list of priority children has been identified. Many Looked After Children can safely remain at home. Whilst there has been a priority list identified by the Local Authority, any child subject to Child Protection Planning can attend a Hub.

Prior to St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School closing, and before receiving official guidance regarding who met the criteria of vulnerable children, our school safeguarding team identified who our most vulnerable children were and formulated a plan to monitor their safety and wellbeing during school closure.

Schools have flexibility and are able to offer a place to those children they determine to be vulnerable, particularly those who are on the edge of receiving support or assessment from children's services.

For the children who are not attending school, who are isolating at home, our school community continues to use See-Saw, our dedicated interactive platform. Through this, our children and parents are provided with carefully researched and resourced daily activities and additional pointers for further learning.

Contact between school staff, parents and children is therefore maintained daily.

Each class teacher is aware of the most vulnerable children and their families and additional contact via text, phone call or Skype, is carried out at least once a week.

Families in greater need of support receive daily contact from the Designated or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads via Skype/video conferencing.

The very small number of families who struggle with accessing online platforms are also reached by phone or using Skype.

See-Saw, text messaging and the website continue to be the most popular and successful links between school staff and the community within and beyond the Hub.

'Safe and Well' checks identified by the Safeguarding Team are being carried out via home visits for those families who are not seen to be engaging in communication with the school.

The effectiveness of these measures is under continual review by all staff.

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School continues to work with and support children's services to help protect vulnerable children. This is especially important during the COVID-19 period.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Staff continue to follow the procedures set out in the main Child Protection policy for contacting and reporting concerns to the DSL and/or deputy. All school staff have the school safeguarding email address and the personal contact numbers of each of the Safeguarding Team. This method of communication/advice/support continues throughout this period.

While the school is open for Critical Workers children and identified vulnerable children our staff are working on a rota basis, there is always a member of our schools' Safeguarding Team on-site at all times.

Throughout the COVID-19 period, the safeguarding team continue to engage with social workers and attend and contribute to all multi-agency meetings, as determined by the local procedures for remote meetings.

It is acknowledged by the government that face to face DSL training is unlikely to take place during the COVID-19 period. For the period these 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 missed their refresher training.

4. Safeguarding procedures

Where staff in school have a concern about a child, they continue to follow the process outlined in our main Child Protection policy. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

This includes making a detailed record via the Cause for Concern section in Edukey, the school's current recording platform. This ensures that all members of the Safeguarding Team are alerted by email. This recording must also, in every instance, be immediately followed through by phone call to the relevant member/s of the Safeguarding Team.

If a member of staff believes a child is at risk of harm then the Designated Safeguarding Lead should ring **Liverpool Careline on 0151 233 3700, without delay**. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is *unavailable* then **any** member of staff should ensure Liverpool Careline is contacted without delay.

If a child is in immediate/imminent danger then staff should ring the police.

[Safeguarding-mate](http://www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk/safeguarding-mate/) can provide additional key guidance to all staff regarding key safeguarding procedures www.schoolimprovementliverpool.co.uk/safeguarding-mate/

Concerns regarding the conduct of a member of staff should continue to be dealt with in line with our managing allegations policy.

5. Attendance monitoring

Local Authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day to day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

The DfE have devised an online form and supporting spreadsheet for the COVID-19 period. It can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

A daily online attendance form is submitted to the DfE each day for all those children in attendance. This is to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending

school. This allows a record for safeguarding purposes and ensures schools provide accurate, up to date data to the Department for Education on the number of children taking up places.

The school follows up with any parents/carers or social workers who have arranged care for their child but their child subsequently does not attend. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up a place at a Hub/setting, and was expected to, the social worker is informed.

6. Safer Recruitment

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. Schools should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, set out in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Our school workforce may use volunteers, if this is the case we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (paragraphs 167 to 172). St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School ensures that there are no circumstances where a volunteer who has not been checked will be left unsupervised with children or allowed to work in regulated activity. If new staff or volunteers are recruited, the usual Safer Recruitment processes are followed, and they are also provided with a safeguarding induction.

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School continues 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 (as per paragraph 163 of Keeping Children Safe in Education)

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School also continues to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (as per paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education). During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

7. Mental Health

It is acknowledged that the current circumstances surrounding COVID-19 are particularly stressful and may cause increased anxieties and stress for all members of our school community. When children and staff are away from their usual routine and social contact, this can become a negative and stressful experience. St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School ensures there is appropriate support available for the whole school community at this time. Support includes existing provision in the school, or from specialist staff or support services.

Children and their parents are directed to the Growth Mindset tab on our website that provides insight into the impact of positive thinking on everything we do and every challenge we may encounter:

<https://stvincentdepaulprimary.co.uk/learning/growth-mindset/>

The school also uses the specific Covid-19 support for children available from MindheartKids at: https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_0a595408de2e4bfcfbf1539dcf6ba4b89.pdf

The Liverpool CAMHS partnership's Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing, has provided an update on the ongoing support for children and young people's mental health being. Please find attached an update (COVID-19) to explain what services are available and the contact details for them during the Covid-19 restrictions. As things are rapidly changing this document will be updated regularly so to keep checking back to the website for the latest version:

<https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/children-young-people/covid-19-liverpool-camhs-support>

Where children of critical workers and vulnerable children continue to attend the setting, appropriate support is offered to them whilst on site.

The school community can also be signposted to the government's advice on supporting children and young people's mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Staff are also aware of the mental health of their pupils and parents when setting expectations regarding pupil's work when they are at home.

8. Online safety in schools and Hubs

Where the site remains open, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School continues to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources. Measures have been put in place to ensure safe IT arrangements and St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School has considered what the contingency arrangements are if the named IT staff become unavailable.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face

9. Online safety away from schools and Hubs

Where children are not physically attending a Hub/school, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School has considered the safety of our children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching remains the same as the principles set out in our school's staff code of conduct. This policy includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media. This policy applies equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which have been introduced. The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) should be adhered to by all staff.

Any online learning tools or systems recommended for use by St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School, are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

The school has clear policies and procedures in place for online access, e-safety and acceptable use. These can be found on our website and include reference to sites such as the NSPCC, net-aware, ChildLine.

Please also refer to our website's Children's tab, where there is a clear outline, guide and links for parents and children on Digital Citizenship and e-safety:

<https://stvincentdepaulprimary.co.uk/pupils/computing-curriculum-and-e-safety/>

As our main form of contact with families at this time is via technology, there is continuous reinforcement and support for parents in making selective, informed and appropriate use of any 'learning' sites beyond those recommended by school.

Parents can make reference to the following links:

<https://coronavirus.lgfl.net/safeguarding>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/working-remotely-advice-professionals-parents-posh-rhc>

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/safe-remote-learning/>

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School acknowledges that some parents and carers may choose to supplement the school's online offer with support from online companies and in some cases, individual tutors. We continue to raise awareness with parents of the importance of only accessing online support from a reputable organisation or individual who can provide evidence that they are a safe organisation and can be trusted to have access to children. We will signpost parents to support such as [Internet matters](#), [London Grid for Learning](#), [Net-aware](#), [Parent info](#), [Thinkuknow](#) and the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

10. Operation Encompass

When we receive an operation encompass notification relating to a pupil at our school, during the COVID-19 period, our response may be different from normal. If the subject of the notification remains in attendance at our school, we will follow our usual procedures. If the child is not attending school and is being cared for at home, we will risk assess the situation taking into consideration the history of the child and family. This information will be used in order to determine our response to each individual case. In all situations we would always aim to speak to the child.

11. Peer on peer abuse

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School recognises that where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within our main Child Protection policy. We 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 will be recorded using the agreed methods and appropriate referrals made.