



**Changes to Safeguarding & Child Protection  
Policy & Procedures due to COVID-19 pandemic**

April 2020 (updated July 2020)

## Annex 4

### Changes to Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedure

#### as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

#### Introduction

1. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and associated restrictions have required various changes to be made at Cotswold Chine School. A number of young people are remaining at home, whilst those that remain at School are needing to spend more of their time in their respective houses. In addition, there will inevitably be pressures on staffing numbers as several staff members will need to remain away from work due to illness or the need to self-isolate. The availability and access to external professionals and local authority child protection services has also been affected.
2. Despite these changes, the School's policy in respect of safeguarding and child protection remains fundamentally the same. In particular:
  - 2.1. The safety and welfare of the children in our care remain of paramount importance;
  - 2.2. When it comes to safeguarding, we will continue to maintain a culture of vigilance and always seek to do what is in the best interests of those in our care;
  - 2.3. If anyone has a safeguarding concern they should report it immediately in accordance with the School's established procedures;
  - 2.4. Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Safeguarding Officer is always available;
  - 2.5. We will continue to ensure that our recruitment procedures are robust and that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure that unsuitable people are not permitted access to children;
  - 2.6. Children should continue to be protected when they are online.
3. 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. It takes into account the guidance contained in the [Department of Health Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#).

## Safeguarding Reporting procedures

4. All staff members should continue to follow established policies and procedures regarding reporting concerns and what they should do if they have any concerns about a child.
5. **Kelly Lawson** is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Residential Care and aims to be available to take calls 24/7 on the designated safeguarding telephone number: **01453 837 171**.
6. If it is not possible to contact Kelly Lawson via the telephone number above or if Kelly is absent from work due to sickness or annual leave:
  - 6.1. any safeguarding concerns arising within the residential setting can be reported to **Carolyn Cornwall** (*Registered Manager and Deputy Safeguarding Officer*) directly or a deputy safeguarding lead who will be contactable through the main safeguarding telephone number: **01453 837 171**
  - 6.2. Any safeguarding concerns arising within the education setting should be reported to **Tim Makaruk** (*Designated Safeguarding Lead for Education*). If a safeguarding concern arises relating to education during the school holidays then another Safeguarding Lead will coordinate the response to this and reporting should be done through the main safeguarding number.
7. If the concern relates to Kelly Lawson, Carolyn Cornwall or Tim Makaruk, then staff should report the matter to **Jake Lukas** (*Chief Executive*).
8. Although it is expected that any safeguarding concerns will normally be reported as above in the first instance, any member of staff can still report the matter to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). In view of the fact that local authority services are likely to be under increased pressure due to COVID-19, it may be necessary to be persistent when contacting MASH. The relevant contact details are as follows:

Telephone: 01452 426565

Email: [childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk)
9. Should a child be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the School will immediately escalate the matter in accordance with the relevant escalation procedure (available here: [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)).

### Collaboration with external professionals

10. Under the School's Pandemic Response Plan, all meetings that need to take place in person are being facilitated with all expected social distances measures in place in relation to COVID-19. The School will continue to work proactively with each child's social worker and other external professionals. The senior leadership team will take all reasonable steps to support external professionals to maintain links and check on the welfare of the children for whom they are responsible. Where appropriate, this will be facilitated through telephone or video calls and / or visits with COVID-19 measures in place.

### Support for children who have returned home

11. The Headteacher and/or Registered Manager have designated key people to stay in touch with children who have returned home to provide additional support for parents such as access to educational materials. This may take the form of telephone calls, postcards and video calling (N.B. any use of video calling will be subject to certain conditions— see paragraph 18 for further details).
12. The Headteacher has sent out advice to all parents and carers regarding online safety and support when their children are accessing online educational materials at home. Parents and carers are being communicated with regularly and asked to seek advice from senior staff members at the School if they have any concerns around safety and welfare for their child.

### Support for children who remain at the School

13. **Physical health.** In the interests of minimising the health risks to children and staff members, all children are being encouraged and supported to observe regular handwashing and to adhere to the social distancing guidance issued by the Government. In addition, the Behaviour Support and Physical Intervention Policy has been updated to reinforce the fact that intentionally spitting, coughing or sneezing on other people is unacceptable.
14. **Mental health.** Staff should remain vigilant to the potential impact of anxieties about the COVID-19 outbreak and should continue to use their training in trauma informed approaches to support children with their mental health and wellbeing. In particular, any member of staff who believes that there may be an emerging problem should follow the established 'early help' procedures set out in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures so that an assessment can be made to identify whether it would be beneficial to access early help services. The School will continue to seek support from a child and mental health psychiatrist who is able

to carry out consultations via video calls. In addition, all members of the Clinical Therapy team will continue to support in the homes and will be able to provide individual and group support for children regarding self-care strategies to support their mental health.

15. **Online safety.** Compliance with the 'stay at home' guidance will mean that young people spend more time in the houses and may spend more time online as a result. The School will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, and the members of the IT team will continue to be available to maintain safe IT arrangements. Staff should remain vigilant to ensure that young people do not access inappropriate content or spend excessive amounts of time online. The majority of staff members have attended and completed Child Exploitation Online training provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Further online safety guidance is available in each of the houses.
16. **Behaviour support.** The Behaviour Support & Physical Intervention Policy has been updated with regard to the behaviours that may result in a fixed term exclusion from the School (e.g. intentionally coughing, sneezing or spitting on others). If it becomes necessary to implement a fixed term exclusion, the child's professional network will be mobilised to ensure that any temporary exclusions are managed safely for the child involved.

### **Video calling with children, families and professionals**

17. The School recognises that maintaining connections with external professionals as well as ensuring that children can remain in visual contact with their family and key people are crucially important for their welfare. As a result, the School has introduced measures to enable meetings to take place via video calls.
18. Any video calling arrangements are made through a monitored calendar and using laptops checked and owned by the School. Only staff authorised to do so will facilitate video calls and must adhere to the rules and expectations set out in the Staff Handbook. Staff must not make video calls to children from their own homes or via any personal devices.
19. There are currently no remote learning systems in place. Educational materials have been sent out where relevant in hard copied packs.

### **Safeguarding recruitment and induction**

20. Whilst the social distancing guidance remains in place, arrangements may be made for interviews with job applicants to take place via video call in some instances, however, if an

applicant can attend in person, the interview can be conducted at Ebley House following social distance and other COVID-19 prevention measures. All necessary pre-appointment checks as required by the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 guidance should continue to be carried out.

21. If the COVID-19 restrictions make it impractical for an applicant to provide original copies of the ID documents needed for the DBS check, it will be acceptable for the documents to be viewed via a live video link and to accept scanned images via email. However, the original documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the new member of staff arrives for their first day at work.
22. All new members of staff will be required to attend safeguarding induction training prior to working in the homes. All other recruitment procedures and checks will continue as normal.