

# Samuel Rhodes School

## Safeguarding arrangements specific to the period effected by the COVID 19 pandemic

Date of original policy	March 2019
Original Author	ISCB
Review date and SLT initial	April CN & SLT
Next review date	When advised by ISBC

Reference: SRS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy September 2019 **COVID 19 Addendum**

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body on 22.4.20. It will be reviewed following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff and it is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy. This policy was shared with all staff on 23.4.20

This addendum of the Samuel Rhodes Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

### **1. Context**

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the UK government has asked parents to keep their children at home wherever possible. Schools, and all childcare providers, are, however, being asked to provide care for a very limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and who cannot be safely cared for at home.

The key principles of our existing Safeguarding and Child Protection policy still apply as follows;

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- a DSL or deputy will be contactable at all times
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act immediately and inform the DSL/deputy DSL
- unsuitable people will not be allowed to enter our workforce and/or gain access to children
- those supporting pupils accessing online content will continue to be supported appropriately

We will ensure that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 will not weaken our approach to safeguarding or undermine this policy.

### **1. Vulnerable children**

Current guidance<sup>1</sup> defines vulnerable children as including “those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

*Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan (CP) 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.*

In line with the current guidance, we will risk assess all pupils 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. The views of, carers, therapists or clinicians will play an important part in evaluating pupils’ safety at home or at school.

Nearly all children and young people in our provision can safely remain at home during the Covid 19 outbreak. The school will support parents in their choice to keep their children safe at home and has a role to ensure accessible and differentiated home learning is available.

Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and especially our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their deputies know who our most vulnerable children are and will work in conjunction with the borough and other agencies to ensure priority cases are properly identified.

Our school 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

---

<sup>1</sup> <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>

school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Our Designated Teacher for this is Jenny Johns.

In circumstances where parents do not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Samuel Rhodes School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parents. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, A senior leader or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

## **2. Designated Safeguarding Leads**

During current COVID-19 pandemic arrangements Samuel Rhodes will ensure the DSL or one of the deputies available will be on site frequently each week pupils are accessing onsite provision in line with statutory guidance<sup>2</sup>. Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site a named leader on site will assume responsibility for co-ordinating immediate contact with the safeguarding lead should a safeguarding incident or concern arise. The DSL and at least one deputy DSL will always be available via phone & email. Staff will be informed and updated daily of the safeguarding rota and parents will be able to access all the contact details on the website.

The DSL and deputies will manage access to child protection records and liaise with pupil's social workers in order to fulfil school requirements for children in need meetings or when they need to carry out statutory assessments.

All staff on-site will be notified which member of the leadership team is responsible for on-site provision and will be made aware of the process for speaking to the DSL or deputy DSL.

The DSL and deputies will continue to engage with social workers, and co-ordinate remote attendance of case holding staff at all multi-agency meetings.

The DSL will ensure the Operation Encompass protocol is adhered to and respond to any concerns appropriately.

## **3. Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child/young person, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this includes making a report using our usual process. They will contact the DSL/Deputy DSL by phone or by email/by phone and record using CPOMS.

### **All 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 as soon as possible. This should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher within 24 hours. Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Tim Atwood and if the concern is in relation to the Chair of Governors or anyone on the governing body, the LADO should be informed directly at [lado@islington.gov.uk](mailto:lado@islington.gov.uk)

Advice may also be sought from the Principal Officer Safeguarding in Education on 0207 527 5595.

---

<sup>2</sup> Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019.

#### **4. Attendance monitoring**

Current guidance states that local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. However, all families will receive a 'check in' weekly phone call (more frequent for families of concern) from a member of the leadership team. They will also be called by other staff members and members of the therapist team where appropriate. Some pupils we know to be finding isolation particularly difficult will be identified by the senior team and receive regular wellbeing calls from the Intervention Lead or their 'trusted adult' at school. Information from these calls will be collated and accessed by DSL, deputy DSLs and other key members of staff who have safeguarding responsibilities.

Samuel Rhodes school will, when communicating with parents and 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 stops attending without notification, Samuel Rhodes school will notify their social worker.**

#### **5. Safeguarding training and induction.**

During the period that COVID-19 measures are in place, our DSL (and deputies) who are all trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

If it is at any point necessary to recruit new staff they will be provided with a safeguarding induction. If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school they will need to be appropriately endorsed by that setting or be accompanied by a member of school staff at all times.

All new staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding and child protection policy, including this addendum and our local processes and including confirmation of DSL arrangements for that day and subsequent days.

#### **6. 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, Samuel Rhodes school will continue to follow safer recruitment processes, 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.

No volunteers will be recruited during this period.

We will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS (and consider a referral to the TRA) anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

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 will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

We will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE, 2019.

## **7. Online safety in schools and colleges**

Where students are using devices that access the internet on school property, appropriate supervision will be in place.

## **8. Children and online safety away from school and college**

It is important that all staff who interact with children continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk of harm or neglect. Any such concerns should be dealt with in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and if required, the police.

Online pupil support should follow the same principles as set out in the school's code of conduct. We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Staff must not at any time use facetime/Zoom or other video calling platforms to speak to pupils or their families unless this has been risk assessed and agreed by the DSL.

## **9. Supporting children not in school**

Samuel Rhodes school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. 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 wrap around support plan is in place for that child or young person. All calls should be recorded in the relevant documents and shared with the SENCO team. Any concerns recorded as detailed above.

The wrap around support provided can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits (if deemed safe to do so).

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages and this will include identifying how children and their families can talk to the DSL or their deputies if they need to.

We recognise 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/carers. Our teaching staff are aware of this and will take this into account when setting work for pupils and also in relation to their expectations of the quantity and quality of pupils' work whilst they are at home.

We 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.

Every staff member must support pupils and work with other agencies whilst rigorously adhering to GDPR requirements. They may use Egress and remote logins in order to facilitate this.

## **10. Supporting children in school**

Samuel Rhodes School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students and we will continue to be a safe space for pupils to attend. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

We 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 COVID-19.

We 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.

Where Samuel Rhodes school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the local authority.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Samuel Rhodes school recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of peer on peer abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE, 2019 and of those outlined within our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. We will continue to listen and work with children and young people, parents/carers and multi-agency partners to ensure the safety and security of the child/young person concerned. All concerns and actions will be recorded in line with our normal safeguarding processes and appropriate referrals made.

### **11. Support from Islington Council**

In Islington, the following services will continue to provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively:

- Head of the Virtual School: 0207 527 3993 or [matthew.blood@islington.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.blood@islington.gov.uk)
- Principal Officer Safeguarding in Education: 0207 527 5595 or [michelle.virdi@islington.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.virdi@islington.gov.uk)
- Children's Services Contact Team: 0207 527 7400 for urgent child protection referrals and [csct@islington.gov.uk](mailto:csct@islington.gov.uk) for all other queries and CIN and Targeted Family Support Referrals
- LADO: 0207 527 8102 or [lado@islington.gov.uk](mailto:lado@islington.gov.uk)