



Appendix to Safeguarding Policy (COVID-19 Provisions)

1. Response to COVID-19

1.1. There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak of the new Corona Virus. Many pupils had had to be educated primarily or partially at home, and staffing continues to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

1.2. Despite necessary changes and additions, the school's Child Protection Policy remains fundamentally the same:

- Pupils always come first
- Staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with established safeguarding procedures.

1.3. This Appendix sets out some of the adjustments made in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following advice from government and local agencies.

2. Reporting arrangements

2.1. The school arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

2.2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

- Mr. Harry Howells
- Email: harry.howells@hartmoreschool.co.uk
- Mobile: 07805695821

2.2.1. The Deputy DSLs are:

- Cath Quinton & Rich Coughlin
- Email: cath.quinton@hartmoreschool.co.uk
- Email: richard.coughlin@hartmoreschool.co.uk

2.3. The school's approach ensures that the DSL or a deputy is always contactable while the school is open, and the lead DSL is always contactable by mobile at any time.

2.3.1. All staff are re-issued with contact details for DSL's during school closure, and should report any concerns to the lead DSL by email, and follow this up with a phone call to bring it to his attention at the first possible opportunity, in line with the current policy. Staff should continue trying to contact the DSL until they have spoken to him. **IT BECOMES THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU HAVE TO DO THAT DAY.** This starts the safeguarding process.

2.4. Staff must continue to follow the safeguarding procedure as outlined in policy, and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any pupil (whether or not physically present in school).

2.5. COVID-19 necessitates a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and pupils, rather than a reduction in our standards.

2.6. Children's services may be affected both by the impact of the virus on staff, and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistence applied in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are: **01452 426565** or by email **childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk**

2.6.1. Further details can be found at Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive.

2.7. Should a pupil, in the school's view be at risk of significant harm, and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children executive escalation procedure, available here:

[Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)

3. Identifying Vulnerability

3.1. The nature and pupil population of Hartmore School means we have a significant number of children identified as 'vulnerable'.

3.2. We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and Social Worker, mostly involving fortnightly contact
- Pupils who have previously been Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and SW, mostly involving fortnightly contact
- Pupils subject to a Child Protection Plan/ Child in Need Plan – Places offered, if not taken this must be agreed by Social Worker and family. Visits will be undertaken 3-times weekly (to be agreed with Social Worker as to who will undertake these visits).
- Pupils with an EHCP – Individual Risk Assessments undertaken and consultations held with parents/carers, SLT and SENCO.
- Pupils 'on the edge' of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker – Where required these children will be offered a place at school or individual contact plans will be agreed
- Other Pupils the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. Contact arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers, SLT and DSL.

3.3. Where appropriate, the school will liaise with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate, their social worker, the Virtual School Head for Children in Care and those who have previously been Children in Care.

3.3.1. In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the school.

- Children of critical workers, who may attend school if no safe alternative arrangements can be made.
- Children at home – work packs sent home with regular updates provided by daily contact with children. Teachers will ensure all children have internet contact and be in daily contact with the children in their class and ensuring their safety and well-being in addition to engaging them in education

- Senior leaders will also be in regular contact with parents to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

3.4. The plans in respect of each pupils in the above groups will be reviewed regularly. Their Risk assessment will be updated regularly whilst at home.

4. Holiday Arrangements

4.1. Hartmore School will be closed over regular school holidays as normal.

5. Attendance

5.1. Hartmore School adheres to the [attendance guidance issued by government](#). Where a pupil does not arrive as expected, the school will follow our attendance procedure, and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will then attempt a range of methods to contact the parent. The School will also keep the placing authority informed of all absences causing concern.

5.2. A risk assessment will be undertaken to manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

6. Awareness of Increased Risk

6.1. The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There likely will be heightened awareness of family pressures, especially if exacerbated by being ‘cooped up’ in a small living area, along with other issues such poverty, employment insecurity, financial or health anxiety, and mental health problems. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for pupils to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below).

6.2. Staff will be aware of the mental health of both pupils and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns.

6.3. It is widely reported that incidents of Domestic Abuse are expected to significantly increase during the period of isolation, as perpetrators may use this time as a “tool of coercive and controlling behaviour”, and victims and their children are consistently more vulnerable during periods of societal stress ([see government guidance](#)). Staff must be especially alert to the possibility of children being exposed to domestic violence of any kind, and respond to it as a safeguarding concern.

7. Online Risks

7.1. Pupils inevitably will be using the internet more during this period, both for educational and entertainment purposes. The school also uses online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff should be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and [other risks online](#) and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when pupils were learning at the school.

- The school adopts a simple “No screen unseen” Policy in school. We therefore encourage parents to take the same approach at home. The simple fact is that any filter or ‘net nanny’ is never going to be 100% safe. Children often have the skills and knowledge to get around internet security, sometimes in seconds. The only way to ensure a child’s safety on the internet is to properly supervise their online activity.
- Staff are fully aware of the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period, and been reminded of the school’s code of conduct. In particular, the importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families, and mindfulness with regard to

backgrounds and background conversation on calls when working from home have been emphasised.

- All pupils accessing remote learning receive appropriate guidance, particularly on internet safety.
- Parents and carers have been provided with information via about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access, and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. *Parents are provided with a Timetable showing the dates times and staff their children will be contacted online for an education session.*

8. Allegations or Concerns About Staff

8.1. With such different arrangements as described in this policy, we are cognisant of the fact that pupils could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. All staff are regularly reminded to maintain vigilance, with the view that 'it could happen here' kept to the forefront of their minds. They should and report any concern immediately, no matter how small, to the DSL.

8.2. We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged, and can be found at: [The role of the LADO and the allegations management process - Safeguarding Children in Gloucestershire](#)

8.3. If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

9. New Staff or Volunteers

9.1. New starters must be properly inducted in their role before starting, or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy., as they would prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (including any pre-commencement training). They must read the school's Safeguarding Policy, and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a pupils, and ensure the new starters are familiar with the safeguarding procedure.

9.2. If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- The member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- They have read and understand Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Where their role involves regulated activity, the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting. Further, we will undertake a written risk assessment (see flowchart on p.40 of KCSiE 2019) to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

9.3. Our safeguarding procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. Those supervising volunteers must themselves be in regulated activity, and able to provide regular, day-to-day supervision, so as in all circumstances to ensure the appropriate safeguards and protection for pupils.

- The school will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with DBS guidance.
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS, it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link, and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by SLT of who is working in the school each day.

9.4. The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

10. Review

10.1. This Appendix was last updated November 2020. Given the changing nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, it will be reviewed as required, or order to reflect changes in government guidance and other factors.

10.2. The provisions of this Appendix are designed only to deal with the unusual circumstances created as a consequence of Covid-19 pandemic. Once it is deemed the pandemic is over, this Appendix will immediately become null and void. The decision to nullify this Appendix will be taken solely by the Headteacher and Directors, based on government and other relevant guidance. Parents/Carers, staff, placing local authorities and all other key stakeholders will be notified in writing as and when it considered safe and appropriate to do so. At such time this Appendix will also be removed from Hartmore School's website.