



SOLIHULL



Saint Martin's

**Covid-1 Designated Safeguarding Lead,
Special Education Needs Co-ordinator and
Designated Teacher for Looked After
Children Procedures – Phases 1 & 2.**

Policy Statement

On the Friday 27th March 2020 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council issued emergency guidance for safeguarding and child protection procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance requires all Solihull Schools to append this guidance to their current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies until further notice. There are two phases to the guidance.

PHASE 1

Preparation for closure:

1. Review the provisions Vulnerable Children's list to identify:

- Children on a Section 47 Child Protection Plan,
- Children on a Section 17 Child in Need Plan,
- Children who are looked after,
- Children for whom an extended period of time at home will present an additional risk to the child,
- Children who are acting as Young Carers
- Children with a health care plan
- Children engaged with the Youth Offending Service

(Spreadsheet: Appendix A)

2. Review each case and decide, based on the level of need/concern, considering how the following approaches could be used:

- a home doorstep visit (in pairs, doorstep only, observing social distancing guidance)
- telephone call(s) should be undertaken whilst the school is closed. (This will vary from 1-3 days, but contact will be no longer than every 3 days. Record this risk assessment in line with the school child protection policy.)
- e-communication systems (such as Skype for Business or Face Time calls) (see emerging guidance in Appendix B)

3. Divide the children between the DSL team and ensure that each member of the team knows which child they are allocated to.

4. Record this decision on the child's child protection records file of the child.

5. Liaise with specialist health teams for any child with a chronic long term health/respiratory needs e.g. Brittle Asthma, Cardiac issues, Cystic Fibrosis and inform them of a possible school closure.

6. Any child where staying at home for a prolonged period raises concerns for the DSL a referral should be made to Children's Social Services outlining the risks as a child protection referral, and record this in line with school policy

7. The DSL must ensure that remote access (working from home) to any e-recording system is possible and that a laptop/iPad is available for each member of the DSL team.
8. Establish where the children will be living in the event of a closure and discuss with parents the need to respond to calls.
9. Contact details of parents, social worker and any multi-agency professional working with the child are recorded on child protection records
10. Discuss with neighbouring schools about DSL cover in the case of sickness.
11. Any child where staying at home for a prolonged period raises concerns for the DSL a referral should be made to Children's Social Services outlining the risks as a child protection referral, and recorded using the school's child protection record systems.

Process when school is closed

1. Inform the allocated social worker for all children on a CP/CiN/LAC that the child will be at home for the period of closure.
2. Current child protection concerns (child protection plan, child in need plan):
 - Twice weekly doorstep visits in pairs, doorstep contact adhering to social distancing protocols, with all children seen. Record in child protection record:
 - By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
 - By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
 - Summarising the situation as reported
 - Noting any actions that need to be undertaken
 - Undertake a contact phone/e-communication call every 1-3 days (where twice weekly visits not being undertaken) or once per week (where twice weekly visits being undertaken), depending on the risk assessment, noting the following points in the child protection record:
 - By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
 - By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
 - Summarising the situation as reported
 - Noting any actions that need to be undertaken
 - Offer of food support through school.
 - Liaising with all necessary professionals as usual.
 - Attending any planned review meetings, unless advised otherwise.
 - Continue to follow school child protection procedures to record and report concerns.

3. Vulnerable families:

- Once per week doorstep visits in pairs, doorstep contact, adhering to social distancing guidance, with all children seen, depending on the risk assessment, noting the following points in the child protection record:
 - By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
 - By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
 - Summarising the situation as reported
 - Noting any actions that need to be undertaken
- Phone/e-comms contact once a week.
 - By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
 - By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
 - Summarising the situation as reported
 - Noting any actions that need to be undertaken
- Offer of food support through school.
- Use of child protection procedures to record and report.

4. Escalation of concerns/Unable to make contact with family

- Where concerns for a child at home escalate a referral should be made to Children's Social Care or if at immediate risk to the Police.
- If not able to make contact – try again, review risk assessment & call Social Worker or Police (local school policing links such as PCSOs have now ceased to operate)
- Operation Encompass will no longer be operating. Any concerns about domestic abuse should be reported in line with school policy and DVRIM/DASH tools used. Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid continue to provide a service.
- The DSL team must meet weekly (this can be through a skype for business call), to discuss the status of each child they are working with, through a group supervision meeting which should be recorded.
- Remind Teachers to only use approved contacts methods – no social media groups etc

5. Catering for Children who are entitled to free school meals:

Where Solihull Catering are contracted by the school to provide school meals, two central catering hubs to prepare cold packed lunches for children entitled to free school meals. Please contact the business support team on 0121 704 6602 to organise this if you have a contract arrangement with Solihull Catering.

Those schools who do not contract Solihull Catering will need to make their own arrangements.

Emerging arrangements nationally about vouchers for FSM pupils.

6. Financial Support Signposting for families in crisis

Families requiring information around financial support and assistance to the following website link <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/benefits>

This website covers financial support and assistance with housing benefit, council tax support, information regarding welfare reforms including how to make a claim for universal credit.

The website also has 'support to success' information which signposts to organisations who can help with various issues including debt management and budgeting.

You add this information to your school website and any communications to parents.

Appendix B

Guidance for Camera- Calls

- Wear appropriate clothes – laptop cameras give different & unexpected camera angles – so wear what you would wear if you were in school.
- Think about your environment
 - Don't go on-line from your bedroom,
 - Look at the background – does it have photo's you don't want everyone to see
- Warn others in your house that you are broadcasting on-line – you don't want your family wandering past the camera
- ALWAYS record your session, this will protect you against any form of allegation.
- Use agreed provision communication, e.g. Skype for Business or Teams – **DO NOT** use any form of social media even if you have set them up specifically for this purpose.
- Think about your language – the students are going to be worried and anxious about the future, keep calm, reiterate the government message of washing hands and social distancing.
- Listen for any cues that indicate a safeguarding concern and report these to your DSL as soon as possible. These cues might be about:
 - Child abuse or neglect
 - Inadequate supervision at home
 - The impact of food poverty
 - The health status in a family and any young careering responsibilities they are having to pick up.

PHASE 2

1) Review keeping in touch list for vulnerable pupils

- 2) Submit the return for all threshold 4 pupils by the end of business on Wednesday (word version attached). If there are no pupils at threshold 4, we still require a nil return to be submitted. This will be a requirement for **every** Wednesday moving forward for the foreseeable future.

Review the provisions vulnerable children's '**Keep in Touch**' list:

- children and young people 'in need of a Social Worker' (Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, Looked after child),
- children and young people for whom an extended period of time at home will present an additional risk to the child,
- children and young people who are acting as Young Carers
- children and young people who are known to the youth offending service
- children and young people receiving early help due to child protection concerns at thresholds 2 and 3
- children and young people in Alternative Provision
- children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

2) Prioritising need and categorisation

Review each case and prioritise, based on the level of need/concern.

PRIORITY	CRITERIA	CONTACT/ATTENDANCE
Red – critical risk	Child protection plan Child in need plan Education health and care plan Looked after child Any other vulnerable pupil identified by DSL	Daily contact either - attending school or - contacted by staff
Amber – high risk		Attending school or contacted by staff every other day
Green – medium risk		Attending school or contacted by staff every 3 rd to 5 th day

3) Staff Allocations

Divide the children appropriately between the designated safeguarding lead(s), special educational needs co-ordinator(s) and designated teacher(s) for looked after children (ensuring they are appropriately trained for the role they are undertaking).

Ensure that each member of the team knows which child they are allocated to.

Pupils co-locating to another school or a hub school

Prepare a 'vulnerable' summary for the Host co-location safeguarding team (appendix A below), including:

- Underlying concerns
- Actions & Interventions
- All contact details

Whether closed or co-located there must be DSL cover for our vulnerable students and for staff to refer concerns. This can be done remotely. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) states:

“During term time, the designated safeguarding lead and/or a deputy should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the designated safeguarding lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.”

Co-location *Suggestions* for Ensuring DSL Cover:

- Host school provides DSL(s) on-site
- DSL on-site – rota with all participating schools
- Phone/Skype contact to DSL from co-locating schools
- Initiate a 'Bound Book' for the setting (see Co-location Safeguarding policy)

Also responding to any local authority requests, eg: MASH, social worker, MARAC, virtual school for looked after children, of education safeguarding.

(similar requirement for designated teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator)

Reviews of child protection plans will go ahead remotely as scheduled. You will be contacted by the conference chair regarding the provision and distribution of reports and conference calling arrangements. The same will apply for statutory reviews for children who are looked after and the social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer will liaise with you regarding your contribution to the review process.'

DSL team working remotely from home making keeping in touch calls, and only where appropriate and agreed with the family, doorstep visits, in pairs, ensuring social distancing procedures in place.

- Undertake a contact phone call every 1-5 days, depending on the risk assessment, recording the following points in line with the provision's child protection policy
 - By speaking to the parents – any concerns or worries raised
 - By speaking to the child – any concerns or worries raised (not to be missed out)
 - Summarising the situation as reported
 - Noting any actions that need to be undertaken

(Guidance provided in Appendix B for calls using cameras such as Skype for Business)

- Where concerns for a child at home escalate a referral should be made to Children's Social Care or if at immediate risk to the Police.
- If not able to make contact:
 - Try all the available numbers for the family, including the emergency contact numbers.
 - Re-assess the risk, does the lack of contact escalate your concerns?
 - For CP/CiN children speak to their allocated social worker or social work contact arrangements?
 - Do you need to speak to your local Social Care provision?
 - If the risk is deemed critical - speak to the Police, they may do a 'safe & well' check?
 - Contact Senior Education Safeguarding Officer for support if needed
 - Record all your concerns and actions in line with school child protection policy
 - Review risk assessment
- Consider which of the keeping in touch calls need to continue through the Easter Holidays and which staff are available to make the calls?

DSL team will also be responding to any local authority requests, eg: MASH, social worker, MARAC, virtual school for looked after children, of education safeguarding.

(similar requirement for designated teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator)

5) Weekly Supervision of Case Loads and Submission of Information to Children's Social Work

The DSL team **must** co-ordinate a weekly meeting, eg: via Skype 4 Business (see Phase 1 guidance for further information), to discuss the status of each child they are working with. Any concerns must be acted upon and raised with the social worker/duty desk or MASH. If needed please seek advice from the Senior Education Safeguarding Officer.

- We require this meeting takes place on Wednesday mornings weekly.
- The meeting should be recorded in line with the Solihull MBC education supervision policy guidance.
<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/education/communications/supervision-and-safeguarding-support-in-education-policy-guidance-document/>
- An overview of each pupil with an allocated social worker must be recorded on the pro-forma in Appendix A – which highlights the work done and the planned work for the coming week (to the following Wednesday) for each child.
- The return should be submitted by e-mail to educationupdate@socialcare@solihull.gov.uk by the end of the working day on Wednesday of each week until further notice.
- We require this to enable us to maintain an overview of pupils receiving statutory intervention, ensuring that we can work together to ensure our local authority teams all work together to provide a co-ordinated approach, and not all contact the family on the same day. It will also enable the local authority social work team to prioritise their workload as they too are facing capacity issues due to the impact of COVID-19 on their service.

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