Safeguarding during the COVID-19 Outbreak
Annexe to Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

This annexe sets out safeguarding procedures during the Covid-19 outbreak. The government's order that schools be closed except to children of key workers came into force on 20th March 2020. From 1st June 2020, we will be welcoming more pupils back into school in a phased return. This annexe should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and the DfE guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#) (published 27th March 2020 and updated on 20th May 2020). Unless indicated otherwise in this annexe, the normal procedures outlined in the Bedford School Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy (henceforward abbreviated 'Safeguarding Policy') continue to apply. During the lockdown period, Bedford School operated remotely with most lessons being taught via Microsoft Teams, with a small number of key worker children will be on site. Remote teaching will continue after the 1st of June for pupils not in school. All pupils on our school site are Bedford School pupils.

For the phased reopening beginning on the 1st of June, the school has prepared a Risk Assessment according to the government guidance [Actions for Education and Childcare Settings to Prepare for Wider Opening from 1 June.](#) The school's risk assessment links to the Safeguarding Policy and to this annexe, with safeguarding considerations being an integral part of planning for reopening. The school also has regard to the DfE's guidance [Prevent Management Support for Schools and Colleges](#) for pupils receiving Channel support. Safeguarding children from radicalising influences remains an important duty for the school in partnership with the local authority.

Key Principles

The most important principle is that staff and volunteers must act immediately on safeguarding concerns, just as they would during normal term time. If staff or volunteers have any concerns about the welfare or the wellbeing of a child, they must pass that information on, following the procedures set out in the school's Safeguarding Policy (Section 5.i-ix). Also see further guidance in the section in this annexe below entitled 'Reporting Concerns'.

Similarly, if staff or volunteers have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (including any 'low-level' concern), they must follow the whistleblowing procedures set out in the school's Safeguarding Policy (Section 5.x).

The Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers as laid out in Appendix 2 of the Safeguarding Policy applies in full. There are some additional considerations for remote learning further below in this Annexe in the section entitled 'Online Safety' which must be adhered to by all staff and volunteers.

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first

- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they must continue to act on it immediately
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy (DDSL) will be available at all times
- It is essential that unsuitable people don't enter the School workforce or gain access to pupils
- Children must continue to be protected when they are online.

Staff are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk. Staff will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately.

For children at home, they will look out for signs such as:
- Not completing assigned work, or engaging with remote learning
- No contact from pupils or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video conferences

Safeguarding During the Phased return

As children return to school, staff should be particularly aware of the following issues, in addition to those outlined in the other sections of this document:

- staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following the school closure
- staff and volunteers should should report any concerns they have about a child immediately, including new concerns where children are returning
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) will support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more children return
- The school will do all it reasonably can to ask parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a child returns. This will be requested by the Head Master in communications to parents and guardians of pupils returning to school.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) arrangements

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and team of Deputies (DDSLs) will continue to be available at all times. One or more of the safeguarding team will be on-site, or near enough to be at any location on the school site within 5 minutes, at all times. As the DSL and all of the DDSLs will be working full time during the phased return, there is no rota for DSL cover. Staff can contact any of them by phone or email at any time. If the situation requires an immediate reply and the DSL cannot be reached for any reason, the member of staff should contact any of the DDSLs. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies) is set out in the Safeguarding Policy (Section 3.iii).

Name	Role	Contact
Daniel Koch	Vice Master, Designated Safeguarding Lead	dkoch@bedfordschool.org.uk 07775 440649
Simon Lincoln	Acting Assistant Head (Pastoral) Prep School, Deputy DSL	slincoln@bedfordschool.org.uk 07738 851273
Chris Bury	Senior Boarding Housemaster,	cbury@bedfordchool.org.uk 07904 307481

	Deputy DSL	
Simon Everitt	Senior Day Housemaster, Deputy DSL	severitt@bedfordschool.org.uk 07984 013293

The Head Master, James Hodgson, and the Prep School Headmaster, Ian Silk, are also Deputy DSLs and are also contactable via school email: jhodgson@bedfordschool.org.uk or isilk@bedfordschool.org.uk.

Reporting Concerns

Our reporting lines remain aligned with the established safeguarding lines already set out in the Bedford School Safeguarding Policy. These reporting lines travel from the pupil or the parents with concerns, to any member of staff, through to the DSL/DDSL, then to the relevant statutory agencies.

All staff must continue to act on any concerns they have about a pupil without delay. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children still attending school and those at home.

Tutors must make it clear to their pupils at the start of term and regularly afterwards that if they feel uncomfortable about anything, need to report anything that has happened to them or want to report a concern about a friend, that there are people to whom they can and should talk. Both sections of the school have created summary sheets that explain who boys (and parents, if they wish) can talk to if they're worried or concerned about anything during the Covid-19 closure and phased return. These can be accessed using these links: Upper School, Prep School.

The DSL and the DDSL, wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable pupils in our School are. They liaise with staff as appropriate to:
- Identify the most vulnerable children in School
- Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments.

Local Safeguarding Partners

Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board has published updates about its service during the COVID-19 outbreak on its website. Staff and volunteers should be aware of these. The key services including the Integrated Front Door (formerly known as MASH) for reporting concerns remain available. Therefore, the procedures for elevating concerns to social services as outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy (Section 5.vi) remain in place.

Peer-on-peer Abuse

We will continue to follow the principles and procedures set out in the school's Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse. Staff will continue to act on any concerns they have immediately, about both children attending School and those at home.

Vulnerable Children and support for other children about whom we have concerns

The Department for Education (DfE) defines vulnerable children in its Coronavirus (Covid-19): guidance on vulnerable children and young people (April 2020) as those who have a social worker and/or an education, health and care (EHC) plan, child protection plan or 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.

Schools and local authorities should make a risk assessment for children and young people with an EHC plan, taking parents' and carers' views into account, to decide whether they need to continue to attend school in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home.

The school notes the continued importance for staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We have the option to offer places in School to children who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but for whom we have safeguarding concerns. The DSL or DDSL will work with parents/carers to organise attendance at school. The school may also establish a contact plan where appropriate with the pupil, family and/or social workers.

Online Safety

Pupils are likely to be spending more time online during this period, either for school work or for entertainment. Teachers are mindful that when setting work, it must not always be screen-based.

Onsite: The School continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in school.

Offsite: Where staff are interacting with children online, they will continue to follow our existing Staff Code of Conduct and the Use of Information Technology Network Policy.

Rules for Remote Learning:

- Personal email or other social media accounts must not be used for communication between pupils and staff. All communication should be through school accounts.
- Only video communication through Office 365, e.g. Microsoft Teams, will be endorsed or approved by the school. No other video conferencing platforms should be used.
- Any video communication should take place between 8.00am – 5.00pm, unless with prior permission from a member of CMT/SLT.
- Teachers should be professionally dressed and the background should be appropriate for professional use.
- Whilst 1:1 video communication may be necessary (for a meeting with a tutor or small class), staff <u>must</u> contact the Vice Master or the Acting Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the Prep School to notify the time and nature of the video communication. Teachers should be mindful of ratios in a video conference and should wait until there are two or more pupils logged in before switching on camera or microphones.
- In general, boys should not have their cameras switched on. If a teacher wishes boys to turn their cameras on during a lesson or a tutor period, they may request this, though They should keep a record of any such conversations (time, date and reason) which should be forwarded to the DSL.
- No recordings of live lessons involving pupils should be made or shared by pupils or teachers. A teacher can, however, record and share a video of themselves for teaching purposes, but these must adhere to strictly to DfE teachers' standards.
- If in doubt, always consult the DSL.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately. Th school communications team will send reminders to parents on Internet Safety. Tutors will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to School, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

The DSL and communications team will send information to parents to help raise awareness of:
- the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- only using reputable online sites if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- knowing where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online.

Mental Health

The current concerns around COVID-19, disruptions to daily life and social isolation may cause some pupils to find the circumstances particularly challenging. Some pupils may experience high or acute anxiety. Some signs to be aware of include:

- preoccupation and excessive worry
- emotional and behavioural changes
- showing signs of not being able to cope
- avoidance of responsibilities or relationships
- repetitive thoughts, or chronically thinking about risk and threat
- rumination or thinking too deeply about the situation

We continue to offer our current provision of support for pupils through the availability of tutors and teachers to discuss problems, and access to the School's Counsellor and Medical advice. The school will promote ways of engaging in activities that are creative and fun such as house competitions, individual challenges and regular physical exercise, all of which can help pupils to feel connected to others and improve or maintain good mental health. As pupils are welcomed back into the school during the phased return, they should be aware that boys' mental health will have been impacted.

Registration

It will be more vital than ever to register pupils. Pupils in school should be registered according to our normal procedures. If children who are expected at school fail to turn up, the school will contact the child's parents or carers in the usual manner. Registration of pupils who are staying at home must be taken by tutors each morning, and live lessons should be registered throughout the day. Pupils who fail to register with tutors or for lessons are potentially at risk and all concerns about unexplained absence should be flagged up to the Bellroom, Prep Reception and/or the DSL immediately.

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