

**Addendum: Version 1**



## **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at St Winefride's Catholic Voluntary Academy**

**Policy owner:**

Headteacher Mrs Catherine Murphy  
Chair of Governors Mrs Cathy Lawe

**Date:** 16.03.2020

**Date shared with staff:** 20.03.2020

**Signed:** Chair of Governors

## Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response-who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of the St Winefride's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our Trust-wide safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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This is version 1 of the addendum. It will be reviewed by the Director of Safeguarding as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the school website, and a copy is made available to all staff.

## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Catherine Murphy	01509 503353	cmurphy@winefrides-rc.leics.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Ruth Boyd	01509 503353	rboyd@winefrides-rc.leics.sch.uk
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Ruth Boyd	01509 503353	rboyd@winefrides-rc.leics.sch.uk
Headteacher/Principal	Catherine Murphy	01509 503353	cmurphy@winefrides-rc.leics.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Cathy Lawe	01509 503353	clawe@winefrides-rc.leics.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor / Trustee	Cathy Lawe	01509 503353	clawe@winefrides-rc.leics.sch.uk

## Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include 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 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.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) at St Winefride's know who our most vulnerable children are. We have put in place protocols to assess the level of risk using a red, amber, blue model, factoring in the additional impact of school closure on vulnerability. Therefore, our vulnerable children include those on the edge of receiving children's social care support. There is a plan in place to support children at each level of vulnerability.

St Winefride's 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 school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Ruth Boyd

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and St Winefride's will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, St Winefride's or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

St Winefride's will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

If St Winefride's have any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

If the school has closed, we will complete the return once as requested by the DfE.

St Winefride's and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. St Winefride's will implement the attendance procedures outlined in the Trust's school closure safeguarding protocols to follow up any pupil that we were expecting to, but did not attend. St Winefride's will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, St Winefride's will, when communicating with parents/carers, confirm current emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where these are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, St Winefride's will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

St Winefride's school's Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Catherine Murphy

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Ruth Boyd

Additional Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Jay Moreton & Ann-Marie Donaldson

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to the school's child protection secure files and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and, as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

It is important that all St Winefride's staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, where these can be done remotely.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy. This can be done remotely by sending a password protected email to the DSL, Deputy DSL or Senior Leader in the absence of the DSL.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher/Principal without delay. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher/Principal whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with a password protected email to the Headteacher/Principal.

Concerns around the Headteacher/Principal should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mrs Cathy Lawe.

The Multi-Academy Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training. To increase DSL and safer recruitment capacity whilst the threat of the COVID-19 remains, Initial DSL and Safer Recruitment training will be delivered on Microsoft Teams, booked via LCTSA-Admin. 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 should any new local arrangements be introduced, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter St Winefride's, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from their current employer that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving school's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### **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, St Winefride's will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

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.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check;
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children;
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

Where St Winefride's are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

St Winefride's will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

St Winefride's will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.'

During the COVID-19 period all such referrals should be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

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/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, St Winefride's will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online safety in school**

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguarding and support children.

St Winefride's will continue to provide a safe environment, including online.

Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. To aid parents keep their children safe online where they are working at home, online safety guidance is shared with parents.

### **Children and online safety away from school**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy and, where appropriate, referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the principles as set out in the Trust's Remote Learning Protocols for 'Live Teaching' Online.

St Winefride's will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

### **Supporting children not in school**

St Winefride's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

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 will ensure that a robust communication plan, based on the school closure safeguarding protocols, is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on school safeguarding forms, as well as a record of all contact made.

St Winefride's and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly in line with any emerging concerns about the child, and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

### **Children's Mental Health**

St Winefride's recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people. Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. St Winefride's staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

### **Supporting children in school**

St Winefride's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students and will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. St Winefride's 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 COVID19.

St Winefride's 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded.

Where St Winefride's has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss this immediately with the Trust, by contacting the CEO, Director of Safeguarding Director of Business Services.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures.

St Winefride's recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such 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 and as outlined within the Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen to and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on school safeguarding forms and appropriate referrals made.

### **Support from St Thomas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust**

The Director of Safeguarding, Marcella Gillespie, is available for support and guidance, and can be contacted by mobile phone: 07552245172 or email: [mgillespie@aquinas-cmat.org](mailto:mgillespie@aquinas-cmat.org).

Additionally, to provide capacity for any school whose DSL/Deputy DSL is incapacitated during this period, Allison James, DSL from Sacred Heart Catholic Academy, Leicester, can be contacted by email: [ajames@sacredheart.leicester.sch.uk](mailto:ajames@sacredheart.leicester.sch.uk)

The safeguarding Director will continue to update the school closure protocols in line with any emerging measures or government guidance. In addition, individual or group supervision will be offered via Microsoft Teams to DSLs and staff on the frontline of safeguarding.