Acorn Education Trust

Addendum to Child Protection Policy

COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

March 2020
Revised October 2020

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our settings in response to the outbreak. Many young people have spent a long period learning at home and staffing/attendance of pupils is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure**.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following advice from government and local agencies.

The current Trust/School position and local advice

During the Covid-19 pandemic The Acorn Education Trust has three key priorities for the term. These are:

1. ***Schools stay open and safe***
2. ***Staff and students/children are happy and feel safe***
3. ***Teachers are teaching and students/children are learning at school or at home***

Acorn Education Trust Schools and nurseries are currently all open. Risk assessments and business continuity plans are in place for each setting. All settings are adhering to the principles of: hands, space, face. Pupils are grouped within bubbles and a bubble would only close if a positive case within the bubble is reported. In the event of a positive case, Acorn Education Trust will work closely with the School, Public Health England and the LA. Plans for online/remote learning are in place for all schools across the Trust in the event of closure or tighter local restrictions. In the event of another lockdown or tighter local restrictions, key worker and vulnerable pupils will continue to be offered daily provision. Each of our schools/settings will have their own model of extended opening based upon staffing, physical structure of the site and transport.

For those pupils with an EHCP with health concerns, then the school along with parents/carers will make assessments regarding attendance on a case by case basis.

We continue to take advice from Public Health England, The Department for Education and Wiltshire Local Authority regarding the changing situation in relation to Covid-19 and education.

Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The temporary Designated Safeguarding Lead in Mrs Huxham's absence in term 1 and 2 is: **Alex Blake-Thwaite, ABT@westashton.wilts.sch.uk , 01255 754354**

If there is no School DSL/DDSL available (particularly during holidays) Acorn Education Trust's Safeguarding Lead, Jo Ronxin will assume the role of DSL and is available on ro@acorneducationtrust.com or 07787573962

The Deputy DSLs are the executive Head teachers at West Ashton **Rob Price rbp@clarendonacademy.com 07732800899 and Max Burr mb@acorneducationtrust.com 07802682261 , or Jo Ronxin on ro@acorneducationtrust.com or 07787573962**

Acorn Education Trust has also appointed three DDSL who are as follows: Sara Edwards se@acorneducationtrust.com, Max Burr mb@acorneducationtrust.com and Stuart Porter sp@acorneducationtrust.com

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible the DSL or Deputy DSL will be contactable and the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will email all staff by 9am to advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role together with contact details for the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected 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 persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting children's services are:

Wiltshire Multi-Safeguarding Hub (**MASH) 0300 0456 0108** (08:45am-5pm Mon-Thurs and 8.45am -4pm Fri)

Emergency Duty Service: **0300 456 0100** (5pm – 8.45am)

If a Child is in immediate danger or left alone, you should contact the police or call an ambulance immediately on **999**

Should a child 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 partnership escalation procedure, available here: https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/wiltshire/p_escalation.html

Identifying vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children. This has included identifying all pupils who currently have a social worker (LAC, CP and CiN), children with a EHCP and those on FSM.

In the event of a wider school closure/local restrictions we have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children – Carers are offered the option of the pupil attending school.
- Children subject to a child protection plan – the expectation is these children attend school daily. If they are absent the child' social worker is contacted by 9.30am.
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker – Children who are described as 'Child in Need'. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** attend school (or another school by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Children with an EHCP – attendance agreed with parents/SENCo on a case by case basis.
- Children on the cusp of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker. Where required these children will be offered a place at school.
- Other children the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required.

Each of these children has an individual plan which has been shared with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Looked After and previously Looked After Children.

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

- Children of key workers who may attend school – as set out by the DfE.

- Children at home – Heads of House and teachers will make weekly contact for those pupils that they may have concerns about. Head of House contacts have been made available on the school's websites. Work is provided for all children at home.

Attendance

The school is following the attendance guidance issued by government and the

Wiltshire Council Settings Attendance and Children with CiN or CP Plan in the event of school closure (at end of this annex).

Where a child is expected and does not arrive 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 contact the child's social worker to report non-attendance. The DSL will attempt to contact the parent, but if necessary will arrange a home visit by another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider 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.

For all other pupils expected to attend the school will follow their usual daily attendance procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

For any child who is not attending school due to Covid-19 related issues (positive case/self-isolation) the then 'X' code is applied within the registers.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place
- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and guidance for

safer working practice from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly.

- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Staff should read the 20 safeguarding considerations for livestreaming prior to delivering any livestreamed sessions
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP.
- Parents and carers have received information 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 asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents can be offered the following links:

    - Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
    - London Grid for Learning - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
    - Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
    - Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
    - Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
    - UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers

- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged:
01225 718079 / 01225 713945

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.

New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

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 Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment 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.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- 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 the **Headteacher** of who is working in the school each day.

New children at the school

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

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.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on [date] and is available on the school website at link

Wiltshire Council

School attendance for pupils with a CiN, CP or EHCP plan, and for LAC

Covid Recovery

In September all pupils returned to education.

Where a Looked After Child, or a pupil with a CiN, CP or EHCP does not attend school regularly, the headteacher/DSL/DT/SENCo should take the following actions:

What is the reason for the absence?

Parental preference

Actions:

- Make every effort to identify a way that the child can attend school- explore the barriers and develop a plan.
- Remind parents that school attendance for their child is compulsory.
- Inform the child's social worker, SEND lead worker and the EWO.
- Record decision making on the child's file.

School closed or partially closed

Actions:

- Inform Social Worker (CP/CiN/LAC)
- Inform SEND lead worker (EHCP)
- Retain responsibility for usual welfare/safeguarding checks by liaising with the DSL throughout the absence.
- ***Welcome the pupil back when the school reopens- no further action***

Other

Actions:

- Identify the reasons.
- Explore/identify ways that the child can attend school where they will be monitored/supported in the usual way.
- Inform the child's social worker, SEND lead worker and the EWO.
- Record decision making on the child's file.

Review after 3 days- Does the child start to attend?

Yes

- Monitor, review and raise any concerns in the usual way.
- Inform the child's social worker, SEND lead worker and the EWO.

No

- Liaise with the social worker, SEND lead worker and the EWO (and other relevant professionals) to risk assess the issues for the child and identify resources/approaches to enable the child to attend. Consider:
  - pre-existing and new risks eg online exploitation, home environment
  - severity of risk
  - protective factors
- Record the risks identified and actions agreed to remove/mitigate the risks including contact arrangements, on the child's file.

Review after 5 days Does the child start to attend?

Yes

No

- School to maintain regular contact as identified as part of the risk assessment process, including agreed process with social worker, SEND lead worker and EWO for increased monitoring.
- Review (risk assess) the situation as it develops at least once a week.

If the child continues to be absent from school, follow statutory process around attendance

Key contact numbers

Children's Support & Safeguarding teams

- North & East 01722 438142
- South & West 01380 826251

Education Welfare Service

- 01225 757902

If a child is in **immediate** danger call **999**