



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

COVID-19 Addendum

Adopted: March 2020

Review date: Ongoing in the light of DfE guidance

Approved via email by Safeguarding Governor

Keeping children safe in school

The current coronavirus COVID-19 creates unprecedented pressure on students, parents and staff of The Cowplain School. It remains essential, however, that the school continues to be a safe place for children and that the governing body, the senior leadership team, designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and staff generally have appropriate regard to Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) and keep children safe. This document outlines areas where the school will consider safeguarding policy and processes differently at the current time. KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that The Cowplain School will continue to have regard to as per legislative duty.

A number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in the school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy will be available (in person or via mobile phone) for staff
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

The Cowplain School will, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding and will ensure that amended processes in response to COVID-19 do not weaken our approach to safeguarding or undermine our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will review and revise the policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve, and in the light of:

- any updated advice received from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)
- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this addendum and will be kept up to date as and when it is revised. This addendum is available publicly via the school website.

Designated Safeguarding/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL/DDSL)

Wherever possible the Headteacher, the DSL or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will be available on site. If this is not possible the DSL can be contacted via mobile phone or online video.

Where the DSL or deputy is not on site, a senior leader takes responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

Vulnerable children

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and the Local Authority Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) will continue to work with vulnerable children. The DSL and the DDSL have, in conjunction with the Pastoral Team, risk assessed vulnerable children and will continue to work with and support children's social workers and the VSH to help protect them.

Attendance

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete the usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance, but the school will then follow up on any child expected to attend, who does not. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school or college, or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker.

The Department for Education (DfE) has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the DfE on the number of children taking up places.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All existing school staff have already had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. Should new staff be recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Existing school workforces may move between schools on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19. The Cowplain School will judge, on a case-by-case basis, the level of safeguarding induction required for staff joining the school. In most cases, the existing workforce will already have received appropriate safeguarding training and they will be issued with a copy of The Cowplain School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and this addendum.

Children moving schools and colleges

The Cowplain School will, where our children are attending another setting, do whatever we reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change in school will be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. Information exchanged will include the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum, access will be given to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, his/her personal education plan, name of the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will happen at DSL (or DDSL) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators for children with EHC plans.

Whilst schools must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

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. Should The Cowplain School recruit new staff, we will continue to follow our safer recruitment processes and the relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. 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.

Where the school decides to utilise volunteers, this will not be done without express permission from the Headteacher and the Support Staff/HR Manager who will 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.

Regarding members of the school workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above) and should seek assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

Schools and colleges must continue to follow their legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

Schools and colleges should 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 referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, schools and colleges must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents. At The Cowplain School teachers are aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. In order to minimise stress and maximise efficiency:

- Work is set via one, established system, "Insight".
- Email contact between staff and students is encouraged, with due regard to the safeguarding guidelines issued by the DSL, and where both parties are using school, not personal email addresses.
- The Assistant Headteacher responsible for Home Learning and the Pastoral Team are available via email for students struggling to access or complete work remotely, and can provide paper based alternatives

The Cowplain School will ensure that appropriate support is in place for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site. As a minimum this is two teachers and a Learning Support Assistant (LSA).

Online safety in schools and colleges

The Cowplain School has appropriate filters and monitoring systems to protect children when they are online on the school's IT system. The school has contingency plans in place if the Network Manager with responsibility for online safety becomes unavailable.

Children and online safety away from school and college

The Cowplain School will do what we reasonably can to keep all of their children safe when the majority of children will not be physically attending the school. All staff who interact with children, including online, will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns will be dealt with as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should be made to children's social care, and as required, the police.

The Cowplain School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Children will be reminded of the need to raise any concerns whilst online with the school, and will also be signposted to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support

- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

The Cowplain School will be in regular contact with parents and carers. We will reinforce the importance of children being safe online. Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. We will emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. We will remind parents and carers to keep their children safe online by signposting:

- [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