

The Discovery School



Child Protection Policy Addendum Response to Covid-19

January 2021

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Child Protection Policy Addendum - response to Covid-19

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Key School Contacts

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This addendum will be reviewed following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures and reshared as required.

1. Context

- On 4th January 2021 parents were asked to keep their children at home again, wherever possible, as part of the response to coronavirus (COVID-19). The Discovery School was 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.
- The way The Discovery School is currently operating in response to coronavirus is fundamentally different, however, our safeguarding principles in accordance with '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' (KCSIE) 2020, remain the same:
 - the best interests of children will always come first
 - if anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
 - a DSL or deputy DSL is available
 - unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
 - children will continue to be protected when they are online
- This addendum of The Discovery School Child Protection policy contains details of any amendments to our existing safeguarding arrangements and should be read alongside our current policies and procedures:
- All staff and volunteers will be aware of the policy addendum and any revisions; the addendum will be made available: <https://www.discovery.kent.sch.uk/about-us/policies/>
- The Discovery School will continue to keep up to date and act in accordance with the government guidance regarding education provision during the coronavirus outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

2. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

- A DSL (or deputy) will be present on-site. If this is not possible for any reason, a named DSL will be available to be contacted via phone or video call.
- Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a member of the senior leadership team will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.
 - This will include updating safeguarding files and liaising with the offsite DSL (and deputies) and as required liaising with social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at The Discovery School.
- All staff and volunteers on-site will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is, and how they can speak to them.
 - Up to date details of the DSL/Deputy DSLs will be visible to staff and children.
- The DSL/Deputy DSL's will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings remotely.

3. Vulnerable Children

- Vulnerable children are those across all year groups who:
 - are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child.
 - have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following risk assessment, their needs can be as safely or more safely met in The Discovery School.
 - have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable and could therefore benefit from continued attendance.
- There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family, it is agreed they are at less risk at home or in their placement for example due to underlying health conditions.
- Where vulnerable children are not attending, we will regularly keep in daily contact with them.
- The Discovery School recognises the importance of working in partnership with other professionals, such as social workers, early help workers and virtual school heads (VSH), involved with children and will continue to share relevant information, such as attendance and any welfare concerns, with them.
- Safeguarding concerns will be shared with the relevant professional as soon as possible.

4. Attendance

- No one with symptoms should attend school for any reason.
- Vulnerable children's attendance is expected, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan.
- The Discovery School will follow up with family/carers where children are supposed to be attending but do not.
- In all circumstances where vulnerable children do not take up their place, or attendance discontinues, The Discovery School will notify their social worker (where applicable) or equivalent and will follow up with the family/carer.
- The Discovery School will follow up with families/carers that have arranged a place for their child/children (namely children that are considered vulnerable but not open to any agencies) and do not attend.
- The Discovery School will ensure that regular contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not attending. With support from the DSL, teaching and/or pastoral staff will maintain contact with children, where possible and appropriate.
 - Staff will make calls from the school site and/or via school phones and devices.
 - If a school phone is not available or accessible, phone calls will be made from withheld numbers so personal contact details are not visible.
 - Staff will record the date, time and attendance of calls to children and/or families.
- To ensure contact can be maintained, the School will confirm emergency contact numbers are correct with parents/carers and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

5. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- Where any concerns are raised about learners or staff, the School will follow existing and updated local arrangements as set out by [Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership \(KSCMP\)](#) and as outlined in our existing child protection policy.

- All staff will continue to look out for any signs that indicate a child may be at risk, on and off site, including online.
 - If a member of staff or volunteer has any safeguarding concerns about a child, this will be reported to the DSL as soon as possible using a 'Green Form' or an e-mail containing all relevant information which can be transferred to a 'Green Form' later.
 - If the concern is urgent, the member of staff/volunteer will speak to a DSL in person or via phone/video call if they are not on site, immediately.
 - In the event a member of staff or volunteer cannot contact a DSL, this will not delay them taking immediate action to safeguard a child.
 - Concerns will be recorded using existing safeguarding processes as outlined in our Child Protection Policy.

- Prevent is a vital part of our work to safeguard children from radicalising influences; the school will continue to follow local processes where we have concerns during this challenging time. The DfE has published information for schools and colleges regarding [prevent management support](#) where learners are receiving Channel support.
- Learners are encouraged to report safeguarding concerns to a member of staff or a trusted adult at home. Where this is not possible, additional support can be accessed (as appropriate to children's age/ability) online via:
 - Childline: www.childline.org.uk
 - UK Safer Internet Centre's 'Report Harmful Content': <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
 - National Crime Agency Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (NCA-CEOP): www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- Parents/carers are encouraged to report concerns via existing systems as outlined in our Child Protection Policy.
- Where staff are concerned about an adult working with learners, they should report the concern to the DSL.
 - If there are concerns about the behaviour of any member of staff or volunteer, the LADO service will be consulted with.
 - Concerns around the Head Teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

6. Movement of Children

- If children are attending another setting, The Discovery School will continue to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information, especially if children are vulnerable.
 - For looked-after children, any change in setting will be led and managed by the virtual school head with responsibility for the child.
 - The receiving institution will be made aware of the reason any child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. This will take place ideally before a child arrives or as soon as reasonably practicable.
 - Any exchanges of safeguarding information will take place between DSLs (or a deputy) and SEND information will be shared by special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of special educational needs (SEN) provision for children with EHC plans.
 - If this is not possible, an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team, will take responsibility.

- The Discovery School will continue to have appropriate regard to data protection law but is aware this does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76 to 83 of [KCSIE](#).

7. Safer Working Practice, including Staff Training and Induction

- All staff will follow our existing staff Code of Conduct and any addendum updates with regards to safer working practice, both on and off site.
- Staff will continue to follow any updates to the Code of Conduct which have been made to reflect current Covid-19 measures. Please refer to the updated [Safer Working Practice](#) Guidance
- DSLs will continue to access appropriate training (including remotely) and other additional resources to ensure they are up to date with local and national guidance.
- All existing staff have read KCSIE 2020 Part 1 and accessed safeguarding training.
 - Staff will be made aware if any processes have changed with the sharing of this addendum and the DSL will communicate any changes to local processes directly.
- All new staff and volunteers will have an induction provided via the DSL and will be provided with a copy of our Child Protection Policy and this Covid-19 Addendum.
- Staff may move between settings on a temporary basis; consideration will be given by the receiving school DSL as to what induction they need on a case-by-case basis, dependent on existing skills and knowledge. Transferring staff will always be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

8. 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.
- If The Discovery School recruits new staff during this period, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment practices including those identified within KCSIE 2020.
- If volunteers are recruited, The Discovery School will continue to follow the guidance in accordance with KCSIE 2020 and with a mind to updates to the [Safer Working Practice Guidance](#) produced as a response to Covid-19.
 - Volunteers who have not had the relevant checks will not be left unsupervised with a child.
- If staff from other settings volunteer or begin working at The Discovery School, we will ensure they have a relevant DBS check following DfE guidance at this time. The Discovery School will risk assess staff from other settings, as we would for a volunteer.
- If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will accept portability if 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
- A new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity is not required, however, if for any reason the School has concerns about an individual, we may obtain a new check.
- 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. The Home Office and Immigration Enforcement have also temporarily adjusted the [Right to work checks](#) due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

- The Discovery School will continue to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child in accordance with KCSIE 2020.
- The Discovery School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where appropriate. During Covid-19 measures, all referrals will be made by emailing Misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk.
- The Discovery School will continue to update the single central record in line with KCSIE. (Paragraphs 148 to 156)
 - The SCR will provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in the The Discovery School on any given day.

9. Supporting Wellbeing

- The Discovery School recognises that staff, parents/carers and learners may experience some degree of emotional wellbeing or anxiety challenges during this time. Many children consider school to be a safe place and the current situation may impact on learners', staff and parent/carers mental health. The DfE guidance on [mental health and behaviour](#) in schools may help schools/colleges identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place.
- The Discovery School will ensure that all children are supported. Staff will address the wellbeing of learners through a range of age/ability appropriate approaches and pastoral support will be provided as appropriate and as required.
- The Discovery School is conscious of the wellbeing of all staff and the need to implement flexible working practices in a way that supports staff and promotes good work-life balance. Senior leaders and the DSL (or deputy) are available to provide support to staff as required.
- Teachers will be aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of learners and their families who are working from home, including when setting expectations for children's' work.
- The Discovery School will signpost staff, learners and parents/carers, on or off site, to a range of appropriate sources of support, internally and externally.

10. Supporting Children in School

- The Discovery School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its learners.
- The Discovery School will be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. A senior member of staff will ensure that there are appropriate staff on site and that staff to learner ratios have been considered to maximise the safety of children.
- The Discovery School will follow the current government guidance in relation to social distancing and all matters relating to public health from the respective websites and outlets
- The Discovery School will ensure that all children who are either categorised as vulnerable or children of critical workers and are in attendance are appropriately supported.
- The Discovery School will continue to record any support provided to children in relation to safeguarding issues on their respective safeguarding recording system.

11.1 Peer on Peer Abuse

- The Discovery School continues to recognise and respond to cases of Peer on Peer abuse by considering each incident on a case by case basis and basing any intervention on usual processes outlined within KCSIE 2020.

- The Discovery School recognises that the current circumstances and the changeable nature of current Government guidance may mean that the School may need to adapt elements of the process in some cases to ensure that they are able to respond in line with Government advice when required.
- The DSL will continue to consult as appropriate with multi-agency professionals to ensure that children's safety and wellbeing is not compromised when incidents of peer on peer abuse are brought to their attention.

11.2 Online Safety

- The Discovery School expectations with regards online behaviour and education when using school provided devices or internet access on site will continue to be implemented in line with existing policies.
- Any concerns regarding online behaviour or use will be responded to in line with existing school policies.
- The Discovery School will continue to provide a safe online learning environment where learners use school provided devices on site; appropriate filtering and monitoring will continue to be implemented as outlined in the School Child Protection Policy.
 - Learners internet use will be supervised by staff according to their age and ability and learners will be directed to use appropriate online resources and tools.
 - Use of staff and learner personal devices, including mobile phones, will be managed in line with our existing Acceptable Use Policy.

11. Supporting Children Not in School

- The Discovery School will continue to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people that remain on the School's roll
- All staff will continue to identify those vulnerable children that would benefit from Early Help as identified in KCSIE 2020; DSLs will ensure they have access to appropriate pastoral support and will consider whether they would benefit from external support.
- There will be clear plans around how best to communicate with learners who are identified as vulnerable, as well as those about whom DSLs have concerns about who do not receive a statutory service. This could include telephone contact and/or doorstep visits at the discretion of the DSL.
- The Discovery School and the DSL will work closely with all relevant agencies and professionals regarding safeguarding a child not on site. Any plans will be reviewed regularly and if concerns become significant, the DSL will make requests for support if considered appropriate.
- < The Discovery School recognises that this is a difficult time for children who consider school as a safe place and the current situation may impact on learners', staff and parent/carers mental health.
- Guidance for parents/carers is available from the DfE regarding ['Supporting your children's education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\).'](#)
- The School will utilise its website and social media presence to ensure that appropriate safeguarding messages are shared with children and their families. This will include links to appropriate services and resources that are aimed at supporting them throughout this period.

12.1 Online Safety Away from The Discovery School

- The Discovery School will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements.
- All communication with learners and parents/carers will take place:

- within school hours as much as possible. (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)
- with staff using school devices over personal devices wherever possible and in line with our existing Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Where this is not possible, staff will speak with SLT.
- Using school provided or SLT approved communication channels; for example, school provided email accounts and phone numbers and other agreed systems, such as Microsoft 365.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access. The Discovery School will be clear who from the School their child is going to be interacting with online.
- Where parents/carers opt to supplement the School's remote learning offer, we emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation and/or individuals who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children.
- Parents/carers will be encouraged to ensure children are appropriately supervised online and that appropriate parent controls are implemented at home.
- Staff and learners will engage with remote learning in line with the existing behaviour principles as set out in our school Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy.
- When delivering remote learning, staff will follow our Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- When delivering remote learning, staff will:
 - only use online tools that have been evaluated and agreed by leadership.
 - ensure remote learning activities are planned in accordance with our curriculum policies, taking learner needs and technology access into account.
 - record the length, time, date and attendance of any online lessons/contact held or made.
 - revisit relevant policies such as our acceptable use of technology policy with learners as necessary.
- Where remote learning is taking place 'live', for example using webcams or chat facilities, staff and learners will ensure a safe and professional environment is maintained in line with our Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

More guidance is available via these links:

- DfE:
 - [**Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)**](#)
 - [**Case studies**](#)
- TEP:
 - [**Remote Learning Guidance for SLT**](#)
 - [**Remote Learning/Communication AUP**](#)
 - [**Online Safeguarding Resources for Educational Settings and Parents**](#)

12. Additional Support and Links

- As well as through existing school mechanisms, learners, staff and parents/carers can access age appropriate and practical support and advice via a range of national and local services:
 - Childline: www.childline.org.uk
 - Kent Resilience Hub: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk>
 - NSPCC: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/how-to-have-difficult-conversations-with-children/>

Specific Links relating to Coronavirus for Learners and Parents/Carers

- DfE: [COVID-19: guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#)
- Kent County Council: www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/coronavirus
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/
- Young Minds: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- Kent Children's University: Home Resources Learning Packs: www.theeducationpeople.org/blog/kent-childrens-university-home-learning-resources-pack-is-live/
- Children's Commissioner:
 - Children's guide to coronavirus: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childrens-guide-to-coronavirus/
 - Resources for parents during coronavirus: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/resources/
- Sport England: www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout
- Place2be:
 - www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-supporting-children-who-may-be-especially-vulnerable/
 - www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/

Online Safety

- NCA-CEOP: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org/
- Childnet: www.childnet.com/blog/keeping-children-happy-and-safe-online-during-covid-19
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/working-remotely-advice-professionals-parents-posh-rhc
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
- Parent Info: <https://parentinfo.org/>
- BBC Own it: www.bbc.com/ownit

Domestic Abuse (*Amend according to local area*)

- Domestic Abuse Services: www.domesticabuseservices.org
- Victim Support: 0808 16 89 111 www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/supportline
- Look Ahead Care & Support – Service provider West Kent (Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling): www.lookahead.org.uk/
- Oasis Domestic Abuse service – Service provider, East Kent. (Thanet and Dover): www.oasisdaservice.org/home
- Clarion Housing Association – Service provider for North and South Kent
 - North Kent: (Dartford & Gravesham, Swale and Maidstone) Clarion DA confidential Helpline: 07376 637069 (Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm)
 - South Kent: (Ashford, Folkestone & Hythe and Canterbury) Rising Sun Domestic Abuse service helpline: 01227 452852 (Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm)
- National Women's Aid Domestic Abuse 24hr helpline: 0800 2000247