

Pathfield School
COVID-19 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
COVID appendix
Effective June 1st 2020

- Policy owner:
- Date ratified by governors:
- Date shared with staff:

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1.0 Context:

This policy annex reflects the specific issues Pathfield School require all employees and volunteers to be aware of as the school prepares reopens to greater numbers of children in addition to those who have been attending either as deemed vulnerable, or are children of key workers. Vulnerable children attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending.

This policy annex is based on DfE guidance issued on 20th May ([Link](#)). This policy annex should also be read and understood in conjunction with the school's safeguarding policy, the safeguarding annex dated (*insert date*) and the schools risk assessments, health and safety requirements, code of conduct (including acceptable use of technology), Whistleblowing and the principles set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2019 part 1 that staff are asked to ensure they are familiar with. This appendix and all linked policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of Pathfield School and the current situation.

The safeguarding of children remains our priority and everyone's responsibility. Where an adult has concerns about a child they should report this immediately to DSL or the Deputy DSL using the schools established system. As a greater number of children return to school having spent a number of weeks at home, it is likely that:

- Many will have anxieties that will cause them to be distressed at being back at school
- Many are likely to have mental health concerns
- Children are likely to have had significant changes in their routine and will struggle to adjust back to being at school
- Many have had access to materials on-line that are either age inappropriate or possibly have been exposed to other adults who wish to groom children for exploitive and/or abusive purposes
- Some children will have suffered abuse from the adults in their house
- Some children will have witnessed domestic abuse and violence or have been abusive to their parents/carers or siblings (peer on peer abuse)
- Some children will have experienced abuse (online, physical, emotional, sexual) from their siblings or their peers
- Peer on peer abuse online will manifest as possible behaviour concerns

Disclosures:

As a result of the above (not an exhaustive list), all adults must be vigilant to the likelihood that there will be a greater number of disclosures. Pathfield staff will ensure that the following key points are understood. Information to support staff taking a disclosure can be found *in the safeguarding policy and KCSIE* Not all disclosures are verbal. Staff will need be vigilant to this and act when appropriate. School information on disclosure highlight the following key principles:

- Don't panic – remain calm and reassuring in your manner, listen.
- Give the child your full attention to demonstrate you are listening carefully and taking the information seriously.
- Let the child take their time, go at their own pace and use their own words.
- If they need further encouragement remember TED (Tell me, Explain, Describe)
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone, and that they have been brave in doing so.
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help.
- Let them know that, to ensure they will be safe, you will need to tell someone else.
- Let them know what you are going to do next at an age appropriate level.
- Don't make promises to keep a disclosure a secret

As soon as the child is safe, ensure the child's words (or actions) are recorded as accurately as possible and this is shared immediately with the DSL on site or senior member of staff who is responsible for safeguarding due to the DSLs absence (see section below about DSL on site).

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Wherever possible, the DSL or Deputy DSL will be on site and can be accessed by all staff. They will be available to act on concerns as these become apparent, including to support partner agencies should information be required to be shared. Should it not be possible for the DSL or any deputies to be on site, they will be contactable by phone and email or similar virtual means.

DSL and DDSL will ensure that safeguarding files and chronologies have been updated with all relevant information since the start of school closures and will continue to ensure that this record keeping is kept up to date.

Currently, DSL refresher training is 'on-hold' though the DSL is expected to keep abreast of local and national changes and trends through their local authority, their local safeguarding board, partner agencies and national organisations such as the NSPCC and CEOPs.

The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers receive information that enables them to undertake their safeguarding role with diligence and curiosity. This is likely to be through the sharing of information, through email and other forms of communication. The DSL will also ensure that staff have enough information that means they can fulfil their specific roles in school, (recognising this role may be different due to Covid 19). Staff will ensure that they seek further support if they feel that they need greater information or support. The school website www.pathfield.devon.sch.uk be updated to ensure that key documents, referenced in this appendix can be found.

Staff at Pathfield School will be made aware on a daily basis as to the arrangements for DSL contact and the named senior member of staff. All staff are reminded of their Whistleblowing responsibilities should they have a concern about the behaviour of a colleague, including the Headteacher. This must be shared according to the current whistleblowing policy.

Safer Recruitment:

Pathfield School will ensure that any recruitment of staff still adheres to the requirement as detailed in Part 3 of KCSiE 2019. The school will ensure that all relevant checks are undertaken and detailed in the schools' Single Central Record (SCR) that can be accessed by the Headteacher. Induction of new staff will still conform to requirements as detailed in KCSiE despite this being likely to be through a virtual process rather than face to face.

Should staff from other schools be deployed at Pathfield School, the Headteacher will ensure that they can confirm the suitability of any individual to work with children from their 'host' school and can clarify the reason why this is necessary. Pathfield School will record this information on our SCR

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason Pathfield School have concerns about the individual, they may obtain a new check in the usual way.

Pathfield School will continue to follow its 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.

Visiting contractors or agency staff will equally still be required to have demonstrated the appropriate levels of checks as details in KCSiE part 3.

Transition of children:

DSL (or appropriate member of staff e.g. nominated key worker) will prior to a vulnerable child returning to school after a period of absence make contact with them and their families to identify any change in circumstance that has occurred since school closures.

Pathfield School children that are attending another setting to continue to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable

Pathfield School will continue to support and advise families on how to keep their child safe (e.g. online safety and mental health awareness) via a variety of different communications.

Summary of key points:

- The best interests of children must always continue to come first
- If anyone at Pathfield School has a safeguarding concern about any child or a concern about a colleague they should continue to act and act immediately as per established procedures

- DSL or deputy should always be available or contactable and staff will know who this is on a daily basis and how to contact them
- It is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children