

Annex to Child Protection Policy
COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

First created : 27th March 2020

Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. 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.

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 or college 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 deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

The current school position (as of 30/3/20)

All our young people are now at home and therefore the school is closed, although we would open if the children of key workers needed to be in school. We will provide a place for vulnerable children if their circumstances change. Staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation and we must prepare for this fact.

Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy. Any concerns about a child should be reported on CPOMS. <https://anglo-european.cpoms.net/>

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Ruth Wootton woottonr@aessex.co.uk

The Deputy DSLs are: Darren Priestley priestleyd@aessex.co.uk

Nikki Foster fostern@aessex.co.uk

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always on call. The DSL or Deputy DSL will be contactable during school hours. This includes the Easter holidays (Monday 6th April 2020 - Friday 17th April 2020).

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

Identifying vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children. We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children
- Children subject to a child protection plan
- Children who have a social worker
- Children with an EHCP
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker
- Other children the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL.

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

- Children of key workers who may request to attend school
- Children at home

Attendance

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#). 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 attempt a range of methods to contact the parent. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider and 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. The school will also follow the attendance procedure if contact proves impossible with children at home.

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. The school recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Child Protection Policy. The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

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
- 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.
- 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 be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.
- 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.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

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.