

Addendum: **Version 3**



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at St Francis

Policy owner: **Name of Headteacher/Principal, Chair of Governors**

Date: **06.01.2021**

Date shared with staff: **07. 01.2021**

Signed: **Chair of Governors**

1. Context

On 4th January 2021 the Prime Minister announced that a new national lockdown will be in place from Wednesday 6th January. During this period of national lockdown schools will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers only.

In line with this situation St Francis Catholic Primary School 's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum has been updated and contains details of our Trust-wide safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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This is version 3 of the addendum to take account of safeguarding arrangements during national lockdown and reflect the need for staff to have a heightened awareness of safeguarding concerns, related to both the children attending school and those who are learning at home. It sets out amendments to our normal Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in light of COVID-19 national lockdown, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal safeguarding and child protection policy and protocols continue to apply. This addendum is subject to change and will be reviewed by the Director of Safeguarding as circumstances continue to evolve, or in response to any updated advice or guidance from the Department for Education or our 3 local safeguarding partners. It is available on the school website, and a copy is made available to all staff.

Core safeguarding principles

We will follow the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021](#) and will always have regard for these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first;
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should act on it immediately;
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available on site during school hours; in exceptional circumstances, where shielding, self-isolating or illness prevents this, a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site (see section 4);
- It is essential that unsuitable people do not enter the school workforce or gain access to children;
- Children should continue to be protected when they are online.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Gosia Brown	Gbrown7@st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Hannah Griffiths Julia Orridge	Hannahg18@st-francis.leics.sch.uk jorridge@st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Hannah Griffiths	Hannahg18@st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Headteacher/ Principal	Gosia Brown	Gbrown7@st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Helen Webb	hwebb@st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Bernadette Pitts	C/O hwebb@st-francis.leics.sch.uk
Safeguarding Director	Marcella Gillespie	mgillespie@aquinas-cmat.org

2. Vulnerable children

The list of vulnerable children has been updated to include children and young people those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people 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
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) at St Francis know who our most vulnerable children are. We have put in place protocols to assess the level of risk using a red, amber, blue model, factoring in the additional impact of school closure on vulnerability. There is a plan in place to support children at each level of vulnerability, who have been monitored and reviewed using the Trust's *Covid-19 Vulnerable Child Re-Assessment of Risk Tool* and the updated *Safeguarding Protocols During School Closure* document.

St Francis will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Hannah Griffiths

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and St Francis will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, St Francis or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

St Francis will continue to encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed. For those vulnerable children and young people not attending school, we will continue to take reasonable measures to work with parents (and where appropriate, social workers) to encourage their return to school, in keeping with government guidance that vulnerable children, where attendance is appropriate, are expected and should be encouraged to attend.

3. Attendance recording and monitoring

All pupils who are not expected to be in school should be marked as Code X, as they are not attending because they are following public health advice.

As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). St Francis will encourage vulnerable children to attend, and where a parent of a vulnerable child may wish their child to be absent from school, we will work to overcome any potential anxiety.

Parents/carers of a vulnerable child, should inform the school if their child is not attending. In these circumstances it is recommended that a risk assessment is co-produced in order to inform decision making in granting a special leave of absence and that this should include any other professional involved with the child, the parent / carer and, if appropriate, the child.

The school will code this absence as Code C, (a leave of absence authorised by the school), given the exceptional circumstances, unless another absence code is more applicable.

Likewise, critical worker parents/carers should let the school know if their child is not attending, and given the exceptional circumstances, the school will code this as a leave of absence, using code C.

In all cases where a child assessed as being in need under section 7 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan, a looked –after child, and as appropriate, a child with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, School name will notify their social worker.

St Francis will implement the attendance procedures outlined in the Trust's school closure safeguarding protocols. This includes taking a registers during online lessons and passing the name of any child who has not attended to the person designated to make phone calls to parents about their child's absence. In St Francis this person is: Mrs Marraffino

We recognise that a child or young person failing to submit academic work could be a sign of a safeguarding concern, particularly if they were previously completing work and there are no barriers such as access to ICT. Where engagement is a concern, staff will report this concern without delay to the DSL on CPOMS.

St Francis will monitor online attendance and liaise with parents/carers immediately where poor attendance raises concerns, especially in the case of a vulnerable child.

To support the above procedures, St Francis will, when communicating with parents/carers, confirm current emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where these are available.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

St Francis school's Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Gosia Brown

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Hannah Griffiths and Julia Orridge

It is expected that schools will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, for example if the DSL (and deputy) is shielding or self-isolating, the school's DSL (or deputy) can be available to be contacted via phone or online video.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to the school's child protection secure files and the online management system, CPOMS, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and, as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school.

It is important that all St Francis staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). Where there is a change to the DSL provision (for example, as outlined above), school staff will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff, as necessary, to ensure that contact is maintained with vulnerable children (and their families) who are learning at home. Where possible staff will try and speak directly to children (as far as possible from the school site, using school's phones or devices) to help identify any concerns. In exceptional cases, where staff use personal phones to make calls, they will withhold their personal number.

DSLs (and deputies) will continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and updates, and statutory online training provided by the Trust's Safeguarding Director.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, where these can be done remotely.

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the reporting process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child protection Policy. This can be done remotely by sending a report via CPOMS to the DSL, Deputy DSL or Senior Leader in the absence of the DSL.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS account from home, they should send a password protected email to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher and the Trust Safeguarding Director. This will ensure that the concern is received.

If a concern is raised out of hours, the staff member should report the concern on CPOMS and, as above, alert the DSL, Headteacher and the Trust Safeguarding Director. If a response is not received, the staff member must continue to exhaust all contacts in the key Contact section of this addendum. If a child is in immediate danger, the staff member will report this without delay to the Police (999) and/or make a direct referral to Children's Social Care on (0116 3050005) Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern without delay, including their duty to refer immediately, concerns or allegations from a child about a member of staff's behaviour, as set out below.

Where staff are concerned about a member of staff, volunteer or supply teacher working with children on site or remotely, they should report the concern to the Headteacher without delay. If

there is a requirement to notify the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with a password protected email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the CEO of St Thomas Aquinas Trust, Neil Lockyer, by phone: 0116 2968171, followed up with a password protected email to nlockyer@aquinas-cmat.org.

The Multi-Academy Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

For the period COVID-19 restrictions are in place, statutory safeguarding training, such as Initial and Refresher DSL, Safer Recruitment and Prevent training, will be delivered on Microsoft Teams, booked via LCTSA-Admin: TeachingSchoolAdmin@ctk.leicester.sch.uk>

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff should any new local arrangements be introduced, as well as any changes to safeguarding process and procedure, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter St Francis, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction, including an up to date child protection policy, Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and other relevant documentation identified in the Trust's Mid-Year induction checklist.

7. 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 recruitment is necessary during this period, St Francis will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

Where St Francis is utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include any new volunteer(s) to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to pupils and staff members, or duties related to this such as building test kits, cleaning down areas and directing people.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one to one basis in St Francis are in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer is administering a COVID-19 test whilst unsupervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an enhanced DBS with Barred List check. Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check, which includes barred list information.

St Francis will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child. Full details can be found at paragraph 179 of Keeping Children Safe in Education

St Francis will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 143 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice

for making a referral.’ During the COVID-19 period all such referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that St Francis is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, St Francis will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

8. Online safety in school

St Francis will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguard and support children. Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. To aid parents keep their children safe online where they are working at home, online safety guidance is shared with parents.

St Francis will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school’s IT systems. The lead person with the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements is Jake Tilson ICTIC. SLT will consider contingency arrangements in the event IT staff become unavailable.

9. Children and online safety away from school

St Francis will continue to do all that we reasonably can to keep all our children safe. St Francis will continue to provide a safe online environment for those who remain at home.

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and, where appropriate, referrals should still be made to children’s social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the principles as set out in the Trust’s Remote Learning Protocols for ‘Live Teaching’ Online.

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

St Francis considers the safety of our children when they are asked to work online, following the same principles as set out in the school’s code of conduct. These include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The practices apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our school reporting procedures.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they may have when being asked to work online. This is an essential part of our online planning process. As well as reporting routes back to the school we will signpost children to age appropriate practical support from, for example:

- [Childline](#) - for support

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

St Francis will continue to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It is especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school their child is going to be interacting with online. We will make parents aware that they should use only reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the teaching and resources our school provide.

St Francis will make sure that parents and carers are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online. Following the recommendation from the DfE, we will inform parents/carers about specific support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online which includes:

- [support for parents and carers to keep children safe online](#), which outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to find support and advice
- guidance on [staying safe online](#) which includes information on security and privacy settings
- [Thinkuknow](#) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- [Parent info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Internet matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [London Grid for Learning](#) has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) use this link to report harmful online content
- [Net-aware](#) has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- [Let's Talk About It](#) has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) use this link for tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

10. Supporting children not in school

St Francis is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they will ensure that a robust communication plan, based on the school closure safeguarding protocols, is in place for that child or young person. Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as well as a record of all contact made.

St Francis and its DSL will work closely with stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly in line with any emerging concerns about the child, and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will continue to share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages for parents and children.

11. Supporting children in school

St Francis is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students and will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. St Francis will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on implementing social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19. In addition, St Francis has reissued the Trust's COVID-19 Risk Assessment to all staff.

St Francis will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS.

Where St Francis has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss this immediately with the Trust, by contacting the CEO, Director of Safeguarding or Director of Business Services.

12. Children's Mental Health

St Francis recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people and our staff and volunteers are aware that COVID-19 lockdown potentially puts all children at greater risk. Adverse experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. St Francis staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

The DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools recognises that mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example, disengaging from academic work at home or at school, being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or excessive clinginess.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that may indicate safeguarding concerns, and act on these concerns immediately by referring to the DSL.

13. Peer on Peer Abuse

We recognise that children can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures. Staff continue to act on any concerns they have immediately, about both child attending school and those at home. Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

St Francis recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and as outlined within the Child Protection Policy. The school will listen to and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

14. Support from St Thomas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

The Director of Safeguarding, Marcella Gillespie, will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively. This includes remotely accessing CPOMS for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

Contact Details: mobile: 07552245172 or email: mgillespie@aquinas-cmat.org.

The Director of Business Services, Antoinette Bouwens, can be contacted for support and guidance on Health and Safety.

Contact Details: mobile: 07778150779 or email: abouwens@aquinas-cmat.org

The safeguarding Director will continue to update the school closure protocols in line with any emerging measures or government guidance.

In addition, to statutory safeguarding training, individual or group supervision will be offered via Microsoft Teams to DSLs and staff on the frontline of safeguarding.