

Annex to Safeguarding Policy (including Child Protection)

COVID-19 changes to our Safeguarding Policy (including Child Protection)

5th January 2021

The current college position and context of this annex

On January 5th, 2021 another national lockdown was imposed. Worcester Sixth Form College will remain open to vulnerable students and children of critical workers only. All other students will learn remotely until February half term.

We will continue to follow DfE COVID guidance (DfE COVID Safeguarding guidance)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) is statutory safeguarding guidance that all schools, FE colleges, sixth form colleges and designated institutions must continue to follow. Other 16 to 19 providers are required to comply with relevant safeguarding duties and to follow the guidance in keeping children safe in education by virtue of their funding agreement.

We will ensure that all School staff are aware of this revised policy.

We will ensure that a DSL or DDSL will be on site where possible, however, in some circumstances: a trained DSL (or deputy) from the College is available to be contacted via phone or online video, for example working from home

In the unlikely event that a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site or contactable, a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site

Contact details for reporting to Public Health

For COVID-19 queries related to education settings:
Worcestershire County Council Public Health Team
Email: WCChealthprotection@worcestershire.gov.uk
Tel: 01905 845491

For notification of suspected cases:

On-line notification: <https://capublic.worcestershire.gov.uk/TestAndTracePublic/SchoolEducation>

For notification of confirmed cases:

Worcestershire County Council Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT)

Monday-Sunday 0900-1800

Email: WCChealthprotection@worcestershire.gov.uk Please add to the subject line "[school name] - positive case confirmed"

Tel: 01905 845491

You can find all our procedures and guidance on the management of suspected cases, management of confirmed cases and arrangements for management of a possible outbreak on our COVID-19 update website page

This addendum of the Worcester Sixth Form College Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements

Response to COVID-19

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **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 College, post lockdown when there will be a phased return of students after 15th June and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline, is available to answer questions.

DfE coronavirus helpline

Email DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Telephone 0800 046 8687 Mon - Fri from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.

Designated safeguarding Lead

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, the Principal or Senior Lead for Quality Assurance (DSL training completed) leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with students' social workers where they require access to 'children in need' and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the College.

Whatever the scenario, all college staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with students (and their families) who are not yet returning to College. Where possible tutors and Heads of Year should try and speak directly to students using their work phones to help identify any concerns. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they will withhold their personal number.

DSL training is unlikely to take place during this period although we will explore the option of online training. For the period coronavirus measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

The DSL will continue to do what is reasonable possible to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups and will cascade this information to the deputies.

Worcester Sixth Form College will face unique challenges at this time, including as we welcome back more students. Where reasonably possible and where relevant, the DSL (or deputy) will consider these challenges in a child protection context and reflect them in the child protection policy as appropriate.

Staff training

All existing college staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of KCSIE. The DSL will pass on information regarding new local arrangements, especially if these are being reviewed/changed as a result of more students returning, so they know what to do if they are worried about a student. Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the college, we will continue to provide them with a safeguarding induction, as a face to face training or remote training. Our up to date child protection policy and supporting COVID-19 annex will support this process as will part 1 of Keeping Children Safe In Education.

Reporting arrangements

The College arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Julie Ferman tel: 01905 362614 / 07458104278, j.ferman@wsfc.ac.uk**

The Deputy DSLs are: **Graham Williams**, g.williams@wsfc.ac.uk and **Sara Payne**, sara.payne@wsfc.ac.uk

Ed Senior, Principal has also received Targeted 2 DSL training 01905 362606, ed.senior@wsfc.ac.uk

We will be operating during the hours of 9 a.m – 4 pm

The College's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy or Principal who has received the mandatory safeguarding training is always on site while any students are in College. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible the DSL or one of the Deputy DSLs will be contactable by phone (**Julie Ferman- 07458104278**) or online via Teams video call and the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will email all staff by 9am to advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role together with contact details for the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any student, whether in College or not.

The pressures on students 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 students to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below) or in College.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting children's services are:

- Family Front Door tel: 01905 822666
- Jo Scattergood, community social worker for Worcester 07931 632 494
- Rob Kyle , team manager for Community Social workers 07703097988

Should a student in the College's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the College will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure, available here: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/areyouworriedaboutachild>

Worcestershire is sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools and colleges. Julie Ferman is in contact with other DSLs via phone, e-mail and Microsoft teams.

Identifying vulnerability

Vulnerable students for the purposes of continued attendance during the coronavirus outbreak are those across all year groups who include those who have a social worker and those students up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include students who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A student 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 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 deputy) know who our most students are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Vulnerable students include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including students 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:
 - 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

We will continue to notify social workers where students with a social worker do not attend. We will continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't. To support the above, we will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

We will continue to have regard for 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. We will continue to work with and support children's social workers, the local authority virtual school head for looked-after and previously looked-after children and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners.

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. Students with at least one parent or carers who is a critical worker can go to college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

Safeguarding and welfare information

We recognise the importance of ensuring that relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all students remains accurate. Tutors and Heads of Year (led by the DSL or deputy) will be doing all they reasonably can to ask students, parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a student returns to College.

Attendance

The College is following the attendance guidance issued by government. We will continue to keep a record of students who attend college each day which is submitted to the DfE/Matt Pooler (CME & 16+Lead Officer, WCF). This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows us to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the DfE. Where a student is expected and does not arrive, the College will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the student and parent/guardian. If contact is not possible the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent but if necessary may arrange a home visit by the college or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the student. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure young people are safe.

The College will also follow the attendance procedure if contact proves impossible with students at home.

- If students are not logging in online, teachers can attempt to make contact with the student via Teams, e-mail or text from the Portal. If they are not able to contact the student, teachers will alert tutors, who will also endeavour to contact students. We will also contact parents/guardians if we are not able to contact students.
- Julie Ferman will be alerted if it is not possible to contact either students or parents.

Mental Health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers are aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home. Tutors make contact with their tutees each week and are sending out information about how to maintain a positive mental health and websites/helplines for extra support and advice. Staff will be aware of the mental health of both students and their parents and carers informing the DSL about any concerns

We will share safeguarding messages on our website, our social media pages and in e-mails to parents and students and social media pages. We recognise that college is a protective factor for our young people, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

The Department for Education have produced a 'Guidance to support parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus COV-19 outbreak'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Bereavement

We have a bereavement policy detailing the support offered to a staff member or student who suffers a bereavement. There is a list of external bereavement services in the appendix of the policy and in our help and support booklet in the Safeguarding section of the website.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, including online abuse, 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.

We also address the issue of peer-on-peer abuse in our remote learning curriculum.

Staff and students have received an IT protocol for remote learning.

Risk online

We will continue to do all that we reasonably can to provide a safe online environment for those who remain at home. We will continue to ensure that Esafe, a filter and monitoring system is in place to protect students when they are online on college's IT systems.

For online teaching the same principles apply as are set out in the College's code of conduct. We will also continue to 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 College has taken on board guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on safe remote learning and guidance for [safer working practice](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly
- We have shared an IT protocol with staff and students that has been sent to parents
- Students accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the College, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#). There is information on our website COVID19 and safeguarding pages about keeping students safe online. Parents have been offered the following links here:
 - [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
- Teachers will report any safeguarding concerns to the relevant Head of Year or to Julie Ferman DSL
- The pastoral team will, in liaison with Heads of Year, identify students of concern and will take the necessary action to ensure that they are supported and safe. This may involve liaising with Children's Services, CAMHS and medical services, as appropriate. Teachers will be made aware of if a student's situation impacts the online teaching protocols or agenda.
- Tutors will continue their normal pastoral support remotely, logging any notes in the college pastoral interviews on a student's Portal page

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 Principal.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the Worcestershire LADO remain unchanged

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20559/refer_to_childrens_social_care/1659/are_you_worried_about_an_adult_who_works_with_children

LADO duty telephone number is: 01905 846221

The Team consists of:

Andrew Tombs – Practice Manager Child Protection & LADO

Bev Fain, Nadine Gregory, Nev Ebanks, Emma Arnold, Jon Hancock and Kevin Mills – Independent Chairs of Child Protection Conferences and Position of Trust

All referrals should be sent to <mailto:LADO@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk> within one working day.

If necessary, the College 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 using the address

Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the College Safeguarding/Child Protection policy, the Behaviour policy, the Confidential Reporting policy and the Code of Conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a student and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education settings for a temporary period to support the care of students, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with
- children
 - there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual
- Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

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 young people. When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE). This is regardless of whether the interview process is face to face or by remote interview.

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. We 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 or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

We will 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

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in College, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, we keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with students until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the students.
- The College will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with [DBS guidance](#).
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to initially check these documents online through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The College will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the College, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by Ed Senior or designated member of SLT of who is working in the College each day.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will receive information about keeping students safe online with peers, the College, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We will put this information on our dedicated COV-19 page on our website and send home regular update e-mails.

Useful services for families in Worcestershire can be found at:

Worcestershire Children First <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

As per a resolution adopted and signed by the Local Governing Body on 10th June 2020, changes to the Annex have been approved by the Senior Leadership Team and will be monitored by governors in the summer term.