

## **HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST**

### **ANNEX TO CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**to reflect Government guidance to schools on 27 March 2020:**

#### **(Covid-19): Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other education providers**

There have been significant changes within our setting as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak. Most pupils/students are now at home, with only a small number continuing to attend. Regardless of the changes, the Trust's child protection commitments fundamentally remain the same: to safeguard the children in our care, ensuring we respond quickly and rigorously to safeguarding concerns, involving the relevant designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy in line with our established safeguarding procedures. This annex sets adjustments we are making as a consequence of our new circumstances and follows advice from government and local agencies.

Current government advice is that pupils/students and their families should remain at home wherever possible. However, daily provision continues for particular groups of children including vulnerable children, children with EHCPs and children from key worker families where the support of school is needed. From 30 March 2020 until further notice, children from both schools will be accommodated at Hexham Middle School.

#### **Identifying vulnerability**

Children are identified as vulnerable if: they have an education and health care plan (EHCP) and/or social worker involvement); they are within families facing particular challenges; there have been previous concerns, or we feel families would benefit from more regular telephone contact and support. Staff contacted the parents/carers of children within these groups at both schools and invited them to attend school. Where they have not been able to attend or have stopped attending, the schools have been in at least weekly contact.

The lead professional for each child with social care or early help involvement has been contacted and a plan of support established. Where there has been no response from the lead professional, school has contacted Northumberland County Council's One Call service (see below).

#### **Keeping in touch**

We realise this is a difficult and potentially stressful time for families, and we are encouraging parents/carers to contact school if they need additional help or support. We will do everything we can to work together and offer any extra help we can, signposting or referring families to other agencies as required.

The office at Hexham Middle School is staffed during usual school hours throughout the working week. Outside of working hours, pastoral and safeguarding teams can be contacted via the following email addresses:

For HMS: [admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk](mailto:admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk).

For QEHS: [safeguarding@qehs.net](mailto:safeguarding@qehs.net)

The DSLs, senior leaders and pastoral and SEND staff will keep in regular telephone or email contact with parents/carers of vulnerable students and those with SEND. The SENDCos and their assistants will remain in contact with parents and the local authority regarding our students with EHCPs.

Arrangements for keeping in touch with specific groups are as follows:

- Looked after children and children subject to a child protection plan are contacted at least weekly by DSL or SLT and school is in contact with social worker.
- Children who have social care involvement are contacted at least weekly by DSL or SLT (or nominated person) in liaison with Children Services.
- Children with an EHCP are either attending school or contacted at least weekly by SENDCo or member of the SEND team.
- All students on the SEN register are contacted fortnightly by the SEN team or nominated member of school staff.
- Other children the school considers vulnerable during school closure or where we have previous safeguarding concerns are initially contacted weekly by school staff, and then when required based on risk assessment.

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

- Children of key workers who may attend school – we maintain usual contact arrangements. The school office at Hexham Middle School is staffed from 8.30am to 3.30pm daily. (01434 6032533). Parents can contact HMS via [admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk](mailto:admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk). This will be checked every working day and any concerns/ issues forwarded to the relevant member of staff.
- At HMS, all pupils working from home have access to online resources via School 360. Where children do not have internet access, or the necessary technology to access, school has provided paper based resources. Where pupils with additional needs have struggled to access online resources, school has delivered specific work packs.
- At QEHS, all students working at home – online resources and teacher feedback: <https://www.qebs.net/index.php/online-learning/> For those who do not have access to the internet or a suitable device, hard copies of work are being provided.
- QEHS parents, students and carers can raise pastoral concerns via the email address [pastoral@qebs.net](mailto:pastoral@qebs.net). This account will be checked every working day and messages will be triaged to the relevant member of staff.

### Reporting concerns

- **At HMS, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:** Mrs Amanda Frankish, Deputy Head Teacher, [afrankish@hexhammiddle.org.uk](mailto:afrankish@hexhammiddle.org.uk). **The Deputy DSL is:** Mrs Fiona Cave, Head of Key Stage 2, [fcave@hexhammiddle.org.uk](mailto:fcave@hexhammiddle.org.uk).
- **At QEHS, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:** Mr Richard Zabrocki, Assistant Head Teacher; [rzabrocki@qebs.net](mailto:rzabrocki@qebs.net). **The Deputy DSL is:** Mr Emerson Brown, Sixth Form Pastoral Leader; [ebrown@qebs.net](mailto:ebrown@qebs.net).

During the current arrangements, a senior member of staff will always be on site while the school is open. They are able to contact the relevant school's DSL or Deputy DSL to pass on concerns or take advice. Staff will continue to follow the school's safeguarding procedures and respond immediately should they become aware of concerns about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and children, rather than a reduction in our standards. **Staff who are in school must inform the member of the SLT if they have a safeguarding concern and the relevant DSL or Deputy DSL will then be contacted. Staff working from home who become aware of concerns must report them and can contact their DSL and Deputy DSL via the senior member of staff on duty or directly via email.**

The school remains in contact with the safeguarding team at Northumberland County Council. We will still use OneCall as the 'front-door' service for social care support and advice. The DSLs remain in contact with all allocated social workers regarding the attendance, safety and wellbeing of students involved with social care. In addition, for those students that are looked after, the DSLs remain in contact with the relevant Virtual School leads. The Local Area Safeguarding Officer (LADO) remains a source of advice for school. 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 via the One Call initial response service directly at 01670 536400.**

### **Managing attendance at school**

The schools are following the attendance guidance issued by the Government. Where a child is expected in school and does not arrive, we will follow our attendance procedures and make contact with the family. For vulnerable children, if contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will use a range of methods to try to contact the parent/carer but if necessary will contact the pupil/ student's social worker or One Call.

### **Free School Meals**

Children who attend school are provided with a free two course lunch each day. For children in receipt of free school meals who are not attending school, we will follow the national voucher scheme, launched by the government on March 31 2020. Families will be contacted directly by the school and will receive weekly vouchers worth £15 which can be spent at a local supermarket. More information can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/voucher-scheme-launches-for-schools-providing-free-school-meals?utm\\_source=1e8e0f2f-de27-4ddc-8bb7-4c57b4725211&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/voucher-scheme-launches-for-schools-providing-free-school-meals?utm_source=1e8e0f2f-de27-4ddc-8bb7-4c57b4725211&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate).

### **Holiday arrangements**

Throughout the Easter break, school will remain open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. As there is no demand for provision on Good Friday and Easter Monday, the school will be closed on these days.

### **Pressure at home**

The current situation places greater pressure on families through largely being confined to the house and increased potential for financial worries and health concerns. Staff will be sensitive to such pressures when setting work for children to undertake at home. Staff will also be mindful of the mental health of children and their parents/carers, and will inform the DSL if they have any concerns.

Resources to support students and parents with their wellbeing at this time have been shared via letters, our website and social media platforms.

In particular cases, a risk assessment will be undertaken to consider the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to a child. The risk of COVID-19 does not override the duty on the school to ensure children are safe.

### **Online safety**

Pupils'/students' use of the internet to engage with learning materials at home will be greater than usual during this period. Staff, pupils/students and parents/carers have been made aware of online

risks and where they can access further information and support, or where they can report concerns. The schools will adhere to the same child-centred safeguarding practices as is the case when children are learning at the school, including the following:

- The school will continue to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place.
- Staff have recently been reminded of the school's code of conduct and necessity of using school systems rather than personal accounts to communicate with children and their families.
- Staff have been advised on acceptable methods of communication and online approaches to delivering online learning.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning have received 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. Parents have been offered the links to support their children through a variety of agencies.
- 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](#).
- Senior leaders will monitor the arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise the potential for abuse to occur between children, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Prior to closure, pupils/students were informed that they can continue to contact staff at school to report any concerns. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between children who are not currently attending our provision.

### **Allegations or concerns about staff**

We continue to have the mindset that 'it could happen here' and staff, pupils/students, parents/carers must immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the DSL.

Contact details for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) remain unchanged:

Adam Hall - Independent Reviewing Officer (LADO)

Direct Line: 01670 623979 General Line: 01670 624888

Email: [adam.hall01@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:adam.hall01@northumberland.gov.uk)

If necessary, the school will continue to follow the duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

### **New staff or volunteers**

New starters will have an induction with the DSL or a deputy, before starting or on their first morning. They will be required to read the school's child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know

who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, 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.

Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with children 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 children.

The school 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 school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by the HR manager.

### **Children accessing provision from outside our trust on a temporary basis due to the closure of their permanent school**

Where children join our school from other settings beyond our trust for a temporary period, due to the closure of their permanent school, we will require confirmation from the DSL as to whether they have a safeguarding file. We realise that the providing of the actual safeguarding file may not always be possible, however the key information must be sent to the school via email. This must be accompanied by a call made by the child's DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

For children with an EHCP or additional needs, we realise that the providing of the actual SEND file may not always be possible, however the key information must be sent to the school via email. This must be accompanied by a call made by the child's SENDCo to the placing school's SENDCo to discuss

how best to meet the child's needs. A SEND pupil profile or equivalent must also be emailed to the school. SEND information about children placed in our school will be kept within our school and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us.

**Children applying for a place on roll**

Northumberland County Council (NCC) are continuing to process applications. However, they are not issuing start dates or expecting schools to put pupils/students on roll until after the school reopens.

**This annex was approved by the Trust Board on 03/04/20.**