Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (COVID-19)

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

VERITAS ET SAPIENTIA

Approved by:	Mr J Coucill, Chair of Governors
Lead of Review:	Mrs J Jones, Associate Deputy Headteacher
Last reviewed on:	January 2021
Next review due by:	December 2021

Context

From 6th January 2021 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response, vulnerable pupils and pupils with an EHCP (if required).

This addendum of the Ellesmere Port Catholic High School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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.

EPCHS 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: Mrs V Marsland.

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 EPCHS will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, EPCHS or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. EPCHS will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Attendance monitoring

If EPCHS has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) /carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet if required to the DfE by 12 noon at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings

EPCHS and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – EPCHS will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

EPCHS will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend. To support the above, EPCHS will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, EPCHS will notify their social worker.

When delivering live lessons through Microsoft Teams the class teacher is to complete the class register. Pastoral staff will follow up on pupils who are not attending these sessions to offer further support.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

EPCHS school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Jayne Jones
j.jones@epchs.co.uk
07437 209769 out of hours emergency use only

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Carly Hughes
c.hughes@epchs.co.uk

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on-site during school hours.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS and 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 EPCHS staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them. The DSL (or Deputy) will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy DSL's and Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headteacher either directly or through email. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Safeguarding Training and induction DSL training if required may take place remotely whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus. For the period COVID-19 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.

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

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter EPCHS, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:

• the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
• 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 children.

When recruiting new staff, EPCHS 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 (2020) (KCSIE).

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. If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:-

• the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check

• there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children

• there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual Where EPCHS are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. EPCHS 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.

EPCHS 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school 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, EPCHS will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety in school

EPCHS will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

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Children and online safety away from school and college

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 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 same principles as set out in the school code of conduct.

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

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

• No 1:1s, groups only
• Staff should wear professional dress and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
• Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
• The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
• Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
• Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils.
• Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school

EPCHS 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 should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan is shared with the safeguarding team and all records of contact that have made are recorded on CPOMS.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

EPCHS and its DSLs will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

EPCHS recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers.

Teachers at EPCHS need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home and to fully understand the blended learning policy.

Student welfare will be monitored by the class teacher through live lessons. Any concerns are to be reported to the safeguarding team using CPOMS (or direct contact if urgent). Pupils who don't attend the live sessions will be contacted by Pastoral Leaders.

Supporting children in school

EPCHS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. EPCHS will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

EPCHS will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement 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.

EPCHS 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.

Peer on Peer Abuse

EPCHS 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 multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made. Vulnerable Pupil contact during school closure protocols

Vulnerable pupils have been identified by EPCHS safeguarding and pastoral teams. The protocols for contacting these students during school closure are as follows:

PL/SEN/Safeguarding have received contact details electronically for their groups of children and are to make contact twice a week as a wellbeing and support chat if the pupil is not attending school. Details of this contact are logged through CPOMS as 'communication with home during school closure'

EPCHS safeguarding team will monitor CPOMS logs for any safeguarding concerns – if the concern is immediate please ring

Mrs Jones: 07437 209769

Key staff have all been issued with a work mobile. Staff can give the child/parent their work mobile number and work email address which will operate 09:00 and 15:00 an weekdays. Mrs Jones is contactable via the above number out of hours for emergencies only.

Non vulnerable pupil contact during school closure protocols
Daily procedure for staff

Pupils who are not designated as vulnerable (SEND/Safeguarding/Pastoral) are to be monitored in the main through live lessons on Microsoft Teams. Teaching staff will report any concerns through CPOMS.

The Pastoral team will monitor attendance at live lessons and make contact with pupils/parents who are not attending the sessions to offer further support. This contact will be recorded on an internal spreadsheet. Pastoral staff will liaise with the safeguarding team and report any concerns through CPOMS. A spreadsheet has been set up on the MT and for teaching staff to complete weekly. The codes are as follows:

Attendance/ Engaged - All
Attendance/ Engaged - Most
Attendance/ Engaged - Some
Attendance/ Engaged - None

Scripted Conversation with Parents / Guardians

Please ring the parent to check

1. Is the student (and family) ok?
2. Do they need any extra support? If they do please try to resolve this with the relevant people)
3. Remind them that they are to attend the live lessons on Microsoft Teams Suggested script (this should be as short as possible)

"Good morning/afternoon. I am ringing from EPCHS to check in with (Pupil name).
How is she/he? ………..(If the student is with the parent please ask to speak to them briefly to ask if they are OK)
We have noticed that 'pupil name' has not attended x live lessons. Is there any extra support we can offer to you at this time …
Thank you very much"

The communication is logged on the spreadsheet. If there are any safeguarding concerns, please complete a CPOMS concern as you usually would or ring the safeguarding mobile

School closure on site daily protocols

Week commencing 4th January:

Rooms to use are:
Oasis room (Y7), D4 (Y8), D5(Y9), B6(Y10), B20(Y11), Sixth form (Study room) - pupils and staff are to stay within these areas to reduce the risk within school.

The main toilets to be used, regular supervised trips will be needed to wash hands.

Outside space to be used is within the set bubble areas.

Pupils are expected to always wear face coverings to reduce the risk of infection at this time.

Day organisation

List of pupils attending sent by Laura Hughes via Arbor and SMID to lead staff + SLT to register students and log COVID test requirements.
8.30am – Mrs Jones registers pupil's entrance - pupils use hand gel and get mask if needed and pupils wait in Canteen (key worker staff to be in the hall to supervise)
9.00am – designated staff escort pupils to their room
9.00am onwards - Pupils will join live lesson through Microsoft Teams or complete work set through MT and Zoom. Break and lunch time will follow timings of the normal day with pupils 3.00pm – staff to dismiss pupils ensuring hand sanitiser is used on exit – staff to walk pupils to Reception exit.