

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at The Catholic School of St Gregory The Great

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 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 - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This additional Appendix details our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Charlotte Blanch	head@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk
Deputy DSLs	Penelope Oliver Rachel Biddle Kate Heal Olivia Lines	cafaw@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk inclusionmanager@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk MissKHeal@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk deputyhead@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor	James Saunders	jsaunders@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Anna Elliott	chair@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk

Whilst the partial closure is in place, the school site will remain open for vulnerable children and those whose parents are key workers.

2. 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 parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are and will ensure provision is offered to them whilst the school is in partial closure.

The Catholic School of Saint Gregory The Great 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. The lead person for this will be: Charlotte Blanch, Head Teacher.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker can attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at 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 the School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carers following the advice set out by Public Health England.

The School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed.

3. Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

The Catholic School of St Gregory The Great and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether any will be attending school and then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

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

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and four Deputy DSLs.

Their names are above.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

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.

It is important that all staff have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day SLT duty staff member will have 1:1 contact with each staff member on duty to ensure there is opportunity to share any safeguarding concerns.

An agreement has also been made with fellow Cheltenham Learning Partnership schools so that where there is a problem in making contact with a school DSL/DDSL, a DSL from another CLP school can be contacted. Numbers for these are held in the COVID19 SLT file in the Assistant Head's office.

The safeguarding team will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot have a direct conversation with the DSL or a Deputy DSL, they should tag a CPOM to them to ensure that the concern is logged and time stamped.

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 follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place 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 the relevant parts of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021). The DSL will 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 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.

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. When recruiting new staff, The School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) (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.

The School 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 328 of KCSIE 2021.

The School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 333 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, The School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 250 to 256 in KCSIE.

8. Online safety in schools and colleges

The School 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.

9. 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 and Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

The School 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 (group could be possible with another adult present on one of other side of the dialogue). 1:1s with parent nearby are only appropriate for CAFAW therapy conversations.
- Staff 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.
- Any live classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms agreed by the Senior Leadership Team to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

10. Supporting children not in school

The School 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.

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

The School and its DSL 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.

The School 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 The Catholic School of St Gregory The Great need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

11. Supporting children in school

The School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The School 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.

The School 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.

Where the School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the Cheltenham Learning Partnership.

12. Peer on peer Abuse

The School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Children who are in school during partial closure will be supervised at all times, to ensure they feel safe.

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 and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi- agency partner required ensuring the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

Addendum in case of bubble isolation of family or year group (Tier 1, 2, 3 of Contain approach)

Response to COVID-19

In March 2020, a number of changes were required to our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people were now being educated at home and staffing was potentially going to be affected through illness and isolation. An annex to the School's Child Protection Policy was drawn up to reflect the changes to safeguarding at that time.

Now that the government has outlined the gradual return of children to school from 1st June 2020, we need to make additional amendments to the policy to reflect further safeguarding considerations. These are contained in this additional annex and based on the [guidance issued by the government on 20th May 2020](#).

As previously, 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.**

Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Charlotte Blanch	head@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk
Deputy DSLs	Penelope Oliver Rachel Biddle Kate Heal Olivia Lines	cafaw@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk inclusionmanager@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk MissKHeal@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk deputyhead@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor	James Saunders	jsaunders@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Anna Elliott	chair@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always contactable while the school is open. All staff were re-issued with contact details for DSLs during school closure and should report any concerns via CPOMS in line with the current policy and tag in Charlotte Blanch and Penelope Oliver. To discuss anything of a safeguarding nature, the DSL can be contacted on the number above. A member of SLT will be on site at all times while school closures and returns are in operation. They are based in the Admin bubble and all staff are aware of the on call SLT member through the weekly team sheet.

As more children return, the DSL (or a deputy) will always be available on site.

Staff and volunteers have access to the DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them. This is displayed in the school entrance hall where staff sign in.

The DSL will provide support to teachers to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school. Where possible staff will try and speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff will be encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school site via school phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they should withhold their personal number. If we are unable to make contact with a family, further urgent communication via text, email will be sent via the school office and where contact continues to be nil, a door step visit will take place by DSL or deputy.

The DSL (and deputies) continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via safeguarding partners, newsletters and professional advice groups.

All schools will face unique challenges at this time, including as they welcome back more children. Where reasonably possible and where relevant, the DSL (or deputy) will consider these challenges in a child protection context.

Staff will continue to follow our Child Protection procedures 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 by staff due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Following the return of more children from 1st June, our school recognises:

- that staff and volunteers may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following partial school closures – this may also come about through individual screening.
- we recognise that our DSL (and deputies) will need more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more children return and will allow for this and therefore some of their regular check in calls and support will be shared by members of the wider staff team.
- we understand the importance of ensuring relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children (including returning children) remains accurate. In our school (led by the Headteacher/DSL or deputy) staff will do all they reasonably can to ask parents and carers to advise them of any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before a child returns. 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.
- If required we will revise our process for managing any report of peer on peer abuse given the different circumstances the school is operating in. The principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE will continue to inform any revised approach to managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.
- Our current arrangements will remain in place to keep children not physically attending the school safe, especially online.
- Staff will continue to read updated advice received from the local authority 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 recognise there is continued importance for our school staff to work with and support children's social workers, the local authority virtual school head for children in care and previous children in care and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners.

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 the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are: **01452 426565** or by email childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Further details can be found at [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children executive escalation procedure, available here: [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive](#)

Identifying vulnerability

Schools' relationships with the community mean we have identified children who may be classed as 'vulnerable'

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and Social Worker, mostly involving fortnightly contact
- Children who have previously been Children in Care – individual agreements with carers and SW, mostly involving fortnightly contact
- Children subject to a child protection plan/ Child in Need plan – places offered, if not taken this must be agreed by Social Worker and family. Visits will be undertaken 3 times weekly (to be agreed with Social Worker as to who will undertake these visits).
- Children with an EHCP – Individual Risk Assessments undertaken and consultations held with parents/carers, SLT and SENDCO.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker – Where required these children will be offered a place at school or individual contact plans will be agreed

More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. Contact arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers, SLT and DSL.

Where appropriate school will liaise with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Children in Care and those who have previously been Children in Care.

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

- Children of critical workers who may attend school if no safe alternative arrangements can be made.
- Children at home – class dojo daily posts for those year groups not yet invited back and for those who have been invited back but are not attending school for any reason, project packs on the website which need to be sent into a monitored mailbox homelearning@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk weekly – any who do not follow this protocol for keeping in touch and checking on welfare are contacted by selected staff or their class teacher.

The plans in respect of each child in these groups will be reviewed regularly.

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 10:00am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. 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.

These arrangements will only be in place for children who have enrolled and are eligible for Emergency Childcare. For all other children school is closed.

From 1st June 2020, children in Reception, Year One and Year Six are expected to return to school. Parents and carers will however not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision. This may extend to

other year groups if the phased recovery plan continues. Our priority year groups will be Y5, Y2, Y3/4 in that order.

The school will resume taking an attendance register from this date and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

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). All staff have received training on this prior to return in June 2020 and a specific group of staff have received more in depth training into screening all children for pastoral needs as soon as they have returned to school.

Mental Health

Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns or follow ups needed. Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Where we have children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children returning to school from 1 June onwards, the school will ensure appropriate support is in place for them through the rolling out of the Rainbow Project.

The school will use guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools to help identify children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how 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 being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Support for pupils in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone for those children still not attending provision) or from specialist staff or support services.

Domestic Abuse

Incidences of Domestic Abuse are expected to significantly increase during the period of isolation as perpetrators will use this time as a “tool of coercive and controlling behaviour”, and victims and their children are consistently more vulnerable during periods of societal stress [see government guidance](#).

Operation Encompass will continue as normal with notifications being sent to the school's email address (encompass@st-gregorygreat.gloucs.sch.uk). For further information please contact Halah Shams El-Din on 01452 328953 or by email halah.shamsel-din@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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

- Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school 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.
- 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
- There is a staff cascade in place to monitor dojo messages between teachers and families.

Parents and carers have information via the website 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 following links:*

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [South West 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
- 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.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged and can be found at

[The role of the LADO and the allegations management process - Safeguarding Children in Gloucestershire](#)

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 333 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, who will consider whether this should be referred to the Secretary of State.

New staff or volunteers

All existing school staff will already have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 and part 5 of KCSIE21. The important thing for these staff will be awareness of any new local arrangements, especially if these are being reviewed/changed as a result of more children returning, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school 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, Part 5 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 (see flowchart on Page 40 of KCSiE 2019) 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.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may 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 take reasonable action 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](#). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.
- 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 SLT of who is working in the school each day.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. This will be more important than ever as more children and staff return. As such, the school will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSiE.

In the event that the school needs to recruit new staff during this period, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSiE. In response to coronavirus, 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. 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 Home Office and Immigration Enforcement have also temporarily adjusted the right to work checks due to the coronavirus outbreak.

All staff and volunteers are aware of this new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy will continue to be made available publicly.

This additional annex to the policy has been remotely approved by Governors in June 2020 and is available on the school website.