

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Beckley School

School Name: Beckley School

Policy owner: Mark Szortowski

Date: January 2021

Context

From 6th January 2021 parents and carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for children who are vulnerable and children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of The Beckley School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy has been written in response to DfE guidance and contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

- 1. *Vulnerable children***
- 2. *Attendance monitoring***
- 3. *Designated Safeguarding Lead***
- 4. *Reporting a concern***
- 5. *Safeguarding Training and induction***
- 6. *Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff***
- 7. *Online safety***
- 8. *Supporting children not in school***
- 9. *Supporting children in school***
- 10. *Peer on Peer Abuse***
- 11. *Other Documents***

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Mark Szortowski	headteacher@beckleyschool.org
Deputy Designated safeguarding lead (DDSL)	Rick Houston	rhouston@beckleyschool.org
Deputy Designated safeguarding lead (DDSL)	Laura Cockhill	lcockhill@beckleyschool.org
Chair of governors	Kate Kelly	governor@beckleyschool.org
Safeguarding governor	Siobhan Templeton	stempleton@beckleyschool.org

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Vulnerable children

Definitions

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 (Children we are for). 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 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 and Middle Leaders including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) 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.

We 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 (Mrs M Johnson) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be Laura Cockhill.

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

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

We will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school. Key Workers will be allocated to identified students and regular contact will be maintained. This contact will be mainly by telephone or via video conferencing, but if no contact can be made a visit to the home address to 'sight' the child from a distance will be arranged.

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. Instead we will complete the daily online attendance form provided by the DfE.

All students who are not eligible to be in school should be marked as Code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID19)). They are not attending because they are following public health advice.

Children of critical workers who do not need to attend school should be recorded as Code 'X'.

Where parents who are critical workers only need their child to attend school part-time (for example if they work shifts), we will use Code 'X' to record the sessions that the child is not expected to attend; where the child of a critical worker is expected to attend a session and does not do so, the school should record the absence as Code 'C' (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Code 'X' will be used if the child is self-isolating or quarantining because of coronavirus (COVID-19)

As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining).

If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know. The DfE expects schools to grant applications for leave of absence given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

The Beckley School will, when communicating with parents 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, Beckley school will notify their social worker or other support worker (eg from Family Solutions)

Designated Safeguarding Lead

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:
M.Szortowski

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is:
R.Houston and L.Cockhill

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

The DSL and 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 email or phone. All staff have the contact details for the safeguarding team.

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 head teacher via email or phone. The head teacher will then follow normal allegations procedures including liaising with Alison Beasley (LADO)

Concerns around the Head teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Ms Kate Kelly

The River Learning Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

Safeguarding Training and induction

Face to Face DSL training will not take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. Instead Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has provided online training via its training portal which will provide temporary cover.

Guidance from the OSCB can be found here:

<https://www.oscb.org.uk/learning-zone/training/>

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 join Beckley School 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

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the River Learning Trust (RLT) HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

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, Beckley School 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).

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.

Where Beckley School is 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.

Beckley 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 163 of KCSIE.

Beckley School 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 any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Beckley School will

continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety

Beckley 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.

Children and online safety away from school

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 RLT code of conduct.

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

- One-to-one sessions must only take place within published school hours and with permission from Senior Leadership and parents/carers.
- Staff and students must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas and sitting at a desk or table. The background should be blurred or a generic background chosen
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use school approved platforms to communicate with students
- Students must not share links with anyone outside their class
- Microphones should be turned off unless requested otherwise by the teacher

We will follow the principles of our behaviour for Learning Policy with regard to any disruption to lessons or breach of security.

Supporting children not in school

Beckley 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, a robust communication plan is in place for them.

Details of this plan must be recorded, as should a record of contact made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits.

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.

We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their families. Teachers also need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

Students will also be supported through social wellbeing lessons and guidance will be given on how to protect their mental health and wellbeing.

Supporting children in school

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

Our 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 student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

School leaders 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.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site appropriate support is in place for them.

Where Beckley School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead – the Head teacher will discuss them immediately with the River Learning Trust.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Beckley School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Students may become at increased risk from abuse online and via social media

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 the Child Protection Policy.

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

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Remote Learning Document

OSCB Interim and Safeguarding guidance

Behaviour Policy

Online Safety Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy