

William Murdoch Primary School



COVID-19 Addendum to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

April 2020

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible. Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for limited number of children – children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response.

This does not replace William Murdoch Primary School's safeguarding policy but is an addendum to respond to the partial school closures.

2. Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker or family support worker and those children with Education Health and Care Plans. Senior Leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads will know who the most vulnerable children are and will also have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving social care support. Being categorised does not mean parents must send their children to school. Wherever possible, children should remain at home if it is safe to do so.

Those that have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan or those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they are being assessed by the Local Authority.

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 or whether they can safely be looked after at home. Many children with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in itself should not be a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

3. Attendance and monitoring

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up non-attendance. Instead the school will report the number of children and adults at school each day to the Department for Education (DfE). The school will communicate with parents of children who do not attend but have registered for a school place.

Children who the school identifies as being vulnerable but do not attend school will be monitored closely by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The school will inform social workers when families have not taken up a school place and will work alongside them to ensure all pupils remain safe at home.

Families receiving social care support will be contacted daily during term time and twice a week during school holidays. The DSL will speak to children once

a week to check on their well-being. The DSL will communicate weekly with social workers and family support workers and as and when the need arises. The school will continue to support social care with assessments and reviews of plans.

For children with EHC plans, the SENCo will call parents weekly and speak to the children where possible. Parents will be signposted to support available through external agencies.

All communication and welfare checks will be recorded on My Concern. In the absence of the DSL/SENCo, a deputy DSL or senior leader will carry out the welfare checks.

4. Designated Safeguard Lead

William Murdoch Primary School has a Lead DSL and 4 deputy DSLs:

- Lead DSL – Miss J Buchray
- Deputy DSLs – Mr M Singh, Mrs M Pannu, Mrs S Baker and Mrs K Kullar

The optimal scenario will be to have a DSL available on site when school is open. Where this is not the case, the lead DSL will be available through phone or email and a senior leader will assume responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.

All staff will have access to a trained DSL via email or telephone when working on school site or working from home.

5. 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 reporting via My Concern which can be done remotely. Staff are reminded that concerns should be raised immediately without any delay as would be the case during a normal school day.

In the unlikely event a member of staff cannot access their My Concern account from home, they should email the lead DSL and headteacher to ensure the concern is received.

Where staff are concerned about a member of staff this should be raised with the headteacher. Concerns relating to the headteacher should be raised with the Chair of Governors, Mr D Chopra.

6. Safeguarding Training and Induction

DSL training will not take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus. Therefore during this period any trained DSL will continue to be classed as a DSL even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training delivered by Services for Education and have all read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL will inform staff of any changes in local arrangements.

7. Online Safety in schools

William Murdoch Primary School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes using the school's filtering and monitoring system, Smoothwall. Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

8. 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 in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should be made to social care and as required the police.

The school has published a guide for parent on online safety. Platforms where children can and may send messages to each other or members of staff will be monitored by the DSL on a regular basis and any abuse of this platform will be followed up as it would during school.

Whilst staff are working from home they should ensure that they continue to adhere to the staff code of conduct policy. Information in regards to children and other member of staff should not be made public and should not be seen by others. GDPR procedures should be followed at all times.