

**COVID-19 school temporary closure arrangements for**

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**Addendum**

**January 2021**

**Context**

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, from 5th January 2021 parents were asked to keep their

children at home, wherever possible. Schools have remained open for the children of critical workers

and children who are classed as vulnerable, according to government guidance. This guidance is advisory

and not statutory, places will be offered to children according to bubble sizes and appropriate staffing in

each school setting.

This addendum of the James Montgomery Academy Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy

contains details of our temporary closure safeguarding arrangements for schools in the Trust in this time of

national emergency.

**Remote Learning**

In the situation of a lockdown where only vulnerable children and critical worker children will be attending

school, there will be a move to remote learning for the majority of pupils. Remote learning processes and

procedures will fall in line with the JMAT schools’ Home Learning Policy.

Remote education may include some recorded and/or live contact time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. Each Trust school will have a named senior leader with overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education, they will liaise with the DSL and also the Trust Leader for remote learning (Jo Davenport).

**Our responsibility**

When schools are closed due to the pandemic, we are responsible for providing places to vulnerable

children and the children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response. It is imperative that school remains a safe place for children, however the fewer children making the journey to school, and therefore the fewer children in school, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

The JMAT and its schools will ensure we comply with all DfE and government guidance with regard to the coronavirus pandemic, this includes:

* hygiene requirements, including all protective measures in line with pandemic guidance
* any risk assessments in place
* school policies, such as Infection Control Policy, Health and Safety Policy,etc - to ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
* use of any personal protective equipment supplied to them, such as masks, face shields, gloves, etc.

**Children of Critical Workers**

Children with **one** parent/carer who is listed on the [government’s critical worker list](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision) should be considered

for a school place, so long as their job cannot be done from home. Employees of the following sectors are

classed as critical workers:

* Health and social care
* Education and childcare
* Key public services
* Local and national government
* Food and other necessary goods
* Public safety and national security
* Transport
* Utilities, communication and financial services

Many parents working in these sectors will be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who

can be safely cared for at home should be, in order to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

**Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children are children who:

* Are supported by social care.
* Have safeguarding and welfare needs.
* Have child in need plans.
* Have child protection plans.
* Are ‘looked after’ children.
* Are young carers.
* Are disabled.
* Have an EHC plan.

Those children with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents.

This is to decide whether they need to continue to be offered provision in order to meet their needs, or

whether they can safely have their needs met at home. These risk assessments will take an LA-led format

(depending on which authority the school is under) and will be held by the Trust. Many children with EHC

plans can safely remain at home.

Other vulnerable children, such as those undergoing diagnosis, or those deemed vulnerable by another

professional/service/agency, can also be offered provision at the discretion of the headteacher, in

discussion with SLT.

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

James Montgomery Academy Trust schools 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 (CLA) and previously looked-after

children (CPLA). The lead person for this is the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children in each

school.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an educational 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 educational setting, and their child is considered vulnerable,

the social worker and DSL/Designated Teacher will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

The James Montgomery Academy Trust will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend

a school, including remotely if needed. If vulnerable children are not attending school then they will be

supported to access remote education, weekly checks will be made to ensure they continue to access

home learning, with support provided as required.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the

DSL will notify their social worker. Social workers will also be notified about vulnerable children who need

to self-isolate to ensure contact is maintained and appropriate support is available to the vulnerable child or

young person.

**Supporting children not in school**

The JMAT and its schools is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children.

All JMAT staff recognise that school is a protective factor for children and the current circumstances can

affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers need to be aware of this in setting

expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home.

**It is expected that class teachers have regular weekly contact with the children in their class to**

**support remote learning, in line with DfE guidance regarding contact and feedback. If they have**

**any concerns about lack of contact, response to home learning or any other safeguarding**

**concerns, they should log their concern on Safeguard for the safeguarding team to follow up.**

Where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

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. Details of this communication must be recorded on Safeguard, as should a record of any

ontact made, whether successful or not (no response).

The communication plans can include: remote contact by Dojo, email, text or phone contact. Other

individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

**Contact with vulnerable children not in school**

Where applicable, and when a child has a social care provision, the social worker must be informed that the

child(ren) is not attending school.

**School contact with vulnerable children should be at least weekly.** **DSLs know who their vulnerable**

**children are and should put a plan in place for regular contact on a case to case basis. School staff**

**will not make home visits to pupils during school closure, any concerns should be reported**

**to the DSL and further advice sought from agencies such as MASH, early help or the police for a**

**safety and welfare check. However, provision can be made for school staff delivering worksheets**

**and resources to children without entering their home.**

**Supporting children in school**

The JMAT is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff, and will continue to

provide 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.

The JMAT 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 COVID-19.

The JMAT 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.

**Attendance monitoring**

During this period of temporary closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, class teachers do not need to take

an attendance register in the usual way, however administrative staff will record attendance in line with

JMAT attendance guidance. For administrative purposes any COVID-related absence, or for children not

required to be in school, Code X should be used. Code C will be used in other circumstances, particularly

in regard to children with a social worker.

However, schools will be required to submit attendance information for childcare provision to the local

authority. This will provide a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allow schools to

provide accurate, up to date data to the government. This will also help DfE to track capacity in the system,

enabling the department to feed into wider tracking of the impact of the virus to support scientific advice.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Each JMAT school must have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL present at all times

during the school day. In the circumstances of a DSL not being present in school, they must be available

via phone or via online video.

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.

The DSLs in each JMAT school will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency

meetings if required. This 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 JMAT

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this includes making a report via Safeguard, which can be done

remotely. This applies when working in school or interacting/communicating remotely with pupils for home

learning.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access Safeguard from home, they should email the

Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy or 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 their headteacher by phone and followed up with an email as soon as possible.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors of that school. The JMAT

will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

**Safeguarding Training and induction**

Face-to-face DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst the threat of COVID-19 remains. For the

period that 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. When virtual DSL training is

available DSLs should ensure they refresh their knowledge in line with KCSIE.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in

Education (2020). The DSL should communicate any new local arrangements with staff, so they know what

to do if they are worried about a child.

**All staff are expected to complete the safeguarding training on Safeguard to refresh their**

**knowledge – this should be done every September.**

**Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

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. Verification of the

documents required to validate identification for DBS purposes can be accepted by email, or other virtual

means. Once school re-opens, original documents can be verified as normal.

Where the JMAT are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment

process required by KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left

unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The JMAT 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. The JMAT 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.

**Single Central Record**

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 and that

appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such,

school will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as required by KCSIE, requesting

DBS and safer recruitment information as required.

**Online safety in schools**

The JMAT and its schools will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the

use of an online filtering system. From 1st February 2021 this will also include a facility to monitor

keystrokes on all devices supplied by school. This includes devices used in school and also laptops

provided for remote learning. Where laptops have been supplied by school on a loan agreement, parents

must read and signed the appropriate agreement.

Throughout national lockdown and the use of remote learning schools will continue to follow their online

safety policy. Safeguarding concerns regarding vulnerable children in school mean that we do not advocate

the use of live lessons. Instead, the use of a range of recorded explanation videos will be used in line with

DfE guidance.

Virtual platforms can be used to ‘check in’ with children, but this must be done in line with the school’s

Home Learning Policy.

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 via Dojo or phone, continue to look out for

signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the JMAT Safeguarding Policy

using the Safeguard electronic recording system. 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 JMAT Digital Safeguarding Policy,

Home Learning Policy and the JMAT Code of Conduct for both staff and parents. Teaching staff are

responsible for checking the content of any virtual learning they give to children, both in the classroom and

at home.

JMAT school staff will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data

protection/GDPR requirements.

**Peer-on-Peer Abuse**

The JMAT 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 procedure outlined in the Safeguarding Policy. Concerns and actions must be recorded on

Safeguard and appropriate referrals made.

**Keeping Children Safe In Education January 2021 update**

This guidance replaces Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020. Changes are strictly limited to those related to the UK leaving the EU on 31 December 2020.

European Economic Area (EEA) regulating authority teacher sanctions or restrictions:

149. From 01 January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system will no longer maintain a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states. Advice about how information about a teacher’s past conduct may be obtained can be found at paragraph 172.

172. …schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks could include, where available:

* criminal records checks for overseas applicants – Home Office guidance can be found on GOV.UK; and for teaching positions
* obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked. Advice about which regulatory or professional bod applicants should contact is available from the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom, UK NARIC.

**Monitoring and Review**

The current COVID-19 pandemic continues to be an evolving situation. Thus, this addendum will be

regularly monitored and reviewed. Any updates will then be communicated with school staff via Designated

Safeguarding Leads and Headteachers.

**Date of this Addendum: 8th January 2021**