

# COVID-19 addendum to Safeguarding Policy Newfriars College



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## 1. Introduction

Since 20<sup>th</sup> March, schools and Colleges have been directed to close except for identified children. Parents have been encouraged to keep children/young people at home. Only children/young people identified as being vulnerable and those of key workers have been offered a place at school/College. Both categories have been open to slight variations in understanding and all academies in our Trust have done their very best to support families most in need, but also ensure that the numbers of children/young people and parents/carers travelling to and from school/college is as low as can be to help protect public health.

Numbers of pupils attending schools has generally reduced since Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the first day of partial closure, and schools have tended to rotate staffing to ensure the number of children are looked after in school but that excess staff were not travelling to and from home each day.

Newfriars College as a specialist setting for young people with disabilities and difficulties has a particular responsibility to review the health and safety of our learners and staff within the context of each young person's needs. Case by case we will review the young person's needs and whether, within the context of COVID-19, we can meet the needs of learners safely. As of 27.3.20 all of our learners are being cared for in their homes with the remote and regular support of the staff at the College through phonecalls, communication by Class DoJo and work provided as appropriate including on our learning resources Dropbox.

Case by case risk assessment and review of where a young person is safest at this time includes how to apply government and Public Health English guidance on the management of Covid-19, e.g. ensuring social distancing and handwashing, and to ensure staff-pupil ratios adequate to safeguard our learners.

This document is an addendum for the Newfriars College Safeguarding Policy effective as of Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March. It is important to note that as Government guidance changes, so must this document to reflect any changes.

['Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019'](#) remains the key document for safeguarding children and this document supports KCSiE for the current unprecedented events which are occurring.

This document has been produced in consultation with [government guidance for parents/carers](#) updated on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and [government guidance on safeguarding for schools and colleges](#) issued on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

## 2. Categories of vulnerable children as defined by Department for Education

[Vulnerable children](#) include:

- Those who have a social worker including children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- Those who have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

- Young carers
- Disabled children
- Those that schools and other education providers may identify as 'vulnerable', e.g. previously looked after children, those who have recently had safeguarding issues not yet processed by social care, some SEN K children.

Newfriars College will continue to work with social care and other agencies to ensure any recognised vulnerable child/young person is supported throughout this time.

### 3. Key workers as identified by Government

Key workers have been identified as those who work in the areas of:

- 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

### 4. Attendance Procedures

Newfriars College will not be completing the usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Instead Newfriars College will track attendance of any learners who attend College and will comply with the requirements of the current (as of 27.3.20) a [daily online attendance form](#).

Newfriars College will liaise with social care and families about young people's attendance. Those children on the identified list who are not attending school will be monitored using '**Guidance for Safeguarding Vulnerable children during prolonged school closure**', which has been communicated to all academies/colleges in the SET.

Staff attendance – where the College has staff in attendance, it is imperative that a full register of staff is taken each day so that it is known who is on the College site. Returns must be submitted to CEO daily- including staff available to work even if not on site.

### 5. Key personnel in Newfriars College, including DSL arrangements

Email [helpline@newfriarscollege.org.uk](mailto:helpline@newfriarscollege.org.uk)

**Or ring one of the College's Helpline numbers:**

07923 429392 – Helpline 1 (08:45 – 15:05) 07763 260733 – Helpline 2 (08:45 – 15:05)

Any allegation or disclosure involving someone who works with a student in a paid or voluntary capacity **must** be reported directly to the Head or Senior Manager, unless it involves them and then it should be reported directly to the Chair of the College Council or SLT.

Newfriars College will aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site every day during College hours if any young people are present.

If this is not possible due to illness etc. Newfriars College will contact SET central team who will put the college in touch with another DSL to be available.

In addition, a member of the senior leadership team with responsibility for safeguarding (Rob Millington or Jay Marshall) to support the DSL, will always try to be on site and/or available on the phone if not on site.

It is acknowledged that DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period (although the option of online training can be explored). 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.

#### **6. Updated advice from academy's local safeguarding partners**

Newfriars College has not been advised of any changes to usual referral procedures. This addendum acts as a record of the College's revised actions during this period of response to the Coronavirus.

#### **7. Updated advice from academy's local authority regarding young people with EHCP**

EHCP meetings have been paused. Learners and families have been advised and can contact the College with any concerns.

#### **8. Updated advice from academy's local authority designated officer (LADO)**

Newfriars College has not been advised of any changes to usual referral procedures.

#### **9. Updated advice from academy's local children's social care department, i.e. MASH**

Newfriars College has not been advised of any changes to usual referral procedures. This addendum acts as a record of the College's revised actions during this period of response to the Coronavirus.

#### **10. Communication procedures between school staff and virtual school head (LAC)**

No changes to usual practice.

#### **11. Arrangements for reporting a concern ensuring urgency of actions**

It is imperative that during this period of uncertainty that all staff ensure that any concerns are acted on as quickly as possible. For the most part, reporting procedures will remain as they are during normal school procedures as stated in our College's Safeguarding Policy, contact the DSL/DDSL, and log on My Concern. This can of course be done remotely if need be.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access MyConcern, they should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. If urgent, then a phone call should be made followed up with an email to the DSL and the Head of College. If deemed 'non-urgent', and just in need of recording and informing the DSL, an email should be sent asap to again, both the DSL and Head of College.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the College, they should report the concern to the Head of College. If there is a requirement to make a notification to

the Head of College whilst away from school, this should be done verbally, e.g. phone call, and followed up with an email to the Head of College.

Concerns around the Head of College should be directed to the Chair of the Academy Council. Staff may also contact SET central team if need be at any time concerning any worries about reporting a concern.

## 12. Vigilance regarding peer-on-peer abuse

Staff should be aware that certain issues may arise at this time which are more difficult to detect than when all young people are in school. Behaviours linked to online issues may cause some cases of peer on peer abuse (see Safeguarding Policy). Part Five of [KCSiE 2019](#) outlines these concerns. It is important that where staff suspect peer-on-peer abuse, that they follow the reporting guidelines of the college, including recording the issue on the appropriate system.

## 13. Reporting concerns about an adult

All staff must be vigilant to adults seeking to take advantage of these extraordinary times. Reports have been across the media of incidents of attempted fraud, and there will be those who will see this as an opportunity to possibly gain access to vulnerable children/young people online. All college staff must be as vigilant as possible and reinforce the message of online safety in all communications with parents/carers who are home schooling.

In addition, where any staff is concerned about the behaviour of any adult, they should report using the standard safeguarding reporting procedures as soon as possible.

## 14. Supporting college identified 'vulnerable' children who are not attending college

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, colleges have been able to identify 'vulnerable' children who may not automatically appear on any of the identified lists. In this case, colleges should include these children/young people in regards to all actions and ensure that whether the young person is in College or not, that they are supported. If the young person is not in college, the '**Guidance for Safeguarding Vulnerable children during prolonged college closure**' should be used. It is important that lines of communication with social care and external agencies are clear.

## 15. Moving to a hub – things to consider

If Newfriars College moves to a cluster/hub model for supporting pupils/young people, the following aspects will be put in place in addition to the procedures already in place:

- Appropriate information is transferred by DSL/SENCo staff or relevant senior leaders, to the appropriate member of staff who may assume responsibility for the pupil/young person if this is not one of our academy staff. This information will outline how best to support the relevant pupil/young person, e.g. EHCP, name of social worker etc.
- Any transfer of a LAC will be under the direction of the relevant virtual school headteacher.
- All information will be transferred in the strictest confidence complying with GDPR guidance.
- All parents/carers and relevant external agencies will be notified prior to the transfer.

- The 'cluster' DSL will ensure that safeguarding processes in the new setting will be to the same high standards of our own college and liaise daily with the 'home school/college' DSL.

## 16. Safer Recruitment and movement of staff - ensuring safeguarding standards

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children/young people/vulnerable adults.

**Clusters/Hubs** - Where staff are moving between academies/colleges within SET, there is an expectation that all have had adequate safeguarding training, including having signed Part One of [KCSiE 2019](#). This can be verified by DSLs.

*A designated senior leader will communicate to host school/college via written confirmation, e.g. email, that all staff moving to a cluster have been adequately checked by their academy/college, i.e. satisfy the requirements of the single central record.*

*The important thing for any staff who may be, for example moving to support a cluster/hub, that they be aware of the local arrangements around safeguarding and what to do if concerned about a child/young person, i.e. are in receipt of relevant safeguarding policies/procedures.*

The respective DSLs will ensure that safeguarding induction information is communicated to all 'new staff' in this situation. It will be for the receiving school/college to ensure adequate induction is completed and assessed on a case by case basis. There is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another academy to support the care of children

**Staff Recruitment** - Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the college, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction as with normal procedure.

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 volunteers are used, the college 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.

The college will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date, and ensure a full register of adults on site each day is maintained. Referrals of concerns will be carried out in the normal method.

## 17. Online Safety for children on and off site

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE TRUST'S DIRECTIVE IS THAT THERE IS TO BE NO STREAMED, OR RECORDED MATERIAL, DELIVERED BY ANY COLLEGE STAFF. THIS INCLUDES MATERIAL DEEMED TO FACILITATE DISTANCE LEARNING. THIS INCLUDES ALL PLATFORMS AND SOCIAL MEDIA. THIS IS IN LINE WITH UNION ADVICE AND TO PROTECT STAFF. ALL THE USUAL SAFEGUARDING PROTOCOLS MUST BE OBSERVED.**

As the majority of education for learners off-site may be online, it is vital that the College protects all pupils as best it can during this period. On site IT safety systems should operate

as best they can during this period. The following aspects of online safety should be in place in our college:

- Communication to parents/carers will include, periodically, information about online safety and signpost relevant resources.
- The college will continue to ensure monitoring and filtering mechanisms are in place.
- IT support will be available on-site or remotely at all times. (A back-up plan will be in place where IT support staff become unavailable).
- Staff must be vigilant around online safety as much as possible when checking-in with learners not in colleg. This will be difficult as monitoring their online activity will be responsibility of parents/carers but if in doubt staff should investigate as best they can.

Academies/colleges should continue to use available resources to encourage safe online use. Updated [Government guidance](#) to parents/carers highlights in section 6.3:

There is a lot of support available to keep children/young people safe online for parents/carers. Below are some useful links to help parents/carers:

- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and careers from the NSPCC)

## **18. Mental Health considerations**

We are aware at Newfriars College that this current situation can bring many anxieties for both young people, families and staff. Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of young people and their parents/families. Staff should be aware of this in setting expectations of young peoples' work where they are at home.

Where staff are concerned for their own or a young person's mental health they should seek support as appropriate.

Staff wishing to learn more about mental health and mental health of young people can access a [Flick](#) module and also refer to Government [mental health guidance](#).

## **19. Domestic Violence**

The government and various charities acknowledge that recent measures announced to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19), such as self-isolating, social distancing and spending much more time at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk. Some families might need extra support with parenting. And if a child is experiencing abuse, there aren't as many opportunities for adults to spot the signs and help.

[Government guidance](#) and [NSPCC guidance](#) have been produced in support of families and professionals at this time and how various agencies are ensuring that relevant support services remain open during this challenging time. College staff will as always remain vigilant

to any signs of possible domestic violence and report accordingly. This includes children who are currently in college and those at home considered vulnerable.

Reporting any concern will be done following each college's reporting systems asap and in addition our DSL may wish to seek guidance from the NSPCC who can be contacted on 0800 800 5000 by phone or email at [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Promotion of support organisations is important to all our community in addition to those mentioned of DfE and NSPCC. [Childline](#) can be used by children directly.

Spotting the [signs of abuse](#) might be more difficult and it can be difficult to know for certain if something is wrong. During visits and 'check-ins', it is important to be able to physically see a child you are visiting and if on the phone, speak to them directly.

Think about questions you could ask that will help you see what life's like for them. Ask open-ended questions like, "tell me about your day", "what are some good things that have happened today", "tell me about some sad things that have happened this week" and "what's life at home like". It's okay to ask similar questions - it can sometimes take time for a child to open up about what's happening.

Give children and young people the opportunity to talk about what's going on for them. It may take time for them to feel comfortable talking over the phone or on their doorstep, so staff may need to keep in touch more regularly than stated in our guidance document. Talking about things like what they're watching, reading or playing, or what they've had for dinner, may help them feel more comfortable.

It's also important to support parents and carers. Ask them about how they're coping and any worries and concerns they have. Let them know you're there to support them if they need help.

Certain children are more vulnerable to domestic abuse, e.g. SEND & disabled children, so it's important to make a greater effort to keep in touch.

Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation, no matter what stresses anyone is under.

## **20. Communication of this document with all staff**

Lead staff should ensure that this document is circulated to all staff as appropriate.





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