



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure: COVID-19 addendum

January 2021

Contact List Amended February 2021

This COVID-19 addendum policy only applies during closure of the school site as directed by central government on the 4th January 2021 (England). It sets out changes to our main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure 20/21 and must be read in conjunction with that policy, and the Department for Education's guidance.

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1. Important contacts during closure of the school site

SCHOOL CONTACTS	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Claire Khunan	claire.khunan@cognita.com
Deputy DSL (DDSL)	Jessica Carlon	jessica.carlon@cognita.com
Headteacher	Beth Friel	beth.friel@cognita.com
Acting Head (Maternity Leave)	Graeme Smith	graeme.smith@cognita.com
Director of Education	James Carroll	james.carroll@cognita.com
Group Director of Education	Simon Camby	simon.camby@cognita.com
Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL) - Europe	Alison Barnett	alison.barnett@cognita.com 07717806988 (or call via Teams)
EXTERNAL KEY LOCAL CONTACTS		EMAIL/TEL NUMBER/WEBSITE
Children's Social Care (MASH or similar)	ECIRS	020 8825 8000
Designated Officer	Paul Andrews	020 8825 8930

NATIONAL CONTACTS	
DfE Coronavirus helpline If you have a query about coronavirus (COVID-19), relating to schools and other educational establishments in England contact this helpline.	Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk Tel: 0800 046 8687 Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.
NSPCC 24/7 Helpline	Tel: 0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk Text: 88858
NSPCC Child Line	Tel: 0800 1111
NSPCC FGM helpline	Tel: 0800 028 3550 Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
DfE Prevent helpline for schools and parents	Tel: 020 7340 7264 (non-emergency) Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
National Bullying Helpline	Tel: 0845 22 55 787
UK Safer Internet Centre helpline for School Staff	Tel: 0844 381 4772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Internet Watch Foundation hotline (for reporting criminal content)	www.iwf.org.uk
National Centre for Domestic Violence National Domestic Abuse Helpline Refuge	0800 970 2070 0808 2000 247 http://www.refuge.org.uk/

2. Scope and definitions

The government has directed that school sites can only remain open to offer Emergency Provision to those children who are defined as ‘vulnerable’, and to those children whose parents are key workers and considered critical to the ongoing COVID-19 response.

The Department for Education’s (DfE’s) latest definition of ‘vulnerable children’ can be found [here](#) and like before, includes those children who:

➤ Have a social worker, and are subject to a:

- child protection plan
- child in need plan
- looked after child plan

or

➤ Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

However, the list has been widened to allow for other children who may have vulnerabilities, and whom may benefit through being offered Emergency Provision. *Where operationally possible*, these children may be offered a place.

Schools should offer children who fall into any of the above groups a place in Emergency Provision (and continue to do so whilst EP is available as parental need may fluctuate). The above children do **not** have to take a place if offered. The fewer children in educational settings at this time will protect the NHS and save lives by reducing the risks of spreading the virus. Please note that, should parents of children subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection plan not accept their offered place, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must notify the child's allocated Social Worker.

3. Core safeguarding principles

The safety and wellbeing of all our pupils is still our number one priority whilst the school site is closed

Although we are operating in a different way to normal due to the closure of the school site in response to coronavirus (COVID-19), we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL (DDSL) must be available and contactable during school hours (see section 5 for details of our arrangements)
- It is essential that unsuitable people do not enter our school workforce or gain access to children
- Children should continue to be protected when they are learning online
- We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

4. DSL (and DDSL) arrangements during closure of the school site

Details of important internal and external contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

During this time of closure of the school site, the DSLs (and DDSL), wherever their location (remote or onsite facilitating Emergency Provision), will continue to be responsible for safeguarding, alongside the Headteacher who holds ultimate responsibility. The DSL (and DDSL) will continue to identify who the most vulnerable children in our school are with regards to safeguarding and arrange additional support as needed (and where operationally possible). They will continue to update open Safeguarding Files and liaise with parents where concerns arise.

Should **both** the DSL and DDSL be unable to work due to sickness, or **both** be unable to take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding due *to any other personal reasons*, they must alert the Headteacher who will nominate another member of the Senior Leadership Team to take responsibility for safeguarding on *an interim basis* until either the DSL or DDSL is able to resume responsibility. The Headteacher should alert and seek additional support from Alison Barnett (Regional Safeguarding Lead - Europe) and the Director of Education, James Carroll, if both the DSL and DDSL be absent from work at the same time. Should the Headteacher be unable to make decisions due to their own sickness/unavailability, the SLT should contact their Director of Education who will make the decision with regards to appointing an interim DSL.

In the absence of the DSL and DDSL, the SLT nominee for Safeguarding will have responsibility to continue to:

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school and arrange support as needed for the child
- Update Safeguarding Files, where and when necessary
- Liaise with partner agencies, including making referrals where needed
- Notify the local authority of any children who are 'missing in education'
- Notify the Police of any criminal offences that we believe have taken place e.g. online distribution of inappropriate images
- Signpost parents to external organisations that may be able to offer them support and advice at this time

5. Reporting concerns about children

All staff must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately, and report and record these concerns as per the existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 20/21; there must be **no** delay in reporting and recording concerns just because the school site is closed. It is still vitally important for staff to do this in order to safeguard any vulnerable children and/or parents who may be at risk, and it remains everyone's responsibility to be vigilant. Some children may be at increased risk at this time due to stressors in their home. Others may be higher risk due to increased time spent online. See section 10 for online safety issues.

6. Reporting concerns about staff members

With regards to any concerns about a staff member's conduct during closure of the school site, we will continue to follow the principles set out in our existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 20/21 and part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- Should parents or children raise concerns about a staff member's conduct during closure of the school site, then this will be managed as per procedure set out in our main policy.
- Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have about any colleague by talking to the Headteacher and/or DSL in the first instance. Where *operationally possible*, they should complete a Low-Level Concern form (this document must be password protected and sent to the Headteacher; concerns about the Headteacher should be sent to the Director of Education/Regional Safeguarding Lead).
- We will continue to refer staff who have deliberately harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child to the Designated Officer.
- We will continue to refer staff who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

7. Inter-agency working

We will continue to work with Children's Social Care, Police, and all other external agencies involved with the care of our children, for example CAMHS/other professionals involved in supporting children's mental health. DSLs/DDSLs will continue to make referrals to partner agencies and contribute to meetings such as Core Groups and CIN/LAC Reviews (remotely or by sending documentation). Safeguarding Meetings will still take place at a minimum of 6 weeks during site closure and will be held remotely.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners

- 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

8. Monitoring attendance

8.1 Contact details

During closure of the school site, we will make sure we have up-to-date emergency contacts for **all** children. These will include contacts for their parents/carers, but we may also obtain additional emergency contact details *wherever possible* just in case the parents are unexpectedly unavailable due to illness/other due to COVID-19.

In addition to the above, where children have left the UK with their parents/carers to live in another country due to COVID-19 and/or the temporary closure of the school site, or *where they have moved to a different part of the UK*, we will request the new address at which the child is residing so that we have this for our records.

Where children have left the UK with their parents to live in another country due to COVID-19, and are *not* intending to return to the UK or school site when re-opened, and where they have formally expressed a desire to terminate their contract, we will request the new address at which the child is residing *plus* the name and address of their onward school so that we have this for our records. This information is also required by the Local Authority. Should this information not be provided, then consideration may be given to reporting the child as 'missing from education' to the Local Authority as per statutory guidance.

Where children remain in the UK, but are *not* accessing online learning during school site closure, and/or where they have formally expressed a desire to terminate their contract, we will request the name and address of their onward school so that we have this for our records. This information is also required by the Local Authority. Should this information not be provided, and where the parent/carers have not provided a reason as to why their child is not attending school for ten days (see below), then consideration may be given to reporting the child as 'missing from education' to the Local Authority as per statutory guidance.

8.2. Registering attendance

Most children will not be attending school *on the school site* at this time unless they are accessing Emergency Provision i.e. children whose parents are key workers, and/or they are assessed as 'vulnerable' as per the government's [definition](#) (see section 1).

From 5 January 2021, please note that the government has advised that educational settings do not need to complete the Educational setting status form. The government is in the process of updating the form to reflect the changes as per the Prime Minister's announcement on 4 January 2021. They will provide further instruction shortly on when educational settings should resume completing this form.

A record of those children attending Emergency Provision will be held locally, including the rationale for why they are in attendance. In addition, numbers in each category of need (Keyworker, Vulnerable or EHCP) will be centrally recorded on a daily basis to ensure that the most vulnerable children are supported at this time of school site closure.

For **all** children on roll, our taught curriculum is continuing, and online learning is our method for delivery at this time (barring Early Years who remain open at this time). It is critical that we maintain attendance registers so that we can be sure that children are engaging with our online learning curriculum, but also in order to ensure they are safeguarded.

We will be registering children's online learning attendance using Microsoft Teams.

8.3 Non- Attendance during closure of the school site

During this period of closure of the school site, it is expected that **all** children on the school roll should attend school **every day** and engage with their online sessions and set learning activities (whether they have remained in the UK, OR we have been informed that the family left the UK to reside in another country)

If any child does **not** attend their online school learning, we will:

- Follow up on their absence in the normal manner with their parents or carers (or other emergency contact) by contacting them, on the same day where operationally possible. This will be a phone call to parents.
- Notify their allocated Social Worker, where they have one

We will continue to do this every day that the child does not attend, and where their parent/carer **does not** inform us that the child is unwell/other reason for not attending where operationally possible. This should be carried out in the usual way; either by emailing the dedicated absence email address or phoning the school.

*Schools will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on children's attendance. It is likely that some children may not be able to access online learning if their parent (s) become unwell or are required to care for others (or scenarios where one parent is working and the other is unwell). In these situations, attempts will be made to sensitively contact the parent (s)/carers/emergency contacts to ascertain the current family situation and identify who is the adult caring for the child. Where a member of the family is seriously ill in hospital, it will not be expected that the child will be in attendance, and the situation should be monitored.

8.4 Children Missing in Education

Where children do not engage with their online school learning for a period of 10 days despite **daily** school attempts to contact the parents and engage the child, and where we have **not** been notified by their parent/carer/emergency contact the reason for the child's absence, then we will notify the Local Authority and report the child as 'missing in education' as per our statutory duty.

If this child is assessed as currently vulnerable, or where there were safeguarding concerns about the child prior to the closure of the school site (but they did **not** have an existing Social Worker), then consideration *may* be given to referring our concerns to Children's Social Care, as per our main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure 20/21 when we have concerns about the safety of a child.

9. Supporting children's emotional wellbeing during closure of the school site

Although we are operating in a different way to normal due to closure of the school site in response to coronavirus (COVID-19), we will continue to support the emotional wellbeing of all pupils in partnership with their parents/carers who hold main responsibility for meeting their child needs. Additional support will be offered where operationally possible, during school hours, and in term time only.

Schools will follow the protocol included in the internal guidance document: "Guidance in relation to supporting children's emotional wellbeing during school site closure"

9.1 Pastoral provision

Some children, prior to the closure of the school site, were receiving *pastoral* support in the form of informal daily or weekly check-ins with nominated staff. For any child who was receiving such support prior to closure, or who now has identified pastoral need, provision will be put in place to support them at this time of closure of the school site. Form teachers will phone the parents on a regular basis, to check on their child's wellbeing and their experience of online learning. If necessary, staff will arrange a Teams call with a child, with two staff members in the conversation.

9.2 Group weekly 'Wellbeing Check-ins'

All children will be offered weekly 'Wellbeing Check-ins' where operationally possible during the closure of the school site. These sessions will require parental permission, be held in **groups**, and will take place via Microsoft Teams. Two members of staff will facilitate these groups where operationally possible, in order to safeguard the children and professional. These sessions do not need to be recorded and will be facilitated by the form teacher.

9.3 Individual wellbeing check-ins

Those children who are identified as requiring further emotional wellbeing support, in addition to the above group sessions, will be offered additional *individual* support (where operationally possible) during the closure of the school site. These sessions will be facilitated by two members of staff in order to safeguard the child and professionals. This session will require parental permission and take place via Microsoft Teams. These sessions do not need to be recorded. These sessions would be facilitated by the DSL and form teacher or 1-1 Teaching Assistant.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents and staff to other resources to support positive emotional wellbeing at this time. This can be found on the Well-Being pages of Firefly, our Virtual Learning Environment.

10. Online Safety (including peer on peer abuse)

Whilst there is no statutory guidance relating to facilitating online lessons, children should continue to be protected when they are online during school site closure. Existing policies and procedures should be followed as far as reasonably and operationally possible, plus previously issued guidance with regards to remote and online learning, including the use of the recently issued one to one devices. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles apply as set out in the school's Code of Conduct, particularly with regards to maintaining clear professional boundaries. The DSL should be available and contactable during school hours in case an issue is encountered in remote/online teaching. Staff should **not** use any personal IT equipment.

10.1 In schools where emergency provision is being offered for children of key workers, those children who have an EHCP, and those children who have a Social Worker:

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place *in school* during this time of closure of the school site but where Emergency Provision is offered. If local IT staff are unavailable for support, our contingency plan is to contact the School Support Centre (SSC) or our IT Lead at school, Mebru Cangert.

Where staff are **in school** but interacting with children online e.g. facilitating teaching sessions, they will continue to follow our existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 20/21 and other relevant school policies e.g. Digital Learning/Acceptable Use.

10.2 Outside school

Where staff are interacting with children online during school site closure from a remote setting (i.e. their home), they will continue to follow our existing Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 20/21 and other relevant school policies e.g. Digital Learning /Acceptable Use policy, plus new guidance with regards to remote and online learning, including the use of the recently issued one to one devices. Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 5 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have, during well-being chats with the form teacher or asking to speak with a teacher on Teams at any point in the day.

One to one working

No one to one teaching should take place other than that agreed by the Headteacher. Anyone to one working must be facilitated via Microsoft Teams and the session **must** be recorded in order to safeguard the child and professional. This includes situations where specific individual children are supported in Teams 'break out' rooms by a learning support assistant/additional teacher 1:1. The parent and facilitator of the lesson/break out room will be asked to read, understand and agree to follow the protocol provided in the following guidance, previously issued in March 2020:

- Guidance for Headteachers in relation to supporting children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those with additional learning needs
- Guidance around peripatetic teachers delivering one to one online sessions
- Guidance in relation to supporting children's emotional wellbeing during school site closure

Where existing contracts existed between peripatetic teachers/private counsellors and parents, but sessions were facilitated on school premises, these should continue to take place online as outlined in the guidance above where absolutely possible.

If this is not possible, due to the year group of the child and/or platform for learning not being available for the peri, then the peripatetic teacher/counsellor and the child's parents can continue during school site closure with a private arrangement in order that the child's education/care is not disrupted. However please note this type of arrangement falls outside of Cognita policy; this private arrangement will not be arranged or involve Cognita staff, and all parties should be made aware of the changes.

If parents have previously been issued the above guidance and protocols in March 2020, and previously confirmed in writing that they consent to their child taking part in recorded one to one teaching on Teams, they will not be asked to repeat this. However, parents **must** be informed that recorded one to one sessions are planned as part of their child's ongoing education/care support. They **must** be asked if they would like to withdraw their consent prior to any sessions commencing (they should be asked to put any withdrawal of consent in writing).

10.3 Supporting parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Understand the balance between taking an interest in what the child is doing online whilst respecting their child's a right to privacy (older children)
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online, including how to set parental controls and filtering (www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/)
- Can access advice and guidance from the school Virtual Learning Pages, with dedicated pages for wellbeing

10.4 Peer on Peer abuse

Whilst arguably *direct* peer on peer abuse *may* be less likely to occur during this time of closure of the school site, and the government directive around social distancing, we are mindful that our children *may* be increasingly vulnerable to *online* peer on peer abuse. This may arise in the form of cyber bullying, coercion, sexting, and the sharing of indecent images/inappropriate content. We will continue to follow the principles set out in our main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 20/21 and part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when supporting victims of online peer-on-peer abuse. Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately by following normal process and informing the DSL.

We will support the children to know:

- Who they can contact for help and support with regards to online bullying and/or online peer on peer abuse
- How the school will manage the above if occurring during school lessons, including sanctions if pupils transgress guidelines

11. Staff recruitment, training and induction

11.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that Cognita employees, third party contractors and volunteers who work in/for school are safe to work with children.

Whilst school sites are not open, other than for Emergency Provision, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

11.2 Staff 'on loan' from other Cognita schools

Staff 'on loan' from other Cognita schools, and Cognita owned companies e.g. the Active Learning Group working in our school will have received the appropriate checks so there is no need to complete a risk assessment. Where a risk assessment is already in place for that staff member, this will need to be reviewed prior to that staff member being able to be 'on loan'.

11.3 Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure any new staff employed during the closure of the school site are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction from the DSL
- A copy of our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedure (and this COVID-19 addendum)
- A copy of our Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

All new starters during the closure of the school site will also be required to sign the Annual Declaration.

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' from other Cognita school's need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of **our** school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedure (and this COVID-19 addendum)
- A copy of **our** school Code of Conduct
- Confirmation of **our** school's local processes
- Confirmation of **our** school's DSL arrangements

11.4 Keeping records of who is on site when offering Emergency Provision

We will keep a record of which staff are on site each day offering Emergency Provision and ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our Single Central Record (SCR) up to date.

We will use the SCR to log everyone working at our school each day including staff 'on loan'

12. Emergency Provision- where a child is attending a different setting

Where it has been agreed that a child, who is not normally on our roll but whom attends another Cognita school, can temporarily attend our school's Emergency Provision (due to our setting being closer to their residence, or if their normal Cognita school is unable to offer Emergency Provision), we will request all emergency contacts for that child, plus any relevant learning need/safeguarding information from their normal setting. Our DSL (or DDSL) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will request;

- The reason(s) why the child is being offered Emergency Provision (keyworker child/vulnerable child)
- Why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan, Looked After plan, or personal education plan
- Details of the child's Social Worker
- Details of any virtual school head (where applicable for LAC)

Where the DSL, DDSL or SENCO are not available to request this information due to illness/other personal reason for being absent from work, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this. This information will be received from the child's normal school setting before the child arrives at our Emergency Provision, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards in cases of emergency. The child's parents/carers will be notified by their child's normal Cognita school that we have requested this information, unless to do so would place the child at risk (where the child is Looked After, and the parents are not privy to their location).

13. Policy review arrangements

This policy will be reviewed centrally by Cognita as guidance from the Department for Education is updated, and/or as a minimum every four weeks by Alison Barnett (Regional Safeguarding Lead – Europe). At every review, any changes or amendments will be approved by Simon Camby (Group Director of Education) and Jayne Pinchbeck (Group Legal Counsel)