

Appendix to
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Covid-19 academy closure
arrangements for safeguarding
and child protection

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Diverse
Academies

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1. Context

From 20 March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the covid-19 response – who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children – children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of the Diverse Academies safeguarding and child protection policy 2019-20 contains details of our collective safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Key contacts

Role	Name	Email
Acting CEO	David Cotton	dcotton@dalp.org.uk
Trust Safeguarding Lead	Patrick Knight	pknight@dalp.org.uk
Chair of Trustees	Mike Quigley	MQuigley@dalpgov-ac.org.uk
Safeguarding Trustee	Margaret Blore	MBlore@dalpgov-ac.org.uk

2. Vulnerable children

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 (CPP) and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. 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 Trust, local authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered an academy hub or college 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. The Trust is committed to maintaining effective provision of free school meals to all eligible children throughout the covid-19 crisis.

Senior leaders in our academies, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and the deputy designated safeguarding leads) know who our most vulnerable children are. In addition to those children on a child protection plan (CPP), or who are child in need (CIN), or a looked after child (also referred to as 'CLA'), or a home carer, the Trust expects staff to provide a safeguarding check to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Safeguarding teams across our academies 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 and previously looked-after children. The lead person in each academy for this will be the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

There is an expectation across all Diverse Academies, that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have an underlying health condition that places them at increased risk of infection. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the Designated Safeguarding team in the respective academy will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting covid-19, the respective academy safeguarding lead or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the latest advice set out by Public Health England at the time.

All Trust academies will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a hub, including remotely if the home supports the technology. All Trust academies will provide online learning resources for their respective cohorts during the period of closure.

3. 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. All Trust hubs record the daily attendance of vulnerable children and/or the children of key workers. This daily attendance sheet will be submitted to the Department for Education by 1200 hours in accordance with the guidance as set out in the link below.

All Trust safeguarding teams and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – the respective academy will then follow up, first day absence calls on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, following the protocol issued by the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead.

1. In the event of any child on our confirmed lists not attending, Diverse Academies shall adopt the usual practice of first day calls – ‘safe and well’ checks. The information for ALL attendees will be held by the office/senior staff on the ground. A child who should have been in attendance, but who has not attended will be followed up with a phone call. Once parent/carer has established the cause of the absence – all authorised absence will be in accordance with the Department for Education guidance – which is the X code.
2. Communication around attendance/safe and well checks need to be fed through to the attendance officer at the child’s home academy if different from the hub.
3. There will always be at least one Level 3 trained safeguarding officer available via each hub during the school day.
4. Each hub will be able to provide an on-call Designated Safeguarding Lead in the event that a hub cannot provide an on-site Designated Safeguarding Lead.
5. Any concerns should be reported to the respective Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead of the academy the child usually attends – this will then be logged on the relevant MyConcern within 24 hours.
6. The staffing rota in each hub, as a minimum expectation, should always include at least ONE person from each academy that the children are attending from.
7. Each hub will have at least ONE member of staff who is first aid trained/paediatric first aid (where applicable) on site.
8. Appropriate arrangements will be in place for the safe drop off and pick up of young children. No one under 10 years of age can go home unaccompanied.
9. Safeguarding officers must ensure that parental written permission/consent for children of primary school age (year 5 and 6 and must be over the age of 10) to go home independently is in place.
10. Each setting must have the contact details of all vulnerable young people attending – this should be held by the most senior member of staff on site and/or the safeguarding lead on site.
11. Any enquiries around safeguarding or attendance practice should be fed through to the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead where it will be managed from the centre.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, academy safeguarding staff will notify the child's social worker.

4. The role of the academy Designated Safeguarding Lead

During the period of covid-19 closure, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) role, in addition to the above, will include, when applicable, updating and managing the MyConcern child protection online management system, liaising with the offsite Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy and other designated staff) and as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the academy or hub.

It is important that all hub staff and volunteers have access to a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will continue to attend all multi-agency meetings, which are likely to be conducted remotely.

5. Reporting a concern

Where Diverse Academies staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Trust safeguarding and child protection policy, this includes making a report via MyConcern, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of Diverse Academies staff cannot access their MyConcern from home, they should email the respective Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead and Principal. This will ensure that the concern is received and logged.

Diverse Academies staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Normal safeguarding whistleblowing protocols are applied.

Concerns around the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be directed to the Principal.

Concerns around the Principal should be directed to the Senior Principal.

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

6. Safeguarding training and induction

Designated Safeguarding Lead training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the covid-19 virus.

For the period covid-19 measures are in place, a Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing academy staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The Designated Safeguarding Lead will 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 enter any Trust academy, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education establishment or children's workforce setting to any Trust academy, Diverse Academies will take into account the Department for Education 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 Disclosure and Barring Service (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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of Designated Safeguarding Lead arrangements.

7. 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, Diverse Academies will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their settings, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

In response to covid-19, the DBS has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our academies, Diverse Academies will take into account the Department for Education 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

Where the academy 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.

Diverse Academies 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.

Diverse Academies 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 academy hub is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be on site, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, all Trust academies will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

8. Online safety in Diverse Academies hubs

All Diverse Academies hubs will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in a hub setting, appropriate supervision will be in place.

9. Children and online safety away from Diverse Academies hubs

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 safeguarding and 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 Trust code of conduct.

The academy hub leaders, in conjunction with Trust IT personnel will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No one to one's, groups only.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by a Trust IT network manager/provider to communicate with pupils.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

10. Supporting children not in academies

Diverse Academies is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 or young person.

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

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact and door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The respective academy and its Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The academy will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media channels.

Academies recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Teachers at Diverse Academies need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

11. Supporting children in academy hubs

Diverse Academies is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Diverse Academies hubs will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Diverse Academies hubs 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.

Diverse Academies will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children across our sites – we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on MyConcern.

Where the academy has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – they will discuss them immediately with the Trust.

12. Peer on peer abuse

Diverse Academies recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where an academy hub 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 of the safeguarding and child protection policy.

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

Concerns and actions must be recorded on MyConcern and appropriate referrals made.

13. Support from the Trust

The Diverse Academies central safeguarding team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the respective Designated Safeguarding Leads to carry out their role effectively.

This may include, remotely accessing child protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

The Trust will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.