



Thomas Telford School- COVID 19 Safeguarding Policy Addendum – Spring 2021

Date: January 2021

Review date: As required

Introduction

Thomas Telford School have created this safeguarding Covid-19 addendum to support our safeguarding and child protection policy and to address ongoing issues as a result of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. The following safeguarding information, intentions and commitments can be applied to all eventualities where appropriate to include the following scenarios: full re-opening, partial re-opening, phased return of students and full closure of schools.

All staff will continue to act in the best interests of all children, if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern about any child they will act immediately and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in person by phone, e-mail, skype/facetime/MS Teams or other appropriate channels of communication.

Our school will continue to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education - statutory Guidance, in particular, part 1, part 3 - safer recruitment, part 4- management of allegations and part 5 -dealing with peer on peer abuse, child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, online safety and other forms of peer on peer abuse and the safeguarding and welfare sections of the EYFS Foundation Framework if relevant.

All staff understand the continued importance of acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns, including new concerns where children are returning to school or working at home. Our school is aware that some families may have experienced and continue to experience challenging circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic, we will continue to support families and children making appropriate referrals through the well-establish referral systems in place. Our school will make every effort to encourage parents and carers to advise us of any changes regarding academic progress, welfare, health and wellbeing that they are aware of as their children work/s at home or return/s to school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure all relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on all children remains accurate and up to date.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads, deputies or senior leaders will continue to follow all local procedures, we will continue to refer all concerns through the well- established channels.

When appropriate and we are able to do so, our school will continue to remain open and provide places for all vulnerable children and children of critical workers if it is safe to do so.

In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent, and help to resolve any concerns or difficulties wherever possible. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, our school or social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Role of the Designated, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Leaders

Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Mr Phil Nicholls** – pnicholls@ttsonline.net

Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Mrs Bethan Cash**- bcash@ttsonline.net

Keeping children Safe in Education states: During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) will always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

Whilst the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to define what “available” means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable. It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

The optimal scenario for our school providing care for children is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. This may not always be possible, and where this is the case there are 2 options we will consider:

- a trained DSL or deputy from our school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home
- sharing trained DSLs or deputies with other schools (who should be available to be contacted via phone or online video)

If our DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, our school will require a senior leader to take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) 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 our school.

Attendance

Our school will continue to record and report attendance in accordance with any directives from the government and our local authority. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows our school to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the local authority and the DfE on attendance and the number of children taking up places if required.

Our school has processes in place (e.g. phone calls, e-mails, text messaging, virtual meetings, etc.) to check on the welfare and attendance of any vulnerable child. We keep a record of all calls and contact with families and colleagues.

The Telford and Wrekin Family Connect Service is fully operational and continues to accept all levels of referral.

Health and safety risk assessment

Our school has completed a health and safety risk assessment with the support of the LA to ensure a safe return of children to school. This risk assessment is under constant review.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

At Thomas Telford School we understand it is essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce or gain access to children. If our school must recruit new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE. In response to COVID-19, we will consider and implement safe and appropriate processes to reduce the need face-to-face contact if required.

During this current period if our school uses volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSIE. Under no circumstances would we allow a volunteer who has not been checked to be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Existing staff engaging in regulated activity already have the appropriate DBS check, we understand there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the staff temporarily moves to another school to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. If we are a host school, we will risk assess as we would for a volunteer (see above). Our school understands the onus remains on us to satisfy ourselves that someone in our setting has the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the host school chooses to, via seeking assurance from the home school rather than requiring new checks.

Our school will continue to follow our 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 in KCSIE.

Our school will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as outlined in KCSIE and the TRA's '[Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral](#)'. During the COVID-19 period all referrals will be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that our 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, our school must continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in KCSIE. The SCR can, if a school chooses, provide the means to log everyone that will be working or volunteering in our school on any given day, including any staff who may be on loan from other settings. The SCR can also, if a school or college chooses, be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Mental health and well-being

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Our school is aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Whilst we are providing for all children and children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, our school will ensure appropriate support is in place for them. Our school will have regard to the DfE guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools which sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Our support for pupils in the current circumstances may include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services.

Helpful guidance and links:

[mental health and behaviour in schools.](#)

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/mental-wellbeing/overview>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19.aspx>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/c19>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/>

Online safety in our school and remote learning

E-safety IT lead: **Mr P Nicholls**

At Thomas Telford School we understand that it is more important than ever that our school provides a safe environment, including online. Our school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems (read [guidance on what "appropriate" looks like](#)) are in place to protect children when they are online on our school

IT systems or recommended resources. Our school will consider who in our institution has the technical knowledge to maintain safe IT arrangements, review our e-safety policy, acceptable use of technology and computing policy if required and to communicate any amendments. Our school will publish our remote learning provision by the 5th January 2021, we will also consider what our contingency arrangements are if our IT/E-safety staff become unavailable.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards and proprietors assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. We will also contact our IT provider for assistance if required.

Children and online safety away from school and college

At Thomas Telford School we are doing what we reasonably can to keep all our children safe. We understand that 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 will be dealt with as per our safeguarding/child protection policy and where appropriate referrals will be made to children's social care and as required the police.

We understand that the DfE publishes separate guidance on providing education remotely, we will use the guidance to inform our remote learning provision. Recently published [guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning](#) and from the [London Grid for Learning on the use of videos and livestreaming](#) may be used to help plan online lessons and/or activities and plan them safely.

Our school will consider the safety of our children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in our school's staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct) our acceptable use of technology policy and staff, parent, pupil agreements. This policy should amongst other things include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy will apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced. Our school will, as much as is reasonably possible, consider if our existing policies adequately reflect the new reality of so many children (and in some cases staff) working remotely online. If required, we may add an annex/addendum summarising key COVID-19 to our code of conduct and acceptable use of technology policy. We may seek support from our local authority or independent consultant when planning online lessons/activities and considering online safety.

Our school will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place, so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to our school this should also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

When our school has contact with parents/carers (E.g. via phone calls, e-mails, text messaging, website etc.) we can reinforce the importance of children being safe online. We feel it is especially important for parents/carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from our school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents/carers may choose to supplement the school/college online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents/carers, our school will make every effort to emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents/carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents/ carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents/carers

Our school will continue to provide contact information and supportive information on our website for parents/carers by signposting to statutory agencies –Telford and Wrekin Family connect, Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Website, MASH contact numbers and third sector agencies and other partners.