

**NJA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Updates related to the COVID-19 pandemic - May 2020**

The school closure due to COVID-19 and the partial reopening has provided unique challenges with regard to child protection and safeguarding, especially in terms of identifying children who are at risk and ensuring those who are at risk are protected effectively. It remains essential that schools continue to be safe places for children. This being the case, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first;
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately;
- a DSL or deputy should be available;
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children;
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.

In order to achieve this, Normanton Junior Academy have reviewed the following policies in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an appendix added to each existing policy for clarity:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Physical Restraint and Intervention Policy
- Managing Medicines in School Policy
- Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy

A COVID-19 risk assessment has also been completed.

All staff will have been informed of the COVID-19 risk assessment, changes in policies and the implications to child protection and safeguarding prior to the anticipated reopening of school on Tuesday 2nd June 2020.

Working with other agencies

School recognise the importance of working with children's social workers, the local authority virtual school head for looked-after and previously looked-after children and any other relevant safeguarding and welfare and will continue to do so.

Disclosures

As children return to school following the period of lockdown and school closures, many more children may make disclosures relating to child protection and safeguarding concerns. Training will take place for all staff on the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately

on any safeguarding concerns prior to the return of the Year 6 cohort, including new concerns where children are returning. Staff and volunteers are aware of possibility of an increased number of disclosures and that their time may be needed to support children and families, as well as to make any necessary referrals.

Staff will continue to follow the guidance set out in the main body of this policy if they have any concerns regarding child protection and safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

School will have a DSL on site whenever reasonably possible. However, in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible. Should this be the case, the following arrangements will be put in place:

- a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home;
- a DSL from Normanton Common Primary Academy will be available to be contacted.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating 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 the school or college.

Attendance

Vulnerable children attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending. Vulnerable children - regardless of year group - that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to school provision where this would now be appropriate for them to do so.

A brief summary of attendance expectations across the different groups of vulnerable children is as follows:

- for vulnerable children who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable;
- for vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment;
- for vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable.

School will notify social workers where children with a social worker do not attend and will continue to follow up with any parent whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

Parents and carers of children identified as being vulnerable who have chosen not to send their children to school will be contacted via telephone on at least a weekly basis, or at least twice weekly if they have a social worker. A record of this will be kept in school. Where contact cannot be made, home visits will be carried out by a member of staff whilst maintaining social distancing. If contact

still cannot be made, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed and in some cases a safeguarding referral will be made.

School will resume taking the attendance register from 2nd June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

Weekly updates on vulnerable children will be provided to the Local Authority each Thursday using the Wakefield Safeguarding Tracker, including the frequency with which they are attending school.

Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Staff will be briefed on how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess.

The curriculum delivered on pupils' return on 2nd June will include regular work on promoting mental health and well-being. Support will be put in place for children identified as needing more intensive work in these areas, either from within school or specialist services.

Visitors to school

All visitors, including contractors will be limited during the period of COVID-19 restrictions. Where visitors do attend school, they will be made aware of the expectations of them in relation to the risk assessment in place.

Visitors and contractors will only be authorised by the Headteacher, who is responsible for the safety of the children and staff in school. Visitors and contractors without prior appointments will NOT be allowed to enter the main school building.

Online safety in school

School will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems through Mint Support.

Children and online safety away from school

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 the child protection and safeguarding policy and where appropriate referrals will be made to children's social care and as required the police.