

Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum



The Forest CE Federation

'Small enough to care. Large enough to inspire

Valuing all God's children '

'All things are possible for one who believes' Mark 9 v 23

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1 Introduction

1.1 This addendum should be read alongside the school’s main Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. It is for use during the partial school closures beginning on 5th January 2021.

1.2 Further information about the government’s approach to COVID-19 can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

2 Context

2.1 Following government guidance, **the Forest CE Federation of Schools** closed to pupils on 5th January 2021, with the exception of children deemed to be 'vulnerable', or those with parent/s or carer/s who are critical workers.

2.2 Safeguarding and child protection remains an essential part of our duty of care to all students and we have a responsibility to safeguard children, whether they are on-site or staying at home. We understand that safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare of all children is everyone's responsibility and everyone has a role to play in protecting children. We continue to promote a culture of vigilance, where staff and volunteers act immediately if they have safeguarding concerns about a child. We recognise that our school is part of a wider safeguarding system for children and work closely with other agencies to promote the welfare of children. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and will consider the wishes of, and at all times, what is in the best interests of each child.

2.3 The purpose of this addendum is to;

- Ensure that children are protected from maltreatment or harm;
- Promote safeguarding and child protection;
- Demonstrate the school's commitment to keeping children safe whilst operating under emergency measures related to COVID-19;
- Provide all members of staff with the information required to meet their safeguarding duty and protect children from harm during this time; and
- Provide stakeholders with clear information relating to the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures during the COVID-19 outbreak.

2.4 All staff will be made aware of this addendum and updated regularly on further developments.

2.5 This addendum is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that the school is compliant with;

- all relevant legislation and statutory guidance;
- government guidance relating to the COVID-19 outbreak¹; and
- guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.

2.6 Scope

2.6.1 This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of **the school**. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned unless otherwise stated.

2.6.2 This policy applies to all staff, whether working on-site or at home.

¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak> for further details.

3 The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

3.1 **The Forest CE Federation** has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Eliza Hollis**
- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Stacy Powell

3.2 A trained Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will be available at all times during school hours. Wherever possible, a trained DSL (or deputy DSL) will be available on site. Where this is not possible due to staff self-isolation, a trained DSL (or deputy DSL) will be available to be contacted via phone or video-conferencing via TEAMS. In this instance an appropriate senior leader will take responsibility for safeguarding on site.

3.3 The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings that can be done remotely.

3.4 Arrangements for contacting the DSL/DDSLs will be shared with staff before 9am each day, as well as any relevant safeguarding and child protection updates and training.

3.5 All DSLs and DDSLs will keep up to date with the latest safeguarding information and guidance via e-bulletins, Local Authority e-bulletins and taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments.

4 Vulnerable Children

4.1 The school has given careful consideration to which children need to continue to attend school, in order to ensure children are safe and to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

4.2 Each child has been considered on a case by case basis in consultation with any relevant external agencies and the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (where necessary) to establish if a child should be on site.

4.3 The school adheres to government guidance on vulnerable children. The school considers children to be vulnerable and may need to attend if they:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child.
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services

- adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
- those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
- those living in temporary accommodation
- those who are young carers
- those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
- care leavers
- others at the provider and Local Authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health².

4.4 We strongly encourage vulnerable children to attend.

4.5 Children other than those above may be considered vulnerable and some children will become vulnerable during the time that the school is closed. The school will continually review which children will attend school, in line with local and governmental guidance.

4.6 There is a government expectation that children with a social worker will attend a provision, unless **in consultation with the child's social worker and family** it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, professionals will talk through these worries with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

4.7 All children with an EHC plan will be invited into school in line with government guidance. Decisions about how individual children are supported to engage in education will be made in discussions with parents and all relevant professionals.

4.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with the SENDCO and other relevant staff to ensure that children with special educational needs and disabilities continue to receive appropriate support.

4.9 The Forest CE Federation has the flexibility to offer a place to other learners who may also be considered vulnerable. Please contact Eliza Hollis to discuss this further.

4.10 If vulnerable children are not attending school, we will notify their social worker (if applicable) and agree the best way to keep in contact with them. The school will keep in contact with vulnerable children via phone calls and Teams video meetings

4.11 The school will check if vulnerable children are able to access remote education support, will support them to access it (as far as possible) and will regularly check if they are doing so.

4.12 The Forest CE Federation will continue to work with professionals involved with children and share relevant information with them such as social workers, early help workers and

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision#vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Virtual School Heads (VSH). This is especially important during the COVID-19 period. This will include information about attendance and any welfare concerns.

- 4.13 If there is a safeguarding concern, this will be shared with the relevant professional as soon as possible.
- 4.14 If children have existing vulnerabilities but are not attending school, the school will TEAMS call daily and phone call fortnightly.
- 4.15 In the event that we have to temporarily stop on-site provision on public health advice, we will inform the Local Authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and work towards welcoming back pupils as soon as possible, where feasible to do so.
- 4.16 All children will be contacted daily by TEAMS or using Class DOJO.

5 Attendance

- 5.1 The school adheres to government guidance, which states that parents should keep their children at home, if they can, and that schools and colleges should remain open only for children of critical workers and those deemed to be vulnerable.
- 5.2 As such, The Forest CE Federation will not be following our usual attendance procedures and non-attendance will not be managed in the way that it normally would.
- 5.3 The school will record attendance in the usual school register. We will provide the Local Authority and the Department for Education (and with any commissioned provider in the case of Children in Care) with requested data as per local and government guidance.
- 5.4 The school will work with families and social workers to agree whether children should attend school or not. If it is agreed that a child should attend and they do not, the school will follow this up with parents/carers.
- 5.5 The school will follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend.
- 5.6 If children who should be attending school develop symptoms or are required to self-isolate, parent should inform the school immediately and they will be asked to remain at home. In the event that this happens, we will contact the family weekly by phonecall and TEAMS meet daily.
- 5.7 The school will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

5.8 In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at the school, or discontinues, we will notify their social worker where applicable.

6 Children attending Alternative Provision

6.1 Not applicable

7 Children from other schools

7.1 In the event that children temporarily move to The Forest CE Federation from another setting, we will request SEND and safeguarding and child protection information for that child, and details of support in place. This could include, but is not limited to, educational records, child protection files, Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), Child in Need Plans, Child Protection Plans, Personal Education Plans and details of professionals involved with the child.

7.2 For looked-after children, the change in school will be led and managed by the Virtual School Head with responsibility for the child (see front of policy for details) and the Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children.

7.3 This information will be requested and should be sent to the school prior to the child's arrival

7.4 We will liaise closely with the Local Authority, the Virtual School and social workers in the event that a child moving to the school has either an Education Health Care Plan and/or is a Looked After Child.

7.5 If sharing information we use Edukey secure platform, or information is sent recorded delivery .

7.6 We continue to operate under the Data Protection Act (2018) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). However, this is not be a barrier to sharing information for the purposes of keeping children safe and safeguarding information will be shared lawfully, as necessary.

8 Reporting a concern

8.1 All staff will continue to look out for any signs that indicate a child may be at risk, both on and off site, including online.

8.2 If a member of staff/volunteer has any safeguarding concerns about a child, this will be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.

8.3 If the concern is urgent, the member of staff/volunteer will speak to a DSL in person or via phone/video call if they are not on site, immediately.

- 8.4 In the event a member of staff or volunteer cannot make contact with a DSL, this will not delay them taking immediate action to safeguard a child in line with school procedures.
- 8.5 Concerns will be recorded using existing school/college safeguarding processes as outlined in our Child Protection Policy.
- 8.6 Children are encouraged to report concerns via existing school/college systems, or to a trusted adult at home.
- 8.7 Parents/carers are encouraged to report concerns via existing school/college systems.

9 Allegations against staff

- 9.1 The Forest CE Federation takes all allegations against staff seriously and will manage them in line with this policy, Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 9.2 If a concern or allegation of abuse arises against the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of Governors , Daniel Lister without delay.
- 9.3 If a concern or allegation of abuse arises against any member of staff other than the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Headteacher without delay. In the event that the headteacher is unavailable due to illness or other circumstance, concern must be reported to Stacy Powell, Kelly Lea, Doreen Howie, Andrew Henry Moore or Michael Mc Loughlin.
- 9.4 Allegations of abuse against staff should be not discussed directly with the person involved.
- 9.5 The Headteacher or Chair of Governors should consider if the allegation meets the threshold for Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) intervention.
- 9.6 Concerns relating to a position of trust issue will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer within 24 hours.
- 9.7 If a child has suffered abuse or harm, a referral for statutory intervention will also be made.
- 9.8 In the instances where an allegation is dealt with internally, the Local Authority Designated Officer will provide information and support to The Forest CE Federation in managing the allegation.
- 9.9 The procedure for whistleblowing is outlined in the whistleblowing policy, on the staff shared area of the schools website www.forestfederation.co.uk

10 Safeguarding training and staff induction

- 10.1 All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so all staff know what to do if they are worried about a child.
- 10.2 Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter any sites within The Forest CE Federation they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.
- 10.3 Staff will be made aware if any processes have changed with the sharing of this addendum and the DSL will communicate any changes to local processes directly.
- 10.4 All new staff and volunteers will have an induction provided via the DSL and will be provided with a copy of the Forest CE Federations Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Covid-19 Addendum in addition to other documents outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).
- 10.5 Staff may move between The Forest Ce Federation schools on a temporary basis and consideration given will be given by the DSL as to what induction they need on a case-by-case basis, dependent on existing skills and knowledge.

11 Safer recruitment, volunteers and movement of staff

- 11.1 It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.
- 11.2 When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).
- 11.3 The school will adhere to all government guidance in relation to checking identification for the purposes of obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service checks and when conducting interviews.
- 11.4 Where The Forest CE Federation are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 183 to 188 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.
- 11.5 If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will adhere to all government guidance in checking their suitability to work in the school.

11.6 The Forest CE Federation 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 in paragraph 179 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

The Forest CE Federation will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral'.

11.7 During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

11.8 The Forest CE Federation will continue to update the single central record and will log details of any risk assessment carried out on volunteers and temporary staff from other educational institutions.

12 Supporting children in school

12.1 The Forest CE Federation is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

12.2 The Forest CE Federation will be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

12.3 The Forest CE Federation 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.

12.4 The Forest CE Federation will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on Edukey.

13 Record keeping

13.1 As detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020), all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

13.2 We will review open cases regularly particularly during the duration of the partial school closure.

- 13.3 During school closure, staff at, The Forest CE Federation will continue to use Edukey.
- 13.4 If using an electronic system to record concerns, discussions etc. remember to ensure that the screen **is not visible in non-secure areas**, for example, at home where other family members may be able to see it.
- 13.5 Staff will continue to record incidents on Edukey in the event that the DSL/DDSs are offsite, or in the event that the safeguarding team are unable to work.
- 13.6 The central electronic system can be accessed by all DSL's across all four schools if children are attending at a different school/hub.

14 Peer on Peer/Child on Child Abuse

- 14.1 The Forest CE Federation continues to recognise and respond to cases of peer on peer (child on child) abuse by considering each incident on a case-by-case basis and basing any intervention on usual processes outlined within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).
- 14.2 The Forest CE Federation recognises that the current circumstances and the changeable nature of current Government guidance may mean that the school/college may need to adapt elements of the process in some cases to ensure that they are able to respond in line with Government advice when required.
- 14.3 The DSL will continue to consult as appropriate with multi-agency professionals to ensure that children's safety and wellbeing is not compromised when incidents of peer on peer abuse are brought to their attention.
- 14.4 During this time, staff will continue to be vigilant in reporting any concerns relating to peer on peer abuse to the DSL.
- 14.5 Staff have been reminded about peer on peer abuse in recent whole-staff emails/ Teams meetings and briefings to those on site .
- 14.6 The school's revised approach to peer on peer abuse is informed by the principles set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

15 Online safety and remote learning

- 15.1 The school recognises that continuing high quality pastoral support is vital to ensure that children are safe and supported. The school will provide remote pastoral support and education via:
- 15.2 Daily checks in with pupils via Teams.
- 15.3 Phone calls with pupils/ parents as required.

15.4 Pupils have a monitored chat facility on Teams so they can still communicate with each other.

[See 'pupil wellbeing and support' in this government guidance for further details.](#)

15.5 The school recognises that children both on-site and off-site are vulnerable to abuse and radicalisation online. Children who are at home may be spending more time online and this increases their vulnerability.

15.6 The Forest CE Federation recognises that additional safeguarding arrangements are required to ensure that children are safe online at this time.

15.7 All staff will continue to look out for any signs that indicate a child may be at risk online and will report and respond to concerns in line with the Child Protection Policy addendum.

15.8 Where necessary, referrals will be made to LADO, children's social care and as required, the police.

15.9 Governors will review arrangements to ensure that they continue to be appropriate.

15.10 Online activity in school will continued to be monitored through our usual IT monitoring systems. All teaching staff will monitor this via Teams and RM control our privacy and filters.

15.11 Children who are not attending school –Parents have been informed of the remote learning procedures with regards to safeguarding their pupils whilst online through a letter and the remote learning policy

15.12 The school is legally required to provide suitable remote learning for children whilst they are out of school. We are using technology to deliver learning to pupils who are at home. In order to ensure that children are safe when learning online, the school have;

- Trained staff involved on appropriate use of IT, provided pupils with information sheets, filtering and monitoring, acceptable use agreements etc.
- Parents have been advised on suitable websites for children, encouraged to supervise children and informed about the risks of using online unknown tutors .

15.13 All communication with learners and parents/carers will take place using parent mail, class dojo and Microsoft 365 .

15.14 Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL.

15.15 The Forest CE Federation will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

15.16 Staff and learners will engage with remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in our schools/setting behaviour policy/code of conduct.

15.17 When delivering remote learning, staff at The Forest CE Federation will:

- Only use online tools that have been evaluated and agreed by leadership.
- Ensure remote learning activities are planned in accordance with our curriculum policies, taking learner needs and technology access into account.
- Where possible, pre-record content.

15.18 If remote learning is taking place 'live' using webcams or chat facilities, staff and learners will ensure a professional environment is maintained. This means:

- Staff will record the length, time, date and attendance of any online lessons/contact held or made.
- Sessions will not be delivered in any 1:1 situation, unless pre-approval has been given by the DSL and/or Headteacher and the session is auditable.
- Staff will record any online lessons so they can be audited or accessed later if required; learners and staff should be made aware that lessons are being recorded.
- Staff will agree online behaviour expectations with learners at the start of lessons.
- Staff will revisit our Acceptable use of Technology Policy with learners as necessary.
- All participants will wear suitable dress, use professional language, and ensure backgrounds of videos (live or pre-recorded) are neutral and appropriate.
- Staff and learners should ensure personal information and/or, inappropriate or unsuitable personal items are not visible.
- Where possible, other household members should not be in the background or in shot; if this unavoidable, they should follow appropriate language and behaviour expectations.
- If live streaming, staff will mute and/or disable learners' videos and microphones, as required.

15.19 Learners are encouraged to report concerns to a member of staff or a trusted adult at home. Where this is not possible, additional support can be accessed online via:

- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre's 'Report Harmful Content': <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
- National Crime Agency Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (NCA-CEOP): www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

15.20 Staff have received updated safeguarding training to ensure that they are equipped with the skills to keep children safe when using technology for remote learning.

15.21 Use of staff and learner personal devices, including mobile phones, will be managed in line with our existing mobile technology policy.

15.22 A list of useful sources of information relating to online safety is including in Appendix B of this addendum.

16 Supporting children learning at home

16.1 The Forest CE Federation will continue to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people that remain on the school/college roll.

16.2 All DSLs will continue to identify those vulnerable children that would benefit from Early Help as identified in KCSIE 2020, provide pastoral support and consider whether they would benefit from external support also.

16.3 There will be clear plans around how best to communicate with learners who are identified as vulnerable, as well as those whom DSLs have concerns about who do not receive a statutory service.

16.4 This could include telephone contact and/or doorstep visits. The way that this communication is managed is at the discretion of the DSL.

16.5 The Forest CE Federation and the DSL will work closely with all relevant agencies and professionals regarding safeguarding a child who is not on site.

16.6 Any plans will be reviewed regularly and if concerns become significant, the DSL will consider any requests for support if considered appropriate.

16.7 The Forest CE Federation recognises that this is a difficult time for children and young people who consider as The Forest CE Federation a safe place and the current situation may impact on learners', staff and parent/carers' mental health.

16.8 The Forest CE Federation will utilise its website and social media presence to ensure that safeguarding messages are shared with children and their families. This will include links to appropriate services and resources that are aimed at supporting them throughout this period.

17 Additional Guidance on Use of Hub and Cluster Schools

17.1 It is the **HUB**/Receiving School that is responsible for:

- Providing a safe environment

- Keeping children safe
- Safer recruitment of staff and volunteers
- Completion of risk assessments

17.2 When children are moved from one to another it is the **receiving setting** who take on responsibility for the safeguarding of that child .

17.3 Relevant information on the child should be shared within the Federation restricted staff area within Office 365 cloud including the reason for vulnerability. At a minimum the hub will have access to:

- THE EHCP
- THE CIN or CP Plan
- The name of the child's Social Worker and contact arrangements
- For LAC – the PEP and name of Virtual School Head
- Details of any medical needs
- Emergency contact details
- Details of any parents/carers or others who should not be collecting the child; for example, if there are safeguarding concerns

17.4 It is recommended that where a child has transferred from their own school to a different/'Hub' school during this time, and there is no member of staff present from the school that the child regularly attends, then consideration is given to collection arrangements for such children. For example, it may be pertinent to consider the use of a password, agreed between home and the child's own school, for parents/carers to use when they collect from the different/'Hub' school, so as to ensure that the situation has been appropriately risk assessed and managed.

17.5 This information should be readily available for all vulnerable children should there be a need to urgently close school premises.

Appendix A – Online Safety Resources

Support for schools implementing remote learning

- <https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/safe-remote-learning/>

Support for professionals when using videos and/or live streaming

- <https://static.lgfl.net/LgflNet/downloads/digisafe/Safe-Lessons-by-Video-and-Livestream.pdf>

Support for children and parents

- Childline – www.childline.org.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre to report and remove harmful online content – www.reportharmfulcontent.com
- CEOP (to make a report about online abuse) – www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- Internet Matters (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online – www.internetmatters.org
- London Grid for Learning (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online) – www.lgfl.net/online-safety/
- Net-aware (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC) – www.net-aware.org.uk
- Parent info (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online) – www.parentinfo.org
- Thinkuknow (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online) – www.thinkyouknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre (advice for parents and carers) - <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>