

COVID 19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection



From 20th 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 St Mary's RC Primary School, Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

A DSL will be available to be contacted all times – either in school or via telephone when working from home. All staff have the contact details of the DSLs. All staff on site will be responsible for safeguarding all children and reporting any concerns in the usual way as outlined above. The DSLs will continue to engage with social workers.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can also be done remotely. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email/telephone the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should follow the same procedure outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy above.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mr David Joyce.

Safeguarding Training and induction

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read and understood Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Online safety in school

St Mary's RC Primary School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

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 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.

Where the DSL 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 CPOMS, as should a record of contact have been made. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

St Mary's RC Primary School and its DSLs 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 DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

St Mary's RC Primary School 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 St Mary's RC Primary School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work at home. Parents and carers have been informed that there is no expectation for the completion of work, this is not compulsory.

St Mary's RC Primary School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Supporting children in school

St Mary's RC Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. St Mary's RC Primary School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend.

The Headteacher (or in their absence the most senior SLT member) will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. St Mary's RC Primary School 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 COVID19.

St Mary's RC Primary School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

If operating at an alternative site, we will still follow the same policy and procedures

Children with an EHCP

Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home. St Mary's RC Primary School will consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, alongside the views of their parents, and make a risk assessment for each child. Working with the local authority, school will decide who is best placed to undertake the risk assessment, noting that the duty to ensure provision remains with the local authority.

St Mary's RC Primary School will consider a number of different risks to each child, including:

- the potential health risks to the child from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions. This will be on an individual basis with advice sought from an appropriate health professional where required
- the risk to the child if some or all elements of their EHC plan cannot be delivered at all, and the risk if they cannot be delivered in the normal manner or in the usual setting
- the ability of the child's parents or home to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely
- the potential impact to the child's wellbeing of changes to routine or the way in which provision is delivered

We expect most children with EHC plans will fall into the following categories:

- children who would be at significant risk if their education, health and care provision and placement did not continue, namely those who could not safely be supported at home. This may include those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those receiving significant levels of personal care support.
- children whose needs can be met at home, namely those who are not receiving personal care from their educational setting, or whose limited need for personal care can be met in their family home.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows the Secretary of State, where appropriate, to temporarily lift the statutory duty on local authorities to maintain the precise provision in EHC plans; with local authorities needing instead to apply 'reasonable endeavors' to support these children and their families. As such, where the Secretary of State has issued a temporary notice and a local authority is unable to secure the full range of provision stated in a plan, as long as they use their 'reasonable endeavors' to do this, they won't be penalised for failing to meet the existing duty in section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014.