



# **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at NUASt**

**NUAST: NUASt**

**Policy owner: Nova Education Trust**

**Date: 30 March 2020 Based on DfE Guidance on 27 March 2020**

**Date shared with staff: 1/4/2020**

## 1. Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> 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 also 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 NUASt Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Robert White	0115 8592040	bwhite@nuast.org
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Robert Tapp	0115 8592040	rtapp@nuast.org
Headteacher	Robert White	0115 8592040	bwhite@nuast.org
Trust Safeguarding Manager	Helen Duffy		<a href="mailto:HDuffy@novaeducationtrust.net">HDuffy@novaeducationtrust.net</a>
Chair of Governors	John Saunders		john-saunders@hotmail.co.uk
Safeguarding Trustee	John Saunders		john-saunders@hotmail.co.uk

## Any individual and or hub contacts

### 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 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 Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school 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.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

NUAST 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 for this will be: Robert Tapp

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an

education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. 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 NUASt will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, NUASt or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

NUASt will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **Risk and RAG rating pupils:**

At NUASt pupils who are deemed to be vulnerable will be RAG rated according to the following criteria:

**Red** – pupils most at risk of harm i.e. Child Protection Plan

**Amber** – moderate risk, i.e. Child in Need

**Green** – some concerns

### **Contact if not on site;**

Pupils in **red**, who are our most vulnerable students, should have correspondence from school at least once/twice per week (email/phone call) and should be discussed with the SDSL or DSL weekly (regularity of calls to be defined by the safeguarding team in school depending on the individual needs of the pupil/family).

Pupils in **amber** should have one call home/ email weekly and should be discussed with the SDSL or nominated DSL weekly.

**Green** students should be monitored at the discretion of the safeguarding team. It is for the Head of School to identify who is the most appropriate person to make the call, this may be the class teacher, a DSL, Head of Department etc...

The list is interchangeable and pupils may move between categories. Contact with Social Care should also be dependent upon the needs of the pupil.

### **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. A log of daily attendance must be kept and sent back to the DfE daily.

NUASt and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – NUASt will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. NUASt will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, NUASt will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

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

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

NUAST has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Robert White

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Robert Tapp

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader or designated staff member will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to safeguarding app and 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.

It is important that all NUASt staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them. This also remains the case where there is a hub of schools working together.

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

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via the safeguarding app, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access the app from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 report the concern to the headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: John Saunders.

The Multi-Academy Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations and Helen Duffy Safeguarding Lead should be contacted either via email : [hduffy@novaeducationtrust.net](mailto:hduffy@novaeducationtrust.net) or by phone, 07701 008067.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL 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 DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read 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.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter NUASt, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE 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

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

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

### **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, NUASt will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

Where NUASt are 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.

NUAST 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.

NUAST 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current National emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, NUASt will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online safety in schools and colleges**

NUAST 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 and college**

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 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 MAT code of conduct.

NUAST 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 1:1s, 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 provided by the MAT to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.
- There should not be any 'Live' streaming

### **One to one contact with Students:**

In light of changes to government guidance, pupils may have face to face time with Tutors, Teachers, Heads of Department and Pastoral Teams. Where possible this meeting should occur in school in a designated area.

If a pupil is not available to attend the school site, then a staff member may conduct an online session. The staff member must:

- Be in school to undertake the meeting
- Arrange the meeting with the parent
- The parent must be invited to attend the meeting to safeguard both the child and staff member
- Meetings must be recorded via Nova Education Trust Central IT System

### **In addition:**

- 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 if possible.
- Parents/carers should be nearby when the session takes place but are not expected to directly take part in the meeting.
- Parents/carers should announce their presence to the member of staff at the start of the meeting
- The live meeting should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live meetings 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 provided by Nova Education to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any meetings held.

### **Supporting children not in school**

NUAST is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

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 the app, as should a record of contact have made.

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

NUAST and its DSL 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.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

NUAST 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 NUAST need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

NUAST 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on the app.

### **Supporting children in school**

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

NUAST will continue to 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.

NUAST 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.

NUAST 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on the app.

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

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

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

Where a school 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 Child Protection Policy.

The school 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 the safeguarding app and appropriate referrals made.

### **Support from the Multi-Academy Trust**

The Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Central Safeguarding Team, Helen Duffy, Ash Rahman and Dave Hooker will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

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

## DfE Checklist:

Activity	Completed (Yes/No)
Ensure that someone is responsible for ensuring these actions are completed	
Ensure governors are aware of the Government's interim safeguarding guidance	
Ensure that someone is responsible for continuity in safeguarding leadership	
If you are a hub understand that you have the responsibility for safeguarding all children and staff	
Ensure DSL is available, in-person, by phone or video link	
Nominate a senior leader to be the onsite safeguarding lead	
Create a Coronavirus Outbreak addendum to your child protection policy to include the specific issues for these circumstances	
Ensure staff know the new arrangements for DSLs and reporting concerns	
Understand what changes there may be for contacting the LADO	
Understand what changes there may be for contacting the MASH team or other 'front door' services	
Understand what changes there may be for contacting social workers	
Know which children have social workers and how to contact them	
Know which children are LAC/PLAC, who their Virtual School Head is and how to contact them	
Know which children should be in school and follow up where they do not attend	
Ensure that emergency numbers and alternatives are kept up to date	
Ensure that there are safeguarding induction processes for new staff, staff relocated to the school, and volunteers	
Ensure that new staff, staff relocated to the school, and volunteers understand the staff code of conduct	
Ensure that any volunteers have been individually risk-assessed	
Ensure that each vulnerable child has an easily transferable record of why they are vulnerable, a copy of the EHCP and/or CIN or CP Plan, the name of their social worker and contact details, for LAC children the name of the relevant Virtual School Head	
Ensure there is a record of which staff are onsite daily	
Ensure that the SCR is up to date with any relocated staff or volunteers and the checks that have been made	
Ensure that your safer recruitment processes are clear and adhered to, for example, be aware of anyone unknown to the school offering themselves as a volunteer	
Ensure that staff are aware that there may be an impact of the mental health of pupils, parents and staff or volunteers; and what support may be available	
Consider what to do if there are no IT staff available	
Ensure that the school has an online teaching and learning policy which considers safeguarding risks	

**Interim DfE Safeguarding Guidance: Actions required**

Ensure that pupils, parents and staff know how to raise any safeguarding issues that may arise during any online learning	
Ensure that SLT has a plan for how any bereavements may be handled, including obtaining any support services (not otherwise shared) [See charity websites, for example, Winston's Wish, Grief Encounter, Childhood Bereavement Network or Hope Encounter.	

