

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy COVID-19 school arrangements for Townley School and Pre-School

Amendments shown in blue made on 25/6/20 to reflect updates in KCSIE 2020.

Amendments shown in red made on 5/1/2021 to reflect the new lockdown situation

This revised addendum of the Townley School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements when schools need to close due to a lockdown, to protect all children, whether attending school or remaining at home, from harm and abuse.

Townley School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students and will ensure compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) which remains in force throughout the response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

The following safeguarding principles therefore remain unchanged:

- 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.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Maria Higgins	01354 638229	head@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Cheryl Chambers Jane Gathercole	01354 638229	office@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Headteacher	Maria Higgins	01354 638229	head@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Sue Rudge	01354 638229	chair@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Sue Rudge	01354 638229	chair@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Designated Teacher – Looked After Children	Maria Higgins	01354 638229	head@townley.cambs.sch.uk

Supporting Children In School

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

Townley School will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement protective measures including social distancing: [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

The school continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of Covid-19.

Townley School will continue to be a safe space for children to attend and flourish. **We recognise that for those children returning to school as vulnerable children or the children of critical workers will be challenging and staff will support children to adjust to the necessary changes to the school environment and routines.** Supporting pupil wellbeing will be at the forefront of our approach and school staff will seek to provide reassurance to pupils as we manage the transition period. Staff will talk to the children about the changes to the school day in an age appropriate manner, acknowledge and listen to pupil anxieties and support children to understand the altered routines.

Townley School recognises that the current circumstances may adversely affect the mental health of children and their parents. School staff have been briefed to look out for changes in behaviour or in a child's emotional state, which could range from being excessively clingy, fearful, withdrawn or aggressive as more children return to school. As always, pupil wellbeing is at the heart of our work, and school staff will seek to provide appropriate support for pupils both in school and where required from specialist services.

Townley School recognises that for some children, home may not be a safe space, and there may be children who are relieved to return to school. **School staff have been reminded of the need to respond sensitively to pupils' differing experiences.**

School staff have been asked to be particularly vigilant for signs and indicators that a child may have experienced/be experiencing abuse or neglect. School staff have been trained about how to handle a disclosure from a child, and understand that any safeguarding concerns, including those that relate to the period of school closure, must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputies) in the usual way.

Townley School will ask parents and carers to ensure that all personal details held by the school, such as emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. At this time, parents and carers will also be asked to advise the school if there are any changes regarding the child's welfare, health and wellbeing that it would help school to be made aware of. Where the school is aware of particular circumstances affecting a child or family, such as bereavement, a relationship breakdown, an incident of domestic violence, this will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis so that children can be best supported.

Supporting Children Not in School

Townley School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people.

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

Where the DSL has identified a child about whom there have been concerns but not currently open to social care, 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 will be recorded, as should a record of all contact made.

Townley School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

If we are unable to contact a child about whom there have been concerns after a reasonable number of attempts, we may need to seek further advice about safe and well checks.

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

Vulnerable children

All vulnerable children continue to be eligible to attend school full time during the period of **lockdown**.

Vulnerable children include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children 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 and it is determined, following risk assessment (risk assessment guidance), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued attendance. This might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the school and local authority's discretion

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those about whom there have been concerns but not currently open to Social Care.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Townley School 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: Maria Higgins

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a Social Worker will attend an education setting, unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable. 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 Townley School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Townley School and Social Workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Townley School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

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

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

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Townley School will notify their Social Worker.

Attendance monitoring

Townley School will continue to follow up with any parent/carer if they were expecting the child to attend and they subsequently do not attend school. Non-attendance will be followed up in line with the school's normal attendance protocols.

Townley School **will continue to inform Children's Social Care if a child with a Social Worker does not attend school either in person or remotely.**

Designated Safeguarding Lead Arrangements

Townley School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Maria Higgins

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s is/are: Cheryl Chambers and Jane Gathercole

We will endeavour to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not possible, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or email *or through our electronic recording system, MyConcern*

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

It is important that all Townley School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). All staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL will continue to engage with Social Workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which are being held remotely.

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. Townley School *uses an electronic recording system, MyConcern which staff are able to access from home.*

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 according to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. 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:
Sue Rudge

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, Townley School 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 (2020).

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.

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

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason the school have concerns about an individual, new checks will be obtained in the usual way.

Where Townley School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 183 to 188 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Townley School 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 179 of KCSIE.

Townley School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 143 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

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, Townley School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 – 171 in KCSIE.

Online safety in schools and colleges

Townley 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 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

School closures bring lots of challenges for both school staff and parents, and both are increasingly looking to the benefits of technology to continue delivering some form of learning experience for children.

As always, there are huge benefits to be gained from the appropriate use of technology, and accessing learning resources whilst at home is a great example of this. However, parents (and teachers) need to be aware of the potential risks that go along with this.

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

Peer on Peer Abuse

Townley School recognises that during any 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 Safeguarding and 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 and appropriate referrals made.

Radicalisation

School staff have received training about Prevent. The school has a Prevent Lead: Maria Higgins. All school staff are aware of the need to treat concerns about radicalisation as safeguarding concerns, and immediately share them with their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputies). DSLs continue to refer concerns about radicalisation to partner agencies, including Channel Panel which remains operational, in line with usual procedures.

The Department for Education has also published information here on [prevent management support for schools and colleges](#).

Children moving schools

As always, where children join our school from other settings we will seek confirmation from the DSL whether they have a Safeguarding File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely before the child begins at our school and a call made from our DSL or a deputy to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe.

In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed Social Worker and where relevant for the Virtual School Head.

Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded on our safeguarding system, will be securely copied to the placing school DSL and will be securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

This policy has been remotely approved by Governors on [date] and is available on the school website at [link](#)

With thanks to the Stowe Valley MAT Central Team for the use of their template