<u>COVID-19 addendum to Safeguarding Policy and Procedures</u>

<u>March 2020</u> – This addendum will be kept under review as circumstances continue to evolve.

<u>Key Contacts</u>

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<u>Department for Education:</u>

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, 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

Bishop Challoner will, as far as is reasonably possible, take a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow the school to satisfy itself that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening its approach to safeguarding or undermining the child protection policy.

During the enforced school closure, Bishop Challoner will try to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend school. The school will continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep the children safe. However, we acknowledge that we might consider safeguarding policy and process differently when compared to business as usual. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans.

This addendum to the child protection policy reflects:

- any updated advice received from the local 3 safeguarding partners
  The DSL will monitor the BCSP website and follow any guidance given. Currently reporting procedures have not been altered.

- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child

  Reporting procedures will continue as normal using email referrals. Immediate concerns should be referred via telephone to either the DSL or Deputy DSL. Mobile telephone numbers are displayed in the Dining Room. Bromcom MIS will continue to be used to log minor concerns using the Safeguarding Module. This then sends an automated email to the DSL & DDSL so they are aware of the concern and can action if appropriate.

- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns

  All staff on site have received training and are aware of reporting procedures.

- DSL (and deputy) arrangements

  The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. It is recognised this may not be possible, and where this is the case the DSL or deputy can be available to be contacted via phone. Contact details are displayed in all rooms and mobile telephone numbers are provided in the Registration Folder located in the Dining Room.

- the continued importance for school staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children

  Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend 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.

  The DSL will maintain a list of all vulnerable children and any other children that the school may have concerns for. The DSL has contacted all social workers and discussed arrangements for the children concerned. The DSL will remain in email communication with social workers for the duration of the closure.

- peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools are operating in a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

  The school's pastoral team will continue to be in communication with all pupils. During term time, tutors will be in daily communication with tutees and able to deal with any concerns that may arise. Heads of Sections are also available via email.

- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children.

  Any concerns relating to a member of staff should be made immediately to the Head Teacher. This may be made via email or telephone.

- any arrangements to support children the school are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition

  Those not meeting the "vulnerable" definition, were contacted prior to school closure and arrangements confirmed.

- what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed

  Regular information will be provided to all pupil and parents regarding how to stay safe on line. This will be via whole school letters from the Head Teacher and specific communications by staff. All communication via school email will continue to be monitored by the IT department and appropriate

filtering systems will remain in place. If new "online" resources are used by staff (eg Microsoft Teams), appropriate training and safety advice will be delivered to all staff and pupils.

<u>Attendance</u>

Local authorities and schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Schools and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools should also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend. To support the above, schools should 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. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the school or college should notify their social worker.

The department has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

The daily online attendance form will be completed by the allocated member of staff at the start of the am session. This is then emailed to kmontague@bcsweb.co.uk and saved to the S drive.

<u>Children moving schools</u>

It will be important for any school whose children are attending another setting to do whatever they reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change in school should be led and managed by the VSH with responsibility for the child. The receiving institution should be aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution should, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is). This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders should take responsibility.

Whilst schools must continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Further advice about information sharing can be found at paragraphs 76-83 of KCSIE.

<u>Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff</u>

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. If schools are recruiting new staff, they should continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of 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.

Schools must continue to follow their 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.

Schools should 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.

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

Mental health

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services.

Online safety in schools

It will be more important than ever that schools provide a safe environment, including online. Schools should 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 or recommended resources.

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.

All schools should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's staff behaviour policy.

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

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

> Child protection policy
> Staff code of conduct
> IT acceptable use policy
> Health and safety policy
> Online safety policy

Reviewer: S Woolaway   29th March 2020

Approved: T Collins 29th March 2020 (Chair of Trustees)

Approved: P Anderson 29th March 2020 (Head Teacher)

Next Review: March 2021 or earlier as circumstances continue to evolve.