

## **Addendum A: COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Sydenham School**

### **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 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 Sydenham School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our safeguarding arrangements during this period.

### **Key Contacts**

Role	Name	Contact Number	Contact Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Emma Quartey	07908 277599	<a href="mailto:e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk">e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk</a>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sid Robinson	07940 480977	<a href="mailto:s.robinson@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk">s.robinson@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk</a>
Headteacher	Gloria Lowe		<a href="mailto:g.lowe@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk">g.lowe@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk</a>
Safeguarding Governors	Maya Haimon Eilon Rebecca Manson-Jones		<a href="mailto:m.haimoneilon@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk">m.haimoneilon@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:r.mansonjones@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk">r.mansonjones@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk</a>
Chair of Governors	Sarah Armstrong		<a href="mailto:s.armstrong@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk">s.armstrong@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk</a>

### **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 parents/carers, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school 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.

Sydenham 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: Emma Quartey, Designated Safeguarding Lead. 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/carer does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Sydenham School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Sydenham School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. Sydenham School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed.

### **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. Sydenham School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. Sydenham School will then follow up on any student that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

To support the above, Sydenham School will, when communicating with parents/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, Sydenham School will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads**

Sydenham School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Emma Quartey. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Sid Robinson. When the DSL or Deputy DSL are not on site they will be available to be contacted via phone. In addition to this, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS 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.

It is important that all Sydenham School staff have access to a trained DSL and all staff have the DSL's telephone number. On each day staff on site will be made aware of who the senior leader is and how to speak to them should any safeguarding issues arise. The DSL and other key safeguarding professionals in the school 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 CPOMS, which can be done remotely. Any urgent safeguarding concerns of a child protection nature should be reported in person to the DSL via the telephone. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead directly. 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 via email and copy in Allison Costello, HR Manager.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID19 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, 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of Sydenham School'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, Sydenham 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 (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 Sydenham School 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. Sydenham 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 163 of KCSIE. Sydenham School 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 Sydenham School is aware, on any given day, which staff will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Sydenham School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **Online safety**

Sydenham 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.

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 Sydenham School code of conduct. Sydenham School 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 regarding safer working practice for remote teaching:

- Staff will not contact any student or family on your personal telephone, mobile or email account
- Staff will not arrange to meet a student in person at any time or location, no matter how brief
- Staff will not post anything to students
- When emailing a student, the centralised email monitoring address for the faculty will be copied in
- Maintain professional language in any email communication with students or parents
- If staff have any concerns about the content of any email communication from students they should forward it on to [e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, for example not pyjamas, 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.
- A parent or carer should always be present during the lesson
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time
- Language must be professional and appropriate
- Staff must only use platforms agreed by Sydenham School to communicate with students
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Parents will confirm their agreement with the above conditions. This may be via email or through a completed online form.

## **Supporting children not in school**

Sydenham School 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, the YLC and Inclusion staff will confirm a communication plan. Details of this plan will be saved into the Covid 19 Safeguarding Team, and a record of all contact made into CPOMS. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded in agreement with the DSL. Sydenham 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. The school will share safeguarding messages and signposting to relevant external agencies on its website and social media pages.

Sydenham School recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Teachers at Sydenham School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

### **Supporting children in school**

Sydenham School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students. Sydenham School 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 student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. Sydenham 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.

Sydenham 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS. Where Sydenham School has concerns about the impact of staff absence –such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders –this will be discussed with the Local Authority.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Sydenham School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within 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 CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

E Quartey  
30.03.20