

Child Protection & Safeguarding Children Policy - School closure arrangements



Black Firs School

Annex 1 - COVID-19 School closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Policy owner: **Peter Woods**

Date: **12th January 2022**

Date shared with staff: **17th January 2022**

1. Context

From September 2021 the Government's priority is for schools to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all children. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

However, in the extreme circumstances where a full or partial closure of School becomes necessary the following addendum of the Safeguarding Policy will come into force.

This addendum of the Black Firs Primary School Safeguarding & 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	Peter Woods	07764482349	pwoods@black-firs.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Martin Casserley	07808481118	mcasserley@black-firs.co.uk
Headteacher	Martin Casserley	07808481118	mcasserley@black-firs.co.uk
Trust Safeguarding Manager	Peter Kingdom	01270 661223	pkingdom@theoaksacademy.co.uk
Chair of Governors	Paul Horrocks	07730619435	p.d.horrocks@keele.ac.uk
Safeguarding Governor / Trustee	Paul Horrocks	07730619435	p.d.horrocks@keele.ac.uk

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/ Deputy DSL and Safeguarding team 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.

Black Firs 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: Peter Woods

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 increased 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 Black Firs will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Black Firs will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend School, including remotely if needed.

Attendance monitoring

School attendance is mandatory for all children of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by UKHSA or the DHSC, they should be recorded as code X (*not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus*). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (*illness*).

Education settings are required to complete the Educational Setting Status Form daily by 2pm. This should be completed even if the school is closed (*The form does not need to be submitted if the setting is closed for a planned holiday like half-term*).

Black Firs and social workers will agree with parents /carers whether children in need should be attending school – Black Firs will then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Black Firs 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.

How will this look at Black Firs?

To support the above, Black Firs 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, Black Firs will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Black Firs Primary school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Peter Woods

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Martin Casserley

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 via Teams - for example when working from home.

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. All staff working on that day will be made aware of the senior leader who is assuming responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to 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 or college.

It is important that all Black Firs staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy. On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL/Deputy DSL and Safeguarding team 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 verbally recording and making a written record of the concern.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access CPOMS from home, they should email the Peter Woods or Martin Casserley. This will ensure that the concern is received.

All 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 concerns 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: Paul Horrocks

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training will continue to be delivered virtually and is accessible to book via the ChESS Hub: www.chesshub.co.uk

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021). 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 Black Firs, 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, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, section 214 states that there is no requirement to obtain an Enhanced DBS certificate if the candidate has worked in a school in England in the past 3 months in a post:

- ✓ which brought the person regularly into contact with children
- ✓ to which the person was appointed on or after 12th May 2006 and which did not bring the person regularly into contact with children or young persons
- ✓ in another institution within the further education sector in England, or in a 16-19 academy, in a post which involved the provision of education which brought the person regularly into contact with children or young persons

Academies can use DBS from previous school **if** there is a gap of **less** than 3 months however there **MUST** still be a barred list check

However, Cheshire East advice is that all newly appointed staff are required to complete a new DBS application.

Where staff are moved /offer support to another school, the school should seek assurance from their home school that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy 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, Black Firs will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) (KCSIE).

Where Black Firs are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 287 to 294 of KCSIE 2021. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Black Firs 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 329 of KCSIE.

Black Firs will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 333 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, Black Firs will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 250 to 254 in KCSIE 2021.

Online safety in schools and colleges

Black Firs will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes using our online filtering system for internet access.

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.

We will advise parents about using an online filtering systems or parental controls on their home internet.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct.

Black Firs 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 specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with children
- ✓ Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held and overview of content. State whether any safeguarding issues were noted. If concerns were reported/observed record detail and the date/time these were shared with the DSL as per normal safeguarding reporting processes.

Supporting children not in school

Black Firs 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 safeguarding file /CPOMS, 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.

Black Firs 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 on its website, social media pages and send out communication to parents.

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

Supporting children in school

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

Black Firs 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 child ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Black Firs 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.

Black Firs 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 Black Firs has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Headteacher and the local authority.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Black Firs 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 our 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 must be shared with the DSL as per normal safeguarding reporting processes and actions recorded.