

# Extended School Closure Safeguarding Policy



ADVANTAGE  
S C H O O L S

**Approved by:** Trust Board

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# 1. The Policy

- 1.1 Advantage Schools (AS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment;
  - Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
  - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
  - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. We believe that all staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children.
- 1.2 We believe:
- All children have the *right* to be protected from harm as defined by Article 3 in the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child.
  - Children need to be safe and to feel safe in school in order to grow, learn and develop.
  - Schools can contribute to the promotion of children's welfare and the prevention of harm.
  - Children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.
- 1.3 AS will continue to pay regard to the Trust's safeguarding policy and statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). This policy complements these documents.
- 1.4 AS will follow the Department for Education's advice, which used to be in the "**Coronavirus (covid19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers**" of 27 March 2020 but was later withdrawn.
- 1.5 AS staff will:-
- Follow any updated advice received from local safeguarding partners; Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police and the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
  - Follow 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
  - Continue to work closely with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- 1.6 If staff have any safeguarding concerns about a child they should act upon it and report it immediately to the designated safeguarding leads or deputy safeguarding leads or in case of illness any member of the Senior Leadership Teams. This includes concerns regarding;
- peer on peer abuse – which the Safeguarding Team will deal with on a case by case basis according to need and circumstance
  - where staff and / or volunteers have concerns about a staff member and/or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the school will respond following the principles in part 4 of KCSIE)

## **2. School Closure - General Safeguarding**

### **2.1 In the event of the closure or partial closure of our schools, AS will:**

#### **For all pupils**

- Provide frequent and ongoing general update information, guidance and advice
- Advise as to how to make general contact with school (to be made clear through school website)
- Make key phone numbers available via the school website
- Ensure that staff reply as necessary, immediately where concerns are safeguarding issues

#### **For current and new child protection concerns**

- Make weekly phone contact with family home and / or social care
- Offer food support through school if possible
- Liaise with all necessary professionals as usual
- Attend any planned review meetings, offering remote attendance by phone in the case of imposed nationwide no social contact
- Use the schools' agreed system to record and report
- Keep an ongoing log of all contact made

#### **For vulnerable families**

- Make regular telephone contact
- Offer of food support through school where the child is eligible by application for Free School Meals
- Use the school's agreed system to record and report
- Keep an ongoing log of all contact made
- Make regular telephone contact where support from school is requested by the family
- Provide access to food through school catering or otherwise where the child is eligible by application for Free School Meals.

### **2.2 Teachers will:**

- Have contact details of necessary pupils through the school's remote access capability
- Not remove personal information of pupils from the premises (paper copies etc)
- Record and report any cause for concerns through the school's agreed system unless there is an immediate danger where they will make a safety risk call to the school's designated safeguarding lead.

### **2.3 Logistics**

- Food will be provided via supermarket vouchers or the equivalent if possible where a child is eligible by application for Free School Meals.
- Where necessary and if possible in terms of current government advice, home visits will be undertaken by two staff and this will be doorstep visits but children **MUST** be seen.
- Clear recording of families supported / attending and available for home visits and support
- Decisions on closure of school buildings must be with the agreement of the CEO.

## **3. Safeguarding children onsite**

- 3.1 When providing onsite care for children AS will have a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (SL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the

premises. In the case of a member of SLT being on site without the DSL or SL, a trained DSL or SL from the school or trust will be available to be contacted via phone or online video.

#### **4. Children moving schools**

- 4.1 AS will strongly discourage the movement of pupils from or to our schools during school closure. However, if a pupil does leave AS during this time staff will ensure that we provide any receiving institution with relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be regarded as especially important where children are vulnerable. If any new pupils join us we will conduct a robust induction process which includes ensuring that we receive all necessary relevant information, especially in respect of welfare and child protection.

#### **5. Safer recruitment / volunteers and movement of staff**

- 5.1 AS will act in accordance with best practice in respect of its working practices related to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), minimising the need for face-to-face contact where applicable.

#### **6. Remote learning - online safety away from school**

- 6.1 Whilst work is being set remotely, online, AS staff will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should will be dealt with as per our Safeguarding and Child protection policy and where appropriate referrals will still be made to children's social care and as required the police.
- 6.2 AS will consider the safety of our children working online. We will abide by the same principles as set out in our staff code of conduct with special emphasis placed on the acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil / student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The staff code of conduct applies equally to any existing and new online and distance learning arrangements.
- 6.3 AS will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection / GDPR requirements.
- 6.4 As described above AS will be in regular contact with all parents and carers. Those communications will also be used to remind and reinforce the importance of children being safe online. It will be especially important for our parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will asked to access and it will be made clear who from the school their child is going to be interacting with online.
- 6.5 AS will be mindful of the fact that parents and carers may choose to supplement our schools' online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In our communications with parents and carers, AS will emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation / individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children.
- 6.6 AS will suggest support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, this may include sites such as:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

## 7. Providing online advice for mental health and wellbeing

7.1 An essential part of AS online planning process will ensure children working online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school we will also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

7.2 Additionally AS will signpost children and their families to follow Public Health England's most recent [advice](#) to support **mental health** during the Coronavirus outbreak. This will include the updated Public Health England [Every Mind Matters](#) platform with specific advice on maintaining good mental wellbeing during the outbreak.

## 8. Further Information

8.1 Despite it being withdrawn, AS will be mindful of the DfE **COVID-19 on vulnerable children and young people** – UPDATED [guidance](#): 13, 20, 21, 22 and 27, sections primarily relating to:

- Vulnerable children and children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

This guidance provides clarity that where pupils with EHC plans can safely remain at home, they should. AS alongside the local authority will consider the needs of all children and young people with an EHC plan, alongside the views of their parents, and make a risk assessment for each child or young person.

8.2 AS will be also be mindful of any COVID-19 updated guidance about temporary closures and will immediately distribute any new government guidance.

- 'How are vulnerable children defined'
- 'Is it compulsory for parents of vulnerable children to accept their place offer'
- 'Will critical workers or parents of vulnerable children be penalised if they do not send their child to school'
- 'What should schools do if vulnerable children do not attend school' and
- 'What public health advice should schools follow.'