



Birchfield
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Safeguarding Guidance During COVID-19

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Approved by Trust Board
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Response to COVID-19

1. Context

From 4th January 2021 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 Birchfield Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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Key contacts

Role	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Zoe Thewlis	z.thewlis@birchfld.bham.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Yasmeen malik	y.malik@birchfld.bham.sch.uk
Head of School	Zoe Thewlis	z.thewlis@birchfld.bham.sch.uk
Trust Safeguarding Director	Kay Davis	k.davis@the-pact.co.uk
Chair of Trust Board	Sue Knottenbelt	s.knottenbelt@the-pact.co.uk
CEO/DCEO	Sajid Gulzar Phillipa Sherlock-Lewis	s.gulzar@the-pact.co.uk psl@the-pact.co.uk
Safeguarding Trustee	Maxine Rowley	m.rowley@the-pact.co.uk
Academy Committee Safeguarding Representative	Altaf Kazi	a.kazi@birchfld.bham.sch.uk

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and who would therefore benefit from continued full-time education, adopted children or special guardianship order, children living in temporary accommodation, young carers, children with difficulties engaging with remote education at home (due to lack of devices or quiet space to complete work), children at risk of poor mental health.

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 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 with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

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

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Leads know who our most vulnerable children are. Heads of School have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support with the agreement of the CEO.

Birchfield 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: Zoe Thewlis (Head of School).

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 does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and school will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Birchfield will encourage our vulnerable children to attend either key worker provision or remote learning, depending on their circumstances. **If children do not attend then the actions taken should be logged on CPOMs.**

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.

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

All children are expected to log onto remote learning with their class teacher, Monday to Friday during set times of the day (unless circumstances within the child's home prevent them from doing so). Any child that is unable or chooses not to attend remote learning lessons will receive a welfare call from a member of school staff. If staff are unable to make contact via email, letter or phone within a 3 day period, strong consideration should be made by a Designated Senior Leader to carry out a home visit.

HOW THIS WILL LOOK IN SCHOOL

To support the above, school will, when communicating with parents 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, school will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Birchfield school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Zoe Thewlis (Head of School).

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Yasmeen Malik (Deputy Head of School).

A trained DSL will be available on site during school hours.

DSLs will also update CPOMS 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 Birchfield staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL. On each day staff on site will be made aware of that person and how to speak to them.

The DSL 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.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMs from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 head of school immediately. This should be done verbally and followed up with an email.

Concerns around the Head of school should be directed to the CEO, Sajid Gulzar or Deputy CEO, Phillipa Sherlock-Lewis.

The Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training will continue to take place virtually using Teams.

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, or new volunteers enter school, 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

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, Birchfield 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 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.

Birchfield 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.

Birchfield 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

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, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Birchfield will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Online safety in schools and colleges

Birchfield 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 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 Staff Code of Conduct.

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

Supporting children not in school

Birchfield is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive Early Help/pastoral support in school, they should ensure that a robust plan of action is in place for that child.

Details of this contact must be recorded on CPOMS. Consideration will be made to offer the child a place in Key Worker provision.

The communication with children could include; remote contact, phone contact, mentoring video calls, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

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

Contact must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

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

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

- Birchfield 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.
- Any concerns regarding pupils welfare will be recorded onto CPOMS and strategies will be discussed at weekly Child Protection meetings. Incidents requiring more immediate action will be carried out with the agreement of the Head or Deputy Head of School.
- Children identified to benefit from receiving mentoring provision will have scheduled sessions carried out by a Learning Mentor. Children identified to benefit from receiving mentoring provision will have scheduled sessions carried out by a Learning Mentor. The sessions will take place over Teams video calls. All sessions will have an additional member of staff act as a witness for safeguarding purposes.
- For further guidance on No Contact Procedures please refer to annex A.

Supporting children in school

- Birchfield is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.
- Birchfield will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The CEO will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.
- Staff 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.
- Birchfield 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.
- Where the Head of school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as a Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the CEO/DCEO.

Home Visits

Where a visit would normally take place, if the risk of not visiting (for the child) is greater than the risk of visiting, then visits should take place with appropriate safety measures in place so far as is practicable, ensuring appropriate safety precautions are taken (hand washing, PPE, social distancing).

Peer on Peer Abuse

Birchfield school 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 the Safeguarding Policy.

The school will listen and work with the child, parents/carers and any multi- agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that pupil. Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made. Pupil risk assessments will be completed for any pupil posing a risk of harm to themselves, peers or staff.

Support from the Multi-Academy Trust

The Multi-Academy Trust provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSLs to carry out their role effectively - in some case this may involve the use of the Quick Call system With Browne Jacobson solicitors

This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

The MAT will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.

Annex A

Procedure for no contact

1. Identify children in phase who have had no contact with class teacher
2. Cross-reference with siblings – have their teachers been contacted?
3. Update monitoring spreadsheet.
4. Attempt to call from school number (not withheld) DSL in school to complete calls.

If answered, inform parents that they will receive a phone call weekly/daily, possibly from a withheld number. Check wellbeing and inform of remote learning etc.

5. Once all calls are made. No answer/number not working - highlight red. Add address. (from CPOMS/school cloud) AHT for phase to add address.

These children will be discussed at the CP meeting.

6. If contact is made (either via call, phone call to school or email) highlight yellow and date. UPDATE on call list so class teacher knows contact was made. DSL in school to complete.
7. Red highlighted. Post letter asking for contact. (put letter in envelope and write address – give to the office to post). Inform the school office and request a call to be made from the school landline. Letters and follow up calls to be made on day 2 of no contact.

Update monitoring sheet with date of letter sent.

8. If contact is made (either via call, phone call to school or email) highlight yellow and date. UPDATE call list so class teacher knows.
9. If contact is still not made within 3-5 days of initial phone call record on CPOMS. Home visit to be completed.
10. No contact made by home visit - Call CASS and request police to request safe and well check. Update monitoring sheet. Discuss at CP meetings.