

# COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS FOR

## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

### CONTEXT

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, parents/guardians had been asked to keep their children at home and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable. From March 2021, all pupils have returned to school, however some restrictions still remain in place.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. If a period of remote learning occurs again, for many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, mental, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

### PROCEDURES

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place/will be carried out to support families and monitor pupil safety:

- The contact details (*email addresses*) of St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit Safeguarding Team have been made available to all parents via the Safeguarding and Child Protection section of the school website.
- If the school goes into a period of remote learning, parents/guardians will be informed via Seesaw how to contact the Safeguarding Team (*via email*).
- Teachers will provide online learning via Google Classroom with strict procedures in place to minimise risk.
- Online safety information will be sent to parents/guardians at the beginning of a period of remote learning via Seesaw.
- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the Education Authority Child Protection Support Service, the principal and/or teachers may make phone calls to parents/guardians. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents/guardians. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- If a member of staff is using their personal telephone to contact parents/guardians, their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff.
- Responses to parents/guardians' emails will be via the staff's C2k email addresses only.

### ONLINE SAFETY

In order to ensure the safety of all involved, the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using Google Meet:

- Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleepwear/inappropriate clothing during the session.
- Pupils cannot participate from a bedroom.
- The teacher/Principal arranges the session and shares this only with pupils and parents/guardians.

- Pupils/parents/guardians must agree not to share their login details and password for Google Drive/Classroom/Meet with anyone else.
- Parental/Guardian consent will be sought before their child attends online sessions.
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be acted upon as it would be in school following the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

If there is a breach to any of these procedures e.g. pupil gives the password to someone else who joins the group, the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.

### **HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN**

We always welcome parents/guardians asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's or another child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental/guardian concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

In the case of remote learning, parents/guardians will be able to contact the Principal and class teachers via Seesaw messaging. In addition, the Safeguarding Team can be contacted via email. Email addresses can be found on St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit website.

All members of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the Safeguarding Team. In this case, a decision can be made as to how best to provide help following the procedures outlined in St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### **HOW A PUPIL CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN**

We know that while many pupils will be enjoying their time at home and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and those who will miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our pupils continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our pupils as well as signpost them to other agencies.

At the beginning of a period of remote learning, teachers will use the Google Classroom Stream to share with pupils how they can contact them via Google Classroom's Stream and Google Classroom's comments if they need to raise an issue or express a concern. Teachers will also provide information on how to contact Childline. Reminders will be posted regularly on the Google Classroom Stream during the period of remote learning.

### **HOW CONTACT WITH PUPILS WILL BE MAINTAINED**

We will use the following means to connect with pupils and maintain contact throughout remote learning:

- Use of Google Classroom's Stream and comments tool.
- Use of Mote voice notes on Google Classroom.
- Weekly assembly via Google Meet with Mrs Milner.
- Via the child's parent/guardian on Seesaw or by a phone call.

### **IF SCHOOL IS OPEN DURING COVID-19 CLOSURES**

If school is open for vulnerable pupils and key workers' children, the school will adhere to the Education Authority and Public Health Agency guidance.

If our school is part of a cluster of schools which are open, we will share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Teacher and/or Principal. In accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures, this information will be shared on a need to know basis.

In all events, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

### **USEFUL CONTACTS, AGENCIES AND LINKS**

- **St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit Safeguarding Team**  
Principal and Chair of Safeguarding Team: Mrs B.Milner [bmilner488@c2kni.net](mailto:bmilner488@c2kni.net)  
Chairperson of Board of Governors: Dr A. McCullough [amccullough88@btinternet.com](mailto:amccullough88@btinternet.com)  
Governor of Safeguarding Team: Mrs M. Addison [mary-addison@hotmail.com](mailto:mary-addison@hotmail.com)  
Designated Teacher: Mrs S.McCutcheon [smccutcheon@c2kni.net](mailto:smccutcheon@c2kni.net)  
Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs O.Martin [omartin362@c2kni.net](mailto:omartin362@c2kni.net)  
Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs A.Drayne [adrayne338@c2kni.net](mailto:adrayne338@c2kni.net)
- NSPCC  
Childline 08001111  
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>  
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- CEOP-Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command  
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>
- Safer Schools App
- CAMHS-Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service  
<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- UK Safer Internet Centre  
<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit Safeguarding Team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the Covid-19 pandemic in line with Departmental guidance and advice.