# GCH Safeguarding Policy Update During Covid-19 Situation

**Date created:** Monday 30th March 2020
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*This policy will be reviewed according to Government guidance and as this situation develops.*

*This policy has been created as per the guidance from the following Government website:*
*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers*

**The way we are operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:**
- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone at school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy will be available to contact via phone and email
- it continues to be essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

## This Policy will take into account:
- any updated advice received from The Department for Education-Gov.UK
- 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
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns
- DSL (and deputy) arrangements
- the continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools and colleges are operating in a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform any revised approach)
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835733/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2019.pdf **Page 65 onwards**
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how GCH responds to any such concerns) **Page 53 onwards of KSCIE.**
- any arrangements to support children we are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition
- what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending GCH, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed
  It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

## Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) – updated again in January 2021

The DSL for The Grey Coat Hospital continues to be Sandra Young (Senior Leader), with her deputies being Julie Di Rocco (KS3) and Cecily Cole & Angela Loudon. (KS4) and Ian Mc Cartney (KS5)

The DSL will continue to liaise with Social Services and other external agencies regarding any safeguarding concerns.

All staff have been given the mobile numbers for the DSL and Deputies and they can be contacted on these whilst the school is closed.

Staff can continue to log safeguarding concerns on the secure Edukey platform. These will continue to be monitored by the DSL, Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team.

## Supporting Vulnerable Children

The Government definition of a vulnerable child is 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.'*

**The Grey Coat Hospital is supporting vulnerable children through the following means:**

- All of these children were offered places in school whilst the school was open 23-27th March.  Places were again offered to students from January 5th 2021.
- All parents of EHCP children were contact to ascertain what support they needed during this time. They will receive weekly phone calls from the SENDCo, who is also available via email to answer any queries that they have.
- All children with a social worker will also continue to be contacted by their Head of Year/the DSL/the SENDCo on a weekly basis.
- Social workers have all been given the DSL's mobile number to communicate any concerns.
- Where meetings were due to take place, these can take place virtually.
- Children who did not fall under the government definition of "vulnerable", but for whom we believed attending school to be a protective factor were also offered a place at school and will also be contacted on a weekly basis by their Head of Year.
- Fortnightly Inclusion meetings for all Key Stages will continue to take place remotely, with minutes uploaded to Edukey for relevant children.
- Some vulnerable students' parents have been provided staff mobile numbers of the SENDCo, DSL/other members of SLT to be able to contact whilst school is not open.
- ICT equipment was given to any vulnerable child who needed it.
- From 1st June, we reopened and invited in key worker students, vulnerable students and also students who we knew were vulnerable because they were struggling with their workload so that they could receive the support of being back in school and having the routine. School resumed for the new academic year from 1st September.  The school followed the government guideline regarding track and trace for any individual who tested positive for Covid-19. In January 2021 the same group including identified students in Years 7 & 12 we added to the list
- Parent(s)/carer(s) of children who have free school meals were set vouchers covering the cost of the daily school meal from March 2020 onwards.  This has again been sent and has been backdated to the partial closure of the school from 5Th January 2021.

## Attendance

GCH supplied the DfE with their attendance statistics during the partial closure in the two periods of school closure in 2020 and 2021.

Attendance is closely monitored and any students who were due to attend but who did not turn up were contacted to find out why.

All students' attendance during this period of closure will be coded as a Y code, following on from Government instructions.

## Children moving schools and colleges

If a child needs to move school during this time, then their needs will be communicated fully to the host school and contact numbers for key members of staff at GCH provided.

## 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. If we recruit any new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of 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 and this will be taken into consideration.

Although we are currently closed, if we need to use volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE.

Regarding members of the GCH workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school or college to support the care of children. The type of setting on the DBS check, for example a specific category of school, is not a barrier. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in a school setting. The receiving institution should risk assess as they would for a volunteer (see above). Whilst the onus remains on schools and colleges to satisfy themselves that someone in their setting has had the required checks, including as required those set out in part 3 of KCSIE, in the above scenario this can be achieved, if the receiving institution chooses to, via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

GCH will continue to follow our 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.

GCH 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. The current guidance from the Government is that all referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered. Where referrals on serious safeguarding matters are received and it is deemed that there is a public interest in doing so consideration will be given as to whether an interim prohibition order (IPO) should be put in place. The TRA will continue to progress all cases but will not schedule any hearings at the current time.

We were fully aware which staff are on site, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, we continued to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## Children and online safety away from The Grey Coat Hospital

Whilst school is partially closed, 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 were aware that some students did not have access to the Internet or a computer, we have supplied all students with laptops who have requested one and given routers to enable them WIFI access.

*Our online offer to students has been as follows:*

- Staff have been instructed to teach remote live lessons using Microsoft Teams following the normal time table structure.  Students receive assemblies and PSHCE lessons. Students continue to have remote sessions with the school counsellor, MIND and other outside supportive agencies.

   Students were sent the following information regarding expectations for live lessons

*'You will be able to see your teacher's face, he/she will see yours as your own camera must be switched on with the microphone muted. See the attached timetable. Lessons are shorter than the usual 45 minutes as we recognise you need to take short breaks.*

*Please ensure that you meet the expectations below:*

- *Remote live contact needs to take place in an environment that is quiet, safe and free from distractions in a communal area of your house (not your bedroom) for safeguarding reasons*
- *Be on time for your session, it is compulsory that you attend. We will chase up non-attendance by contacting your parents*

- *Be dressed appropriately for learning as you would be at school (no pyjamas for instance) to ensure you are prepared for a day's work. We do not expect you to wear uniform. ( For years 7-11 You will be expected to dress as for a non-uniform day- no makeup, jewellery in line with school policy/diary.)*
- *Remain attentive during sessions without distractions, this includes not using media devices and applications other than those you are working on (as you would in a usual classroom setting)*
- *Follow the instructions of your teachers in how to use Microsoft Teams meeting, particularly the chat section*
- *Interact patiently and respectfully with your teachers and peers*
- *Make ensure you end the session as soon as the teacher indicates to do so'*

- We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.
- Staff have been asked to copy their Head of Department into all correspondence with students so that work set can be monitored and quality assured
- We have been taking advice from the guidance issued by the following websites:
  - https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/safe-remote-learning/
  - https://static.lgfl.net/LgflNet/downloads/digisafe/Safe-Lessons-by-Video-and-Livestream.pdf

*The following links will be sent to parents to support them in monitoring their child's online behaviour:*
- Childline - for support
- UK Safer Internet Centre - to report and remove harmful online content
- CEOP - for advice on making a report about online abuse
  We will be in regular contact with parents and carers and during these communications we will reinforce the importance of children being safe online. We will ensure that parents and carers are aware of what their child is being asked to do online, including the sites they will asked to access and be clear who from GCH (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents and carers may choose to supplement our online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors.

In our communications with parents and carers, we 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.

*We will signpost support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online through the following organisations:*
- 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