

Drumahoe Primary School



Annex to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Covid-19 Arrangements

Context

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak of Covid-19.

Despite the changes, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT in line with our established safeguarding procedures.**

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, spending increased time at home will have been an additional challenge, and for some, an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, 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 that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following advice from government and local agencies.

We continue to adhere to government guidelines and keep abreast of any updated advice from the Education Authority Child Protection Support Service.

Procedures

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Teacher is: **Mrs Hegarty.**

The Deputy Designated Teachers are: **Mr McMaster and Mrs Johnston.**
Mrs Johnston acts as DT for SEN, ASC & LSC.

The school's approach ensures the DT or a DDT is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance that this is not possible, a member of the Senior Management Team will advise they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role.

Staff will continue to follow Child Protection procedures and advise the safeguarding team immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Should a child, in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will take advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

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

Attendance

Staff will continue to follow our Attendance Policy and Procedures.

The DT will attempt a range of methods to contact the parents/carers of children whose absence is causing concern. A risk assessment will be undertaken if necessary to consider managing the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child.

The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

The DT will liaise with the Education Welfare Service if contact proves impossible with children at home.

Blended Learning

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety in the event of **pupils having to spend time at home in the event of the school having to close for a period ('Lockdown') or a pupil having to self-isolate**:

- The school email address and main school phone number have been made available to all parents;
- Teachers will provide online learning via 'Seesaw' and 'Google Classroom' with procedures in place to minimise risk.

Prolonged School Closure

In the event of a **prolonged school closure ('Lockdown')** we have put in place specific arrangements:

- Regular check-ins will be made by the DT with vulnerable families (children with social workers, Looked After Children, children who have been referred to Education Welfare). Parents will be asked to let us know if they are managing or if they need any support and they will be signposted to the appropriate service e.g. school counsellor, Family Support Hub;
- Regular check-ins will be made with parents of children with Special Educational Needs and. Any concerns will be followed up by the SENCO and/or the ASC/LSC Teacher(s).
- The DT will still liaise regularly with Social Services and Education Welfare and attend case conferences and LAC reviews via Zoom and Skype if required.

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 video conferencing or platforms recommended by and available via C2K:

- Teachers and pupils should dress appropriately during the session;
- Pupils cannot participate from a bedroom;
- The teacher arranges the session and password/PIN and shares this only with pupils and their parents/guardians;
- Pupils must agree not to share the password/PIN with anyone else;
- Parents /Guardians will be informed of their child's expected participation in Google Classroom prior to first use. Pupils and parents/guardians will also be reminded of acceptable use at this point;
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school;
- 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/PIN to someone else who joins the group, the teacher should immediately terminate the session/remove those individuals and advise the Principal.

How a parent can raise an issue or express a concern

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

Any member 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.

If school is open during COVID-19 closures

If school is open for vulnerable pupils and key worker children, the school will adhere to the EA guidance.

In any event, 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.

How a child can raise a concern

We understand that while many children will be enjoying their time at home during a Covid-19 closure and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our children:

- Interaction via Google Classroom and/or Seesaw;
- Respond (DT) to any concerning comments our children may post on social media;
- All our children, parents and guardians will be able to contact school via the SCHOOL'S 'Info Account' info@drumahoe.londonderry.ni.sch.uk or their teacher's C2K email address (already communicated);
- Children will be made aware of the Childline phone number.

Other Agencies

- CEOP/Thinkuknow
- Childnet
- Safer Schools App

SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: –

Gateway 028 9050 7000 (ask for the Duty Social Worker)

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Safeguarding Team will review and amend these arrangements regularly in line with Departmental guidance and advice.