

Annex 1

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Middlewich Primary School

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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 vulnerable children and those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

This addendum of the Middlewich Primary School Child Protection and Safeguarding policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

2. Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs V Williams	School 01606 652321	williamsv@middlewichpri.cheshire.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Mrs C Bertoni	07529220842	bertonic@middlewichpri.cheshire.sch.uk
Headteacher	Ms S La Porta	School 01606 652321 07529220954	head@middlewichpri.cheshire.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Mr R Bunn		chair@middlewichpri.cheshire.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor / Trustee	Mrs A Sumner		chair@middlewichpri.cheshire.sch.uk

3. Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include 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.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they can safely continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they need to have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services.

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

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy DSL and Safeguarding team know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Middlewich Primary School will continue to work with and support children's social workers, the Virtual School Head for cared for and previously cared for children and other support workers. The lead person/s for this will be: Vicky Williams/Sandie La Porta

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 increased 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 Middlewich Primary School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Middlewich Primary School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

4. Attendance monitoring

Once it has been established that specific vulnerable children need to be in school Middlewich Primary School will follow up on any pupil that should be attending, who does not. Follow-up will take place with any parent or carer who has arranged for their child(ren) to be in school where they subsequently do not attend.

For all other children, those children being educated virtually, a register of engagement will be taken and follow up will take place for those children who do not engage and the parent has not explained their non-engagement.

To support the above, Middlewich Primary School will, when communicating with parents/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, Middlewich Primary School will notify their social worker/identified Lead Professional.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Middlewich Primary School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site at all times during the working day. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This will include updating and managing access to safeguarding records and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and, as required, liaising with children's social workers/other key workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college, and to ensure that the school are represented at all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

All staff will be made aware of the person who is assuming responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site on any given day.

6. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they will continue to follow the process outlined in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, this includes verbally recording and making a written record of the concern.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access the Record of Concern Form or CPOMS from home, they should email the DSL, Deputy DSL **and** the headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

All 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 concerns to the headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Rob Bunn, chair@middlewichpri.cheshire.sch.uk

7. Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training will continue to be delivered virtually and is accessible to book via the ChESS Hub: www.chesshub.co.uk

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021). 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, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Where staff are moved/offer support to another school, the school should seek assurance from their home school that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

8. 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, Middlewich Primary School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)'.

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.

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

Where Middlewich Primary School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Middlewich Primary School 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.

Middlewich Primary School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per 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

We ensure that we are 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; we continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date at all times.

9. Online safety in schools and colleges

Middlewich Primary School 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.

10. 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 Child Protection 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 code of conduct. Middlewich Primary School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only (exceptions occur at the headteacher's discretion and in line with a separate risk assessment).
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred if possible.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held and an overview of content. Staff should report all safeguarding concerns. If concerns were reported/observed, record detail and the date/time these were shared with the DSL as per normal safeguarding reporting processes.

11. Supporting children not in school

Middlewich Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children whether they are attending school or not.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on the safeguarding file/CPOMS, as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Middlewich Primary School and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan 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, social media pages and send out communication to parents.

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

12. Supporting children in school

Middlewich Primary School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Middlewich Primary School 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.

Middlewich Primary School 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. This will be bespoke to each child and will be fully recorded.

Where Middlewich Primary School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or First Aiders – we will discuss them and establish interim measures, notifying key people in CE as necessary.

13. Allegations of Abuse

Middlewich Primary School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of abuse and supporting victims.

Should we receive such a report staff will follow the principles as set out in KCSIE and those outlined within our Safeguarding and Child Protection 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 young person.

Concerns must be shared with the DSL as per normal safeguarding reporting processes and actions recorded.