

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy COVID-19 Annex January 2021

Birkenhead High School Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This commitment remains the same in the difficult circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whether the school is open to all pupils, partially open or closed with Guided Home Learning in operation, the principles and practices of the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the school's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and the *GDST Safeguarding Procedures* (including the Code of Conduct) will continue to apply. In order to ensure the safety and welfare of children, the school will also adhere to the latest DfE guidance, together with other relevant guidance and advice as this is published and updated.

In practice, the following procedures will also apply:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

There will always be a nominated DSL or deputy DSL available, either on site or contactable by phone or online video. Where a DSL or deputy is not on site a senior leader will take responsibility for safeguarding on site. The DSL will oversee the safeguarding aspects of the return to school, and advise on relevant policy and procedures.

The name of the DSL is Klaire Costello

Deputies - Gwendolyn Saccheri and [Maryanne Ramsbottom](#)

Pupils or parents with a safeguarding concern should contact the school by telephone on 0151 652 5777 or on safeguarding@birkhs.gdst.net

Ensuring safety in school

The school will continue to use relevant guidance published by the Government, Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive to inform arrangements and decision making to ensure the school remains safe for pupils and staff. Safeguarding will be a key consideration of all risk assessments carried out. Appropriate staff will always be on site to maximise safety, and everyone on site should know how to contact the DSL(s), deputy DSL(s) and First Aiders. The school will maintain a record of all staff/volunteers on site on any given day.

Attendance

Attendance issues may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns. Pupils, both on site and learning remotely, will be registered and the school will follow up on any absence. Where a vulnerable child does not attend, the school will also notify their

social worker. No one with COVID-19 symptoms should come into school for any reason.

Online Learning

The school will provide a safe environment for online learning. All pupils and staff must remind themselves of and adhere strictly to the Acceptable Use Agreements, Online Safety Policy, and Guided Home Learning Annex.

Mental Health and Pastoral Support

We recognise that the ongoing impact of the pandemic could have a significant effect on the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the school community, and there will be a particular focus on pastoral care as a consequence. The school's programme will provide pupils with support to help them to respond to issues linked to coronavirus, improve their mental and physical health, and maintain social connections. Staff will remain vigilant for signs of safeguarding risk or emotional distress.

Pastoral concerns will be addressed initially by the class teacher or tutor, who may involve the pastoral/inclusion team depending on the nature of the issue.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the DSL. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern **immediately and without delay**. The revised statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020* highlights the fact that mental health problems can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern.

Where a pupil is known to the school or newly identified as being in need, the DSL will ensure that a communication and support plan is in place for that child. This may include email, phone or online video contact. The plan will be reviewed regularly and should concerns arise the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

All safeguarding and pastoral concerns will be logged on CPOMS in the usual manner, and information will be shared appropriately so that all relevant staff are aware of the support needs or child protection issues of the children in their care. The school will liaise with parents and carers wherever possible to ensure pastoral records remain up to date and staff are aware of any changes to welfare, health or wellbeing before a child returns to school.

If children move between schools, welfare and child protection information will be shared as required.

Vulnerable Children

The school will continue to work with and support children's social workers and local authority to help protect vulnerable children. This will include liaising with relevant providers and ensuring that vulnerable children and those on the edge of receiving social care can attend school where appropriate, or are accessing education and pastoral support if they are unable to attend school. If instructed to close on public health advice, the school will contact the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children.

Working in partnership

We continue to work closely with our local safeguarding partners and other local agencies.

If you feel a child is at risk, contact the Wirral Integrated Front Door on 0151 606 2008 or out of office hours on 0161 677 6557.

In an emergency always call 999.