

## COVID–19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Westfields Junior School

### Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and schools were asked to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response who could not be safely cared for at home.

Schools and all childcare providers were also asked to provide care for children who are considered to be vulnerable.

This addendum of the Westfields Junior School’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

1. **Key Contacts**
2. **Vulnerable Children**
3. **Attendance Monitoring**
4. **Designated Safeguarding Lead**
5. **Reporting a Concern**
6. **Safeguarding Training and Induction**
7. **Safer Recruitment**
8. **Online Safety**
9. **Supporting Children not in School**
10. **Supporting Children in School**
11. **Peer on Peer Abuse**

### 1. Key Contacts

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact No.</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Jo Redman	01252 408218 07557 851105	<a href="mailto:headteacher@westfields-jun.hants.sch.uk">headteacher@westfields-jun.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Jo Wilson	01252 408218	<a href="mailto:jo.wilson@westfields-jun.org.uk">jo.wilson@westfields-jun.org.uk</a>
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Rob Medwell	01252 408218	<a href="mailto:rob.medwell@westfields-jun.org.uk">rob.medwell@westfields-jun.org.uk</a>
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Alison Clarke	01252 408218	<a href="mailto:alison.clarke@westfields-jun.org.uk">alison.clarke@westfields-jun.org.uk</a>
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Redman	01252 408218 07557 851105	<a href="mailto:headteacher@westfields-jun.hants.sch.uk">headteacher@westfields-jun.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Paul Nothard	07970 292932	<a href="mailto:paul.governor@westfields-jun.org.uk">paul.governor@westfields-jun.org.uk</a>
<b>Safeguarding Governor</b>	Paul Nothard	07970 292932	<a href="mailto:paul.governor@westfields-jun.org.uk">paul.governor@westfields-jun.org.uk</a>
<b>LLP</b>	Stuart Adlam	01962 876207 07738119295	<a href="mailto:stuart.adlam@hants.gov.uk">stuart.adlam@hants.gov.uk</a>
<b>LADO</b>	Barbara Piddington Mark Blackwell	01962 876364	<a href="mailto:Barbara.piddington@hants.gov.uk">Barbara.piddington@hants.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Mark.blackwell@hants.gov.uk">Mark.blackwell@hants.gov.uk</a>
<b>Early Help Hub</b>		01252796324 0300 555 1384	<a href="mailto:hartandrushmoor.earlyhelp@hants.gov.uk">hartandrushmoor.earlyhelp@hants.gov.uk</a>

## **2. 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 Care 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 (CiN) 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 need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children with EHC Plans can safely remain at home.

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs 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. Westfields Junior School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working and supporting children's social workers and the Local Authority Virtual School Head (VSH) for looked after and previously looked after children. The lead person for this is Alison Clarke (Designated Teacher).

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 risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is vulnerable, the social worker and DSLs will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Westfields Junior School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Westfields Junior School will encourage our vulnerable children to attend school, including remotely if needed. We will maintain regular contact with the parents of our vulnerable children. We will complete a weekly return to the Local Authority to inform them which children have attended school and any reasons for non-attendance as well as ensure that any updated advice or arrangements from the Local Authority are followed and shared as appropriate.

## **3. Attendance Monitoring**

Local Authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. Westfields Junior School will agree with parents whether vulnerable children should be attending school, and will then follow up on any pupil that we were expecting to attend, who does not as usual attendance procedures. To support the above, confirmation of emergency contact numbers and any additional contact numbers where they are available have been sought. In all circumstances where a vulnerable pupil does not take up their place at school or discontinues, Westfields Junior School will notify the social worker.

## **4. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Westfields Junior School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and three Deputy DSLs. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Jo Redman

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Jo Wilson, Rob Medwell and Alison Clarke

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL or DDSL available on site. Where this is not the case, a trained DSL or DDSL will be available to be contacted via telephone.

Where a trained DSL or DDSL is not on-site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing

access to our online safeguarding management system, MyConcern and liaising with the offsite DSL or DDSL and, as required, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to vulnerable children and / or to carry out statutory assessments at school.

It is important that all staff at Westfields Junior School continue to have access to a trained DSL or DDSL. Staff on site will be made aware of who that person is each day and how to contact them. The DSL will continue to engage with social workers and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## **5. Reporting a Concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Child Protection Policy, this includes logging information on MyConcern, which can be done remotely. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access MyConcern from home, they should email/call the DSL.

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 this 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. Any concerns about the headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors Paul Nothard.

## **6. Safeguarding Training and Induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID-19 virus. For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL or DDSL who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL or DDSL even if they miss their refresher training. All existing school staff have received safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

If any new staff are recruited to Westfields Junior School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. Volunteers will not be used during this closure.

Although unlikely, 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## **7. 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, Westfields Junior School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2019).

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance of standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face to face contact. Westfields Junior School will not utilise volunteers during the closure to minimise risk. Westfields Junior 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. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

Westfields Junior School 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff will be in the school and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Westfields Junior School will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE (2019).

## **8. Online Safety**

Westfields Junior School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place at all times.

### **Children and Online Safety Away from School**

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs that 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 our Code of Conduct, Staff Handbook and with consideration of our Acceptable Use Policy. Westfields Junior School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection / GDPR requirements.

We are not promoting live streaming as it may cause difficulties for some families and result in inequalities for some of our pupils. Staff may choose to record themselves reading a story or modelling key skills such as handwriting. The following should be considered:

- Staff must wear suitable clothing
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas and there should be a plain background
- Staff must only use our school platforms (email, website and blogs) to communicate with pupils (with the exception of welfare calls which will be made from school and recorded on the class lists)
- Language must be professional and appropriate

## **9. Supporting Children Not in School**

Westfields Junior School is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all our pupils. 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 (eg. ELSA), we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child. The communication plan will include regular telephone contact and a record of all contact will be kept.

Westfields Junior School and the DSLs will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of all communication. Arrangements will be reviewed fortnightly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate. Westfields Junior School has links to safeguarding information on the school website.

Westfields Junior School recognises that school is a protective factor for children, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents and families. All teachers at Westfields Junior School need to be aware of this in setting pupils' work where they are at home –

all year groups should follow the expectations set by SLT and monitored by the Curriculum Coordinator. Teachers should be supported by the DSL as usual.

### **10. Supporting Children in School**

Westfields Junior School is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all our pupils and as such, it will continue to be a safe place 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.

Westfields Junior Schools 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 COVID-19. We 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 and any concerns are recorded on MyConcern. If any concerns arise about the impact of staff absence – such as our DSL, DDSL's or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Local Authority.

### **11. Peer on Peer Abuse**

Westfields Junior School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE (2019) and those outlined within our Child Protection Policy. We will listen to and work with any child, parents / carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that child. Concerns and actions must be recorded on MyConcern and appropriate referrals made.