



## Hillcross Primary School

### Child Protection and Safeguarding Addendum

#### **Context**

In response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, this is an addendum to the Hillcross Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. Most children are no longer in a school setting and staff numbers have been affected by the outbreak.

Hillcross Primary school, as far as is reasonably possible, takes a whole institution approach to safeguarding. This will allow us to satisfy ourselves that any new policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are not weakening our approach to safeguarding or undermining our child protection policy.

This additional policy will be under constant review as guidance and information will change. It should be read alongside the existing Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Department of Education guidance issued to all schools on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The Government ordered all schools to close for the majority of pupils during the outbreak; however, children of Key/Critical Workers and those who are “vulnerable” would still be required to attend. A list of those Key/ Critical workers can be found [here](#).

**Vulnerable children** are defined as:

- 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 should be risk-assessed by their school or college in consultation with the local authority (LA) and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college 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 and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

#### **Safeguarding Priority**

During these challenging times, the safeguarding of all children at our school – whether they are currently at home or in attendance – continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online.



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### Local Authority Role

Merton Council have issued emergency arrangements during this lockdown period. Details of which are:

- The **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** will continue to function as normal.
- **First Response** will continue to run as a Duty Team for incoming work.
- **Family Wellbeing Duty** will be set up to respond to open and high need families in their service to prevent escalation to social care. The team will also offer parenting guidance and advice via phone support to the families of all children open to Children's Social Care.
- A new **Central Duty Team** will undertake visits for High Risk children.

### Attendance

Schools/colleges and social workers should be agreeing with families whether children in need should be attending education provision – and the school or college should then follow up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. To support the above, schools and colleges should take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to 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 college, or discontinues, the school or college should notify their social worker.

Schools are expected to report daily attendance figures to the Department for Education by 12 noon every day. Detailed guidance is [here](#). Schools are also expected to send vulnerable children information to the Education Welfare Service using the **Emergency Attendance Monitoring Group** in USO-FX.

### Designated Safeguarding Lead

Hillcross Primary School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and three Deputy DSLs.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Lisa Francis, Headteacher.
- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Helen Beckett (DHT), Tanja Doig (AHT) and Lee Christy (AHT).

It is recommended to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone.

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 might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, for example My Concern or CPOMS and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

It is important that all school named staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site are made aware of who that person is via the rota. Any changes to this are made on the Google Noticeboard.



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The DSLs will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely or may be virtual.

If the DSL is nearing or is over the 2 yearly statutory update, for these emergency provisions, that DSL may continue in their duty.

Some schools may be joining hubs or clusters and therefore a DSL from any one of the schools can be the named DSL for that hub/ cluster.

If a school does not have a DSL due to sickness or staff in self-isolation, assistance can be sought from a nearby school to provide DSL cover. If that is the case they must notify Ian McGraw, Safeguarding in Schools Officer (email: [Ian.McGraw@merton.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.McGraw@merton.gov.uk)), of that new arrangement.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should follow the procedure outlined in the main Child Protection Policy by reporting to the DSL or Deputy DSL. The concern must be reported immediately and without delay.

If any member of staff has a concern about an adult working in the school, they must immediately inform the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors must be informed.

### **Safeguarding Training and Induction**

All current school staff have received safeguarding training and have read Part One and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Our DSL and deputy DSLs have all had recent full or refresher DSL training.

Any new staff recruited during these emergency procedures will require safeguarding induction in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 which includes receiving:

- Part 1 of KCSiE 2019
- A copy of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy including this addendum,
- A copy of the Staff Code of Conduct/ Staff Behaviour Policy
- A copy of the School Behaviour Policy, and
- The Safeguarding response to Children who are missing education.

The induction will also include a meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to understand his/ her role.

All staff will require any safeguarding updates during the emergency period.

### **Safer Recruitment including the movement of staff**

It is essential that all staff and volunteers who work in the school are subject to safer recruitment processes and vetting and this includes ensuring that unsuitable people are not permitted to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. During this emergency period schools will continue to follow their policies and procedures set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and also part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance to minimise the need for face to face contact.



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We will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process for volunteers as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

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/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, we will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE 2019.

All staff who may be working together in a hub/ cluster will not be required to undergo a further DBS check. If staff from another setting attend the school site then, in line with government guidance, we will not undertake any additional safeguarding checks if the setting providing those staff confirm that:

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check and, that in the opinion of that setting, nothing resulted from those checks that provided any cause for concern
- there are no safeguarding investigations into the conduct of that individual
- the individual remains suitable to work with children.

The SCR for the hub/ cluster lead school must include all new staff who are transferred from other schools.

### **Online Safety**

We will continue to provide a safe environment for children at school both on and offline. Pupils will not be allowed to use personal computers, iPads and Chrome Books without supervision.

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguard and support children. Staff who interact with children online will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a child, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

Our staff will follow the process for online safety set out in the Online Safety policy. The starting point for online teaching should be that the same principles as set out in the school's Staff Code of Conduct and the Staff Acceptable Use Policy. These include acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy applies equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

Personal communication between teachers and pupils will only be made via Google Classroom which allows communication to be carefully managed.

We recognise the need to be particularly aware of online learning tools and systems in line with privacy and data protection/ GDPR requirements. We are only using existing platforms and will inform our Data Protection Officer if we use any new communications platforms. This will likely require a Data Processing Impact Assessment.



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As a school we are providing high levels of support and guidance for our families in relation to keeping their child safe online whilst learning at home. This includes:

- A poster on every year group's 'Home Schooling' page outlining key considerations of the '**Be Internet Legends**' approach to online safety that we use with the children at Hillcross. This programme is also very accessible for parents and children and we have encouraged parents to explore this resource with their children at home.
- Sharing **Daily Top Tips for Online Safety** when setting the learning for each day and asking parents to discuss these with their children each day.
- Creating a specific **Online Safety Page** on each year group's 'Home Schooling' page. This contains an overview of how parents can support their child's online safety and also has an overview of the Top Tips that are shared daily and a Useful Links section that signposts them to a range of agencies that can help parents and children directly in relation to a variety of potential online issues that may arise. This includes practical support from the likes of: [Childline](#) - for support; [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content; and [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse
- Continuing our weekly communication of Internet Safety Posters (and ensuring each fact sheet is also be made available as a PDF at the bottom of the Online Safety page for each year group). We are focussing on new apps such as 'House Party'; a recently popular app that allows more than one person to communicate with each other at the same time.

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [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 carer

We will contact the Local Authority or the [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) for support with any online safety issues we face that we do not feel able to deal with ourselves.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a school closure or partial closure and between those children who do attend the school site during these measures. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse. Such abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.



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We recognise that during the school closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Schools who are joining a hub/ cluster will be especially alert as pupils from different phases may well be in the same building.

Any reports of peer on peer abuse must be followed up as set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 and in the specific section of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We will also report all concerns through our multi agency arrangements by reporting all instances to the MASH.

### **Supporting Children not in school**

We will ensure that there is a robust communication plan in school for all pupils who we have identified as being vulnerable but who do not meet the criteria of the definition of “vulnerable children as defined above. Such pupils may be subject of Early Help or have been referred to the School Safeguarding Team, prior to the closure of the school, as being in need of support or emotional wellbeing. There should be a communication plan in place to ensure that there is contact with parents/ carers to offer any support required. Details of this plan must be included in the Child Protection records or on any online CP management programme and subject to regular review.

If the pupil is “looked after” liaison must be made with the Merton Virtual School.

### **Supporting Children in School**

Hillcross Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils and will continue to provide a safe space for all pupils to attend. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety.

We will refer to 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 the spread of Covid-19. We undertake to care for the children of key/ critical workers.

If we have concerns about the impact of staff absence, for example, our DSL or first aiders we will contact the Local Authority.

### **Supporting New children at the school**

Children may join our school from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. This is relevant for all children that join us, but it will be especially important where children are vulnerable.

For vulnerable children we will ensure we understand the reasons for the vulnerability and any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum we will seek access to that child’s EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child’s social worker (and, for looked-after children, who the responsible VSH is).

Ideally this will happen before a child arrives but where that is not possible it will happen as soon as reasonably practicable.

Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case our school senior leaders will take responsibility.



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The DSL will undertake a risk assessment based on the information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know the information.

### **Supporting Children and Families Mental Health (increased vulnerability or risk)**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. Where we are providing for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Our staff and volunteers will be aware of the mental health of children and their parents and carers and will contact the DSL or a deputy if they have any concerns.

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