**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**Covid-19 Addendum (March 31st 2020)**

From 20th March 2020 parents and carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

At a time of unprecedented strain on all partner agencies as we respond to the Coronavirus the collective challenge for St Nicholas Catholic High School is how we continue to help and protect the children and families who need it. The effects of isolation, financial stresses on parents, anticipated increases in child and parent mental health and incidents of domestic abuse all culminate in an increased risk to children at a time when they are less likely to be detected with the closures of schools and declining external supports.

This addendum of the St Nicholas Catholic High School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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**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 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.

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 (and deputy), 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.

St Nicholas Catholic High School will continue to work with and support children’s social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children’s social workers and Cheshire West and Chester’s Virtual School Head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be Mr D Johnson.

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 St Nicholas Catholic High School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

St Nicholas Catholic High School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed, if it is the child or young person’s best interest.

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# 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.

If St Nicholas Catholic High School has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) the daily attendance sheet will be submitted to the DfE by 12 noon.

If the school has closed, the return will be completed once as requested by the DfE.

St Nicholas Catholic High School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether ‘Children in Need’ should be attending school. St Nicholas Catholic High School will then follow up regarding any student expected to attend but does not. St Nicholas Catholic High School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, St Nicholas Catholic High School will, when communicating with parents/carers and 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, St Nicholas Catholic High School will notify their social worker.

**Updated advice received from CWAC Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (March 27th 2020)**

As a Safeguarding Partnership we know that many services have statutory duties to fulfil even in the face of this continually evolving situation. To support all partners to comply with these safeguarding responsibilities, flexible and creative approaches are going to be needed to enable us to facilitate business critical elements of our safeguarding work. As such, leaders in Police, Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authority Children’s Services have revised the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Practice Standards (which is compliant with Working Together 2018) so that minimum requirements are fulfilled whilst striking a balance that keeps our staff groups and the children and families they serve safe.

These Standards will be updated on a weekly basis and circulated across the partnership so that we can continue to adapt to the situation.

They are predicated on the following principles:

· The standards apply to all Section 11 agencies, including schools and education provision. Any provision that has been closed as a result of Covid-19 is still expected to identify ways to contribute to safeguarding processes.

· We do not expect any safeguarding operational meetings to be cancelled. Meetings should be conducted in accordance with guidance below. If meetings are cancelled the Safeguarding Children Partnership should be notified via the Designated Safeguarding Leads to SCP@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

· Defensible decision-making relies on clear and accurate records being maintained on the child’s file that clearly articulate the rationale for action taken.

· Partners are reminded to use the escalation policy when there are concerns about inactivity / disagreement regarding decision-making in the best interests of a child (Pan Cheshire Escalation Policy)

· Joint decision-making between agencies is in the best interest of children and agencies. Single agency decision-making can tie the hands of other services.

· All face to face meetings must be conducted in line with Public Health England ‘Social Distancing’ and hand washing guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance

School will continue to respond accordingly to any updated advice received from CWAC regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children’s social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

**What staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child?**

On 19.03.20 all staff were issued with Child Protection and Safeguarding Guidance (See Addendum Appendix 1 below).

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) arrangements during the School Closure**

All staff are aware that the DSL, Deputy or Safeguarding Lead is available on a rota basis during school hours by phone; this is also published in the Staff Rota for Provision.

**Multi-Agency working**

Staff with particular safeguarding responsibilities, responsibilities for children in care and other pastoral staff must understand the continued importance of working with and supporting children’s social workers and the Local Authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children

**Peer on Peer Abuse**

Given the very different circumstances St Nicholas Catholic High School is currently operating in, a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victim. However, the principles as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 5 (2019) will continue to inform the approach taken. The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

**Concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children**

As always, staff and volunteers should refer to the principles in part 4 (paragraph 201) of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

Where St Nicholas Catholic High School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process 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.

St Nicholas Catholic High 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. St Nicholas Catholic High 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/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, St Nicholas Catholic High School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

**Arrangements to support children the school are concerned about who do not meet the ‘vulnerable’ definition**

The Safeguarding Team will meet (virtually) twice per week and will follow the expectations set out below:

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| **Practice** | **Standard** |
| **Single Agency TaF** | All open TaFs have now been RAG rated by the Local Authority in liaison with the Lead Professional. Single agency TaF leads will now continue with these reviews, and arrangements must be made by the agency to complete in the event that the lead worker is absent from work.   * Those rated Red **MUST** be reviewed weekly. The frequency and nature of contact with the family will be considered at each review. * Amber TaFs will also be reviewed weekly. The family and the child will only be contacted by phone weekly. * Greens TaFs will be reviewed monthly. The family and the child will only be contacted by phone weekly. * If there is any suggestion that risk is escalating, then a review **MUST** be undertaken. The LA TaF Advisor team remain available for advice and support and must be informed if there are no professionals within the TaF who can pick up a TaF in the absence of their colleagues. |
| **Early Help & Prevention led**  **TaF** | All open TaFs have been RAG rated by the allocated family intervention worker. This process has been completed in consultation with partner agencies.   * Those rated Red **MUST** be reviewed twice weekly by family intervention worker and their line manager. Contact with the family will occur a minimum of twice weekly virtually. Any face to face visits MUST be risk assessed and conducted in line with National Public Health Guidance. * **Those rate Amber will be** reviewed weekly by the allocated family intervention worker and their line manager.  Minimum level of contact with these families will be a weekly telephone call. Any face to face visits MUST be risk assessed and conducted in line with National Public Health Guidance. * Those rated **Green** will be reviewed fortnightly by the allocated family intervention worker and their line manager.  The family will be contacted by phone fortnightly. * At every contact the allocated worker will make an attempt to speak to the child independently. Where this is not possible it will be recorded on the electronic care record. * If there is any suggestion that risk is escalating, then a review **MUST** be undertaken. * Should the Family Intervention Worker and line manager be absent, the family will be reassigned by a Duty Manager. * **TaF Meetings** - During the current pandemic it is vital that all plans are reviewed regularly and consistently. It is important that TaF Meetings go ahead, unless agreed with the Line Manager. – All meetings will be conducted virtually.  Families should be encouraged to engage via online technology or telephone. * TaF closures will agreed by all members virtually. |

**Arrangements to keep children not physically attending the school safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed**

All parents and carers have been informed of information on the school website regarding E-safety. 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 responded to as per the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (2019) and, where appropriate, referrals should still be made to Children’s Social Care and, as required, the Police.

**Addendum Appendix 1**

**School Closure Child Protection and Safeguarding Advice**

The impact of the school closure will perhaps be felt greatest by the most vulnerable of our students, potentially through all four categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Do not underestimate the pressure that may well be on families and our students at this time and the consequences that this can have.

Children at risk of criminal exploitation, including County Lines, will be at particular risk.

If you have a safeguarding concern about a student between 08.30 and 16.30 (Monday to Friday) please contact one of the following:

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| **Name** | **Role** | **Contact Number** | **E-mail** | **Assigned Days** |
| Dominic Johnson | Designated Safeguarding Lead | **Staff: ee original document** | d.johnson@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk | Monday and Friday |
| Lisa Burton | Deputy Safeguarding Lead | **Staff: see original document** | l.burton@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk | Tuesday and Thursday |
| Jodie Booth | Safeguarding Lead | **Staff: see original document** | j.booth@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk | Wednesday |

* If you do not get a response from the specified colleague above, please try either of the other two colleagues.
* If the child of concern lives in**Cheshire West** and you are unable to contact any of the specified colleagues above, please do **not** delay and instead contact Cheshire West and Chester I-ART (Integrated Access and Referral Team) on **0300 123 7047**
* If you have a safeguarding concern outside of these hours please call Cheshire West and Chester Children's Social Care Emergency Duty Team on **01244 977 277**.
* If the child of concern lives in **Cheshire East** please contact Cheshire East Consultation Service (CHECS) on **0300 123 5012** (Option 3).
* If you have a safeguarding concern outside of these hours please call CHECS on **0300 123 5022**

**If you feel a student is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, contact 999 immediately**