



**COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements  
for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**Addendum to:  
Safeguarding & Child Protection  
Policy and Procedures**

## **Context**

From 5th January 2021 parents were again asked to keep their children at home wherever possible. Schools sites are to remain open only for children considered vulnerable and those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend, and cannot be safely cared for at home.

This addendum of the Stour Valley Community School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures replaces that published in March 2020, and contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jamie Nunn	01787 279342	jnunn@stourvalley.org
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Cath Bank	01787 279342	cbank@stourvalley.org
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (E-Safety)	Richard Lee	01787 279342	rlee@stourvalley.org
Headteacher	Rachel Kelly	01787 279342	rkelly@stourvalley.org
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding & Child Protection	Marie Ryan		mryan@stourvalley.org
Chair of Governors	Nick Vosper		nvosper@stourvalley.org
School Safeguarding dedicated email			safe@stourvalley.org

## 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.

Stour Valley Community 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 the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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 considered vulnerable, the social worker and Stour Valley Community School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Stour Valley Community School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **Attendance monitoring**

During this period of school closure, normal expectations of lesson attendance will apply. Students will be taught remotely, following their normal school timetable. Students failing to attend lessons will be considered absent, and this will be followed up in accordance with the Attendance Policy. Parents and carers should use the dedicated Absence Line (01787 326941) to notify school before 9am on any day that students will be unable to attend their online lessons.

Stour Valley Community School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. Stour Valley Community School

will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. We 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, Stour Valley Community 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.

It is not compulsory for children considered vulnerable to attend school at this time. However, should lesson attendance/engagement prove to be a concern when learning from home, the school may seek to make arrangements with parents/carers/social workers, to bring individual students into school.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not engage with the school's provision, we will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Stour Valley Community School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSLs; one of whom has specific responsibility for E-Safety.

The optimal scenario is 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 or email - for example when working from home. The dedicated safeguarding inbox will be checked daily.

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 safeguarding and child protection records, liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) s required, or 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.

All Stour Valley Community School staff and volunteers are aware of who the DSL and Deputy DSLs are, and how to speak to them.

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

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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 concern 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.

### **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 deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). 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 Stour Valley Community School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This can be completed and administered online.

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

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) HR Manager 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 policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### **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, Stour Valley Community School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

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.

Where the school is utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 183 to 188 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Stour Valley Community 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 179 of KCSIE.

Stour Valley Community School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) 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, Stour Valley Community School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in KCSIE.

## **Online safety in schools and colleges**

Stour Valley Community 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.

## **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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and, as required, the police.

Live online lessons, pre-recorded lessons and other learning resources are all accessed using Microsoft Teams. All students have their own username and passwords for this system. Staff must only use platforms agreed by Stour Valley Community School to communicate with pupils and may use the Record function in Teams record live online lessons.

Stour Valley Community School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

## **Supporting children not in school**

Stour Valley Community School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people.

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 ready to be implemented for that child or young person in case of non-attendance/engagement with the school's online learning provision.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Stour Valley Community 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 need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

## **Supporting children in school**

Stour Valley Community School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The school will continue to be a safe space for 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.

Stour Valley Community 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.

Stour Valley Community 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.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Stour Valley Community School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a school receives a report of peer on peer abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 and Annexe A of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be reported and recorded, and referrals made as appropriate.