

## COVID-19 school closure arrangements Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Michael Hall School

Policy Owner	Safeguarding DSL
Formally endorsed by	SLT
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This addendum of the Michael Hall Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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### **Context and Statement of Intent**

From 20th March 2020 parents 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.

The government announced that from 1st June 2020, the phased return to school would begin. Key age groups returning first, followed by other year groups, the intention being that all students would be back in education before the Summer break.

Currently not every parent will be able to do this as their home life situation may mean families are shielding or supporting those most vulnerable and school return isn't possible. This therefore means measures in place for providing remote education and pastoral support should continue.

This policy has been created to ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations to ensure our pupils are effectively safeguarded whilst they access online learning opportunities from their homes for the duration of their long distance and remote learning period. In addition, it outlines the actions to be taken to support our vulnerable students.

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Our school is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, Council Members, parents, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure be that on site or remotely.

### **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.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Class Teachers and Year Group Guardians know who our most vulnerable children are. Michael Hall will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

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 Michael Hall will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Michael Hall will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend our remote online lessons

### **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.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Michael Hall school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mark Fielding

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Virginia Westlake

Our DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone and email when working from home.

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, 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 Michael Hall staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is 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.

### **Managing allegations / concerns about adults in the school**

Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers will be dealt with according to the statutory guidance set out in KCSIE. Staff should also have regard to the School's Code of Conduct to minimise the risk of allegations being made. All allegations will be taken seriously and treated as quickly as possible, in a fair and consistent manner providing effective protection for the child and at the same time supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation. Confidentiality cannot be promised to the informant.

Where there is an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has:

1. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
2. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
3. Behaved towards a child or children in such a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they worked regularly or closely with a child.

The details of the allegation should be recorded in writing, dated and signed. The DSL/DDSL should immediately contact the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the LADO who will work with the School to discuss the management of the allegation.

In the event that the allegation is against a member of SLT, then the Council Chair should be informed as well as the LADO.

If the allegation is against the Director of Operations/DSL then the Deputy should be appointed DSL and SLT and the LADO are informed. In the event that the allegation is against a Council member the DSL will immediately inform the Chair of Council who must contact the LADO directly. Should the allegation be against the Chair of Council the staff member should inform the LADO without delay (advising the DSL immediately).

All allegations against staff will be reported to the LADO within 24 hours and decisions will not be made without discussion with the LADO.

### **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 (2019). 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 Michael Hall, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

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:

- Check 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
- That the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training  
Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of our 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, Michael Hall 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 (2019) (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.

If Michael Hall utilises 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.

Michael Hall 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.

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 school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Michael Hall will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online Safety in School**

Michael Hall 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**

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 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 the Staff code of conduct.

Michael Hall will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

### **Online platforms**

Zoom' is the only permissible platform for teaching online video-based lessons at Michael Hall.

'Zoom' isn't to be used for communicating with parents, neither is it to be used for one to one communication with students and is only to be used for teaching students of class seven and above.

In the instance of Teaching Staff delivering a lesson through 'Zoom' they need to observe the following procedures:

- Parents are made aware that the lessons are recorded and therefore need to give their written consent to the school.
- Teachers need to check that all students' parents have given their permission before commencing the lesson.
- When staff are hosting an online lesson, it must be set up with an @michaelhall.co.uk email address.
- Online classroom sizes **must** consist of 2 or more students.
- For certain children, one to one learning may be deemed necessary. In this instance the teacher must:
  - A.** First apply for, and receive permission from the DSL
  - B.** Receive written confirmation from the student's parent in writing that they are happy for a 1 to 1 teaching session to be taught
  - C.** Ensure that the child's parent is in the same room as their child or in close proximity.
- Once a teacher has scheduled an online classroom, the teacher must only send the link to the students' Michael Hall email account.
- If the student has forgotten their password the teacher must request the students' password be reset
- When teaching in an online classroom, staff need to be business-like when giving lessons: presenting themselves as professionally as they would if they were giving a face-to-face lesson, in dress and in manner: Staff should remember that while social media applications can encourage informality, they need to observe their usual high professional standards at all times.
- The broadcast should only take place from an appropriate communal area of their house or area of work. E.g. living rooms, kitchens, home offices and gardens.
- If delivering lessons from home, be aware of material that may be visible in the background. Avoid revealing any personal teacher information or other sensitive data.
- The teacher of the hosted classroom must remove any students from the online classroom who have not followed the school dress code or are deemed to be wearing inappropriate clothing. The student may join the classroom again once the issues have been resolved.
- Staff sign a written agreement to record, upload the files to the designated folder on the school server and immediately afterwards delete the content from the computer used to make the broadcast.
- Recordings will be securely stored in a specified location on the school's server, accessible to the safeguarding personnel only.
- Recordings will be retained on the school server for three years.

- At the end of the retention period, the recordings will be deleted.

### **Supporting Children not in School**

Michael Hall 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 in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as should records of contact made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits.

Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Michael Hall and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages. Michael Hall 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 at Michael Hall need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

### **Supporting Children in School**

Michael Hall is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Michael Hall will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Staff will have heightened awareness for identifying new safeguarding concerns surrounding individual children as they arrive back to School and they are seen in person following covid-19 school closures.

They will report any concerns immediately to the DSL in line with the School's Child Protection Policy.

The DSL and Safeguarding Team are aware and mindful that they may need to allocate extra time to support staff and students on their return.

Michael Hall 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.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Cyber bullying (“the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”) can include the deliberate posting of hurtful messages via the internet, texts, messaging, abusive calls to mobile phones, the use of indecent or inappropriate images, or inappropriate postings on web sites, blogs or social media. (See Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Agreements and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy)

Michael Hall 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 of KCSIE and of those outlined within Michael Hall’s Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

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.