



Marches Academy Trust

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# Covid-19 Annex 2 to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures Version 1

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## 1. Purpose

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents/carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only 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.

This addendum of the Marches Academy Trust Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures contains details of cross-Trust safeguarding arrangements. We will follow [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#) and regularly review as and when more pupils return to school.

### Key contact

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead across Trust	Miss Julie Johnson	07522 814398	Johnson.j@mmat.co.uk

### What is the definition of vulnerable children in relation to this guidance?

Those who have a social worker, including children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are Looked After by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need, or otherwise meet the definition in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

or

Those children where professionals are concerned that they may be at increased risk of significant harm if they are not in school; this could be due to contextual safeguarding issues or existing or new pressures within a family household.

## 2. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each school within Marches Academy Trust has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. This information is available on each school's website and in the safeguarding policy documentation.

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 online video, for example, 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 coordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection records/CPOMS and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy). This may also include liaising with children's social care where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments.

All staff and volunteers within each setting will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

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

The DSL (or deputy) will provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school or college. Where possible staff should attempt to speak directly to children to help identify any concerns. Staff are being encouraged (where possible) to make calls from the school site via school phones and devices. Where staff use personal phones to make calls, they will withhold their personal number.

### **3. Reporting a concern**

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

If a member of staff cannot access a child's safeguarding records/CPOMS from home, they should email/call the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay, on a regular basis.

All schools within Marches Academy Trust recognise that there will be challenges as children start to return to school after lockdown. All schools will ensure that there are opportunities for staff members to have conversations with children to discuss their experience of being at home during lockdown. Each school recognises that some children will have been exposed to further abuse and neglect and will therefore provide opportunities to enable children to talk about any worries they may have.

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 relevant school's Chair of Governors.

### **4. Safeguarding training and induction**

DSL training alongside Raising Awareness training is being offered via approved virtual training providers. All schools within Marches Academy Trust are being encouraged to ask new staff members to book onto the Raising Awareness L1 training through an approved training provider. Any DSL staff whose certification is due to expire will also be encouraged to book onto virtual training offered by an approved training provider. Staff within each setting will continue to be offered local safeguarding training relevant to the setting. Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of Marches Academy Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) (KCSIE).

The DSLs (and deputies) within Marches Academy Trust will continue to do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments, such as via Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnerships, newsletters and professional advice groups

alongside regular MAT Safeguarding network meetings managed by the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding across Trust.

## **5. 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, Marches Academy Trust 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 identification checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to one of our schools, 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 all safer recruitment checks set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, including an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check;
- the individual has been subject to relevant child protection training;
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children;
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual.

There is no requirement to obtain a new DBS check for returning staff who have continued to be employed but have not been working in regulated activity during partial school closures. If for any reason the school have concerns about the individual, they may obtain a new check in the usual way.

Where schools across Marches Academy Trust 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.

All schools 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.

All schools 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, Marches Academy Trust will

continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **6. Managing contact with pupils and families**

### **6.1 Assessment of risk**

All vulnerable pupils should be identified by school/setting based on potential risk and gradings, given to those pupils in order of priority: **Red**, **Amber**, **Green**.

**Red** – most risk of harm or neglect and fewest protective factors (would include those with a Child Protection Plan/LAC/identified as being at risk of Criminal Exploitation/identified as being at risk of exposure to Domestic Abuse within the household).

**Amber** – a moderate risk of harm, but with some protective factors (would include those identified as ‘Child in Need’; and those with a social worker)

**Green** – some concerns escalating or unmet needs; or have been red or amber and require monitoring.

If a child has an allocated social worker, school staff will liaise with that person to ensure that they are aware of whether the child is attending school or not and to agree the level of contact required and how this is carried out.

Pupils can be moved between the categories, depending on the intelligence and information available to each setting.

### **6.2 Suggested contact for vulnerable pupils**

#### **Red**

Email, or other platforms such as ClassDojo, to all parents/carers to notify them of school updates and provide parents with information to signpost for support.

Phone call/virtual contact with parents/carers to ascertain if any further support is required and to ascertain that the pupil is safe.

Any information or intelligence to support that a child may be at potential risk will be reported to the designated social worker.

#### **Amber**

Email, or other platforms such as ClassDojo, to all parents/carers to notify them of school updates and provide parents/carers with information to signpost for support.

Weekly phone call to parents/carers to ascertain if any further support is required and that the pupil is safe.

Any information or intelligence to support that a child may be at potential risk, will be reported to the designated social worker or First Point of Contact (FPOC).

#### **Green**

Email, or other platforms such as ClassDojo, to all parents/carers to notify them of school updates and provide parents with information to signpost for support. No further contact required.

Some schools within Marches Academy Trust have set up a dedicated email address that is monitored by DSLs so that any parents/carers can make contact if they have any worries or concerns relating to themselves or others.

### **6.3 Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements**

For the most vulnerable pupils, staff will attend Child Protection and Child In Need meetings, where possible. These are currently being held remotely. If staff are unable to

attend, a report will be submitted.

Strategy meetings also continue to be held and DSLs will undertake their duties in the same way as before, but meetings will be held virtually.

#### **6.4 Conducting virtual contact with children and their families**

All use of technology should continue to be in line with Marches Academy Trust e-safety policies.

A written record/CPOMS record of all contact with vulnerable pupils and their parents/carers will be made and retained in accordance with current regulations. This record may include:

- any concerns or worries raised by the child;
- any concerns or worries raised by the parent/carer;
- any anonymous information/intelligence shared;
- summary of the situation as reported;
- note any actions that need to be undertaken.

When contact is made using telephones or social media platforms or apps, where possible, school equipment, rather than personal devices will be used.

Staff must ensure that children and parents/carers are appropriately dressed and in a communal area of their home. No interaction will take place if the child is in a bedroom or bathroom.

Staff should be mindful of confidentiality and, under no circumstances, will they carry out any conversations in the presence of their own family members at home.

Staff will be appropriately dressed following the same dress code that is implemented in their usual workplace, although during COVID-19 some school dress codes have been amended to include smart casual wear.

Staff need to be aware of their surroundings and what can be viewed in their home environment. If possible, they should use the background 'dimming' facility on video links. In the same way as home visits, if there are concerns around sole contact with a child or parent/carer, schools will consider having joint contact through call conferencing facilities.

### **7. School attendance and engagement**

If a child is expected to attend school but does not arrive, normal procedures will be followed.

If school staff are not able to make contact with the parent/carer, they will keep trying for the rest of the school day, then follow usual Attendance Officer followed by education welfare procedures for children not in school and alert the DSL/Deputy DSL.

If children are being cared for and educated at home and routine contact is not maintained or a parent/carer does not engage, staff will take all reasonable steps to speak to the parent/carer. If this is not successful, staff will inform the school's assigned Education Welfare Officer.

Education Welfare Officers will be in regular contact with schools to monitor engagement

with distance learning arrangements and to review the attendance of vulnerable children. Trust schools will continue to notify social workers where children with a social worker do not attend. They will also continue to follow non-attendance procedures with any parent/carer whose child has been expected to attend and does not. To support the above, schools should take the opportunity when communicating with parents/carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Parents/carers will not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision. Section 444(1) and 1(A) of the Education 1996 has been disapplied and will be reviewed on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Schools will resume taking their attendance register from the 1st June and continue to complete the online Educational Setting Status form which gives the Department for Education (DfE) daily updates on how many children and staff are attending.

If there are concerns of significant harm report to the named social worker or contact FPOC on 0345 678 9021. If staff feel the child is at risk of immediate harm, they must report to police. For non-urgent welfare concerns, with parental consent, staff can email the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) to [compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:compass.referrals@shropshire.gov.uk)

## **8. Online safety across Marches Academy Trust**

Marches Academy Trust 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 Marches Academy Trust schools**

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 will be dealt with as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and, where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required or to the police.

Online teaching will follow the same principles as set out in the school's code of conduct. Marches Academy Trust will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

The principles set out in the [guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#) published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium will be referred to in order to help schools and colleges satisfy themselves that their staff behaviour policies are robust and effective.

There is no expectation that teachers should live stream or provide pre-recorded videos. Schools across Marches Academy Trust will consider the approaches that best suit the needs of their children and staff, based within each individual setting. Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example not bedrooms and if possible the background should be blurred.



- Any live classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager/provider to communicate with pupils.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Staff will only use work email addresses to communicate with others for professional communications. They will use established portals for sharing work and communicating. We will continue to signpost parents/carers to areas of support for example the following websites provide advice and guidance.

- [Thinkuknow](#)
- [Parent info](#)
- [Childnet](#)
- [Internet Matters](#)
- [Net-aware](#)
- [Let's Talk About It](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [NSPCC Learning website](#).

## **9. Supporting children in school**

Marches Academy Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils and all Trust schools will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteachers within each setting will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff-to-pupil ratios are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Marches Academy Trust 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.

Marches Academy Trust will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we will ensure that appropriate support is in place for them. This will be individual to each child and recorded on the child's safeguarding file/ CPOMS, where appropriate.

Marches Academy Trust has updated the Trust behaviour policies with an annex for use during the arrangements for education of students in school during the COVID-19 partial school closures. It is to be used in conjunction with, and read alongside, the behaviour policy, tackling bullying and e-safety policies.

## **10. Peer-on-Peer abuse**

Marches Academy Trust 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 the Safeguarding and Child

Protection Policy and Procedures.

The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partners required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions will be recorded on the child's safeguarding record/CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

## **11. Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents/carers. Where they have children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children returning to school from the 1st June onwards, schools will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

DfE guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#) will be used to help with identifying children who might need additional support, and to put this support in place. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example: being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess.

Each school within Marches Academy Trust will support children by offering regular contact with a staff member, emails, telephone calls, online lessons, counselling where needed or referrals to KOOTH or other mental health support networks. Schools may use Targeted Early Help services to support some pupils.

Teachers are aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of those children (and their parents/carers) who are continuing to work from home, including when setting expectations of childrens' work. The DfE has provided separate [guidance on remote education practices](#) during the coronavirus outbreak.

This annex follows Shropshire Council's advice and guidance and has been created to remain in line with Shropshire Council.

For further information from Shropshire Council please contact Jane Parsons [jane.parsons@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:jane.parsons@shropshire.gov.uk) or Caroline Ewels [caroline.ewels@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.ewels@shropshire.gov.uk)

If your query relates to Early Years settings, please contact Fiona Purslow [fiona.purslow@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.purslow@shropshire.gov.uk)