Marches Academy Trust

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

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Guidance taken from '*Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers*' Published 27 March 2020 DfE

1. Context

The way schools 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. Marches Academy Trust schools have been asked to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents/carers are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

2. Version control and dissemination

This is interim safeguarding guidance; it is under review and will be updated in line with DfE guidance. This guidance which has been updated to assist with the current COVID-19 situation, supports the current agreed Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. The main Trust policy continues to apply to all settings, alongside this guidance whilst COVID-19 continues to impact upon the country.

This interim guidance will be available for staff and parents/carers on each schools' website and also on each schools' internal system for sharing information. All staff will be made aware of the guidance through the Trust Newsletter.

Marches Academy Trust will continue to ensure that it maintains effective safeguarding and child protection across all of the schools during this challenging time. The principles in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), alongside this guidance applies to all settings within the Trust. Each setting will continue to provide a safe environment, keep children safe and ensure staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked and risk assessments carried out as required. All staff and volunteers will have accessed the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and will be alerted to this addendum.

3. Safeguarding priority

The following main principles will continue to be a priority to each setting:

- The best interests of children will always continue to come first.
- If anyone in a school has a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to act immediately and make contact with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL who is scheduled as lead on that day either on school site or working remotely, or through the school's designated safeguarding email address.
- A DSL or deputy will be available at all times during the school day, including the Easter Holiday; this may be on school site or working remotely. All settings will aim to have a DSL (or Deputy) onsite however, there may be times when a DSL (or Deputy) will not be onsite, but will be available via conference call or mobile phone. The Trust DSL Lead has all contact details for each DSL and Deputy DSL within each setting. This has also been forwarded to the Local Authority. Each school setting is likely to have a rota system in place and will include a DSL (or Deputy) as part of the rota for every day, working either onsite or remotely.

- Schools that have access to CPOMS will continue to use the system to record any safeguarding concerns, conversations and interventions.
- Unsuitable people will not be allowed to enter the children's educational setting and/or gain access to children. There is currently a central digital Trust Single Central Record available. The Trust HR department will continue to provide support and guidance throughout COVID-19.
- Marches Academy Trust will ensure that all children will continue to be protected when they are online.

4. Marches Academy Trust current position in supporting vulnerable children

Marches Academy Trust has ensured that each school setting has created a list of vulnerable children including SEND - EHCP, Child Protection, Child in Need, Targeted Early Help, Social Emotional and Mental Health and Looked After Children, following the advice and guidance from Shropshire Council. There are vulnerable children attending each setting who are continuing to be supported in the most appropriate way. For those children who are not attending, who are vulnerable, there is communication with external agencies to ensure the safety of the child. Regular contact will also be made with home through school staff.

Trust schools continue to work together to support each other. Rota systems are in place across all settings, ensuring that schools remain open for vulnerable children and those of key workers. Primary schools have been working together alongside secondary schools supporting primary schools when needed. This support will continue throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

5. Safeguarding partners' advice

Marches Academy Trust is working very closely with all local authorities supporting **all** children across the Trust. This to ensure that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required, attend a school. Each school in the Trust is continuing to work with and support children's social workers and each local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children alongside Shropshire Council SEND Department.

'*Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care. Social workers and VSHs will continue to work with vulnerable children in this difficult period and should support these children to access this provision. There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend provision, unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child*'. 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers' Published 27 March 2020 DfE

Marches Academy Trust has collated a summary document for Shropshire Council and Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership, summarising DSL staff within each setting with contact emails and numbers. This, ensuring we are supporting Shropshire protocol and ensuring effective practice. Table example below.

School	DSL Name(s)	Email (must not be personal)	Telephone contact number **essential

Shropshire Council guidance:

- Safeguarding and child protection guidance and protocol: Managing contact with pupils and families during COVID-19 pandemic
- Early Help COVID-19 guidance

6. Designated (or Deputy) Safeguarding Lead

Each educational setting within Marches Academy Trust will have available, each day, a rota system for staff to make contact with the DSL (or Deputy), if concerns for any child arises. Each DSL (or Deputy), whether onsite or-off site and on-call, will immediately act if any concerns are shared. CPOMS will be used by schools currently accessing the system. The principles of recording a concern will then continue as described in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. All staff/volunteers must record their concern, share immediately with the DSL (or Deputy) only and sign and date the first contact notes recorded. CPOMS will be rolled out to all schools in the next few weeks with training offered online to all schools DSL staff. There are currently schools in the Trust who use CPOMS and will continue to do so during the COVID-19 crisis.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

With many children now working online and being taught through online lessons, it is important that each educational setting continues to support children who may be victims of peer-on-peer abuse. Staff will continue to support children through email contact and online learning. If any form of peer-on-peer abuse is reported to a staff member, this must be reported to the DSL (or Deputy) and action taken. Most schools in the Trust have created a specific safeguarding email address for pupils and parents/carers to report any concerns. These have been sent out to families through school newsletters. The email addresses are linked to all DSL (or Deputy) staff within each setting ensuring support and systems are available for managing any report of abuse and supporting victims or alleged offenders.

8. Reporting concerns about a staff member or volunteer

Each setting will have a member of Senior Leadership onsite during each day. If staff have concerns of a safeguarding nature, they should continue as expected in the current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. The Senior Lead representative will manage the concerns and make contact with Headteacher.

9. Children working from home

Across the Trust many children will currently be off-site and being educated at home. Each setting has developed systems for supporting children with home learning through online teaching, access to online learning platforms and home learning packs that have been allocated for those without access to the internet.

Each setting has provided parents/carers with the opportunity for communication to discuss any possible concerns that they may have with learning from home. These conversations may be carried out through phone or email contact, as social distancing remains in place. There are schools in the Trust who have a staff member staffing reception each day. For those settings unable to staff reception area, email details have been provided to parents/carers for contact to be made. There are also settings across the Trust who have linked the school's phone line to a dedicated mobile phone for messages to be left and then responded to by staff, if appropriate.

Teaching staff are monitoring learning and are marking work where possible.

Communications are being made through school for parents/carers if it is felt their child has completed limited or no learning.

10. Voucher Scheme for free school meals

Children eligible for free school meals can benefit from a national voucher scheme whilst they stay at home. Trust schools have been working with external agencies to provide every eligible child with a weekly shopping voucher worth £15 to spend at supermarkets while schools are closed due to COVID-19. The scheme will allow schools to provide vouchers to families electronically, or as a gift card for those without internet access. Parents/carers will receive the voucher through their child's school, which can then be redeemed online via a code, or sent to their house as a gift card and used at supermarkets across the country.

Details of the full scheme can be accessed through the link below
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance

11. Attendance

Schools and social workers are working closely to discuss families and whether children in need should be attending education provision. Each school is then following up on any child that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Schools are also following up with any parent/carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend. In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school or college, or discontinues, the school will notify their social worker.

The DfE has introduced a daily online attendance form to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places.

Marches Academy Trust Attendance Officer has developed advice for all schools in making contact with all children from each setting. It is at the discretion of the school which staff are delegated to make contact with each child. This will vary from setting to setting, as some contact will be through PALS, some through Heads of Year, Class Teachers, SENCO, Teaching Assistants, Access Leaders. Contact may take the form of emails or phone calls.

12. Staff working in different settings during COVID-19

For all staff working in a different Trust setting, the current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures is a Trust policy and sets out expectations. Headteachers of the newly allocated short term school placements must ensure that the staff member knows the DSL and safeguarding arrangements whilst onsite.

13. Children attending other Trust schools

During this time, it may be relevant for schools within the Trust to join together to use one setting rather than more. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. For looked-after children, any change in school will be led and managed by the Virtual School with responsibility for the child.

Marches Academy Trust will ensure that appropriate details related to the child are handed over to the SEND team or Safeguarding Team to ensure continuity. Details shared may include access to a vulnerable child's EHCP, 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 Virtual School Headteacher is. This should ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable.

Whilst schools within the Trust continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

14. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

Where schools are recruiting new staff, they will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of 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. Marches Academy Trust HR Department will continue to manage the situation of recruitment.

Where schools within the Trust are utilising volunteers, they will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Regarding staff of the Trust workforce already engaging in regulated activity and who already have the appropriate DBS check, there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained where that member of the workforce temporarily moves to another school to support the care of children.

Schools and colleges must continue to follow their legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

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 will be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk. All referrals received by the TRA will continue to be considered.

During each school day each setting within the Trust will log staff attendance. This will also ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

15. Mental health

Staff are fully aware of the current difficulties that children may face during the COVID-19 crisis. All schools are maintaining contact with all children/families and are providing advice and guidance on managing with mental health during the crisis. Schools within the Trust are being supported by Shropshire Council guidance.

Websites below offer support and guidance to children and parents/carers. These will be published on Trust websites.

Websites to support children's mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak are listed below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/

https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/talking-to-children

https://kely.org/assets/docs/Resources/Information/Mental-Health/Coolminds_Staying-well-during-coronavirus-outbreak.pdf

https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/

https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-advice-for-families-staying-at-home/

https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/how-to-have-an-open-conversation-with-young-people-about-coronavirus/

https://www.kooth.com/

https://www.childline.org.uk/

16. Online safety

It is likely that children will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. All 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 safeguarding and support children. All staff will follow the process for online safety set out in the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

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.

The starting point for online teaching for staff across the Trust continue to be the same principles as set out in the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct. This policy includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy does apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which have been introduced for dealing with COVID-19.

Schools within the trust who are using online learning tools and systems do so in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Schools are in regular contact with parents/carers. These communications are used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online alongside learning focus. It will be

especially important for parents/carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will asked to access.

Parents/carers may choose to supplement the school online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. Schools within the Trust will continue to emphasise to parents/carers the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents/carers to keep their children safe online include:

- [Internet matters](#) - 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 carers