



Stoke Newington School
& Sixth Form

Child Protection Update April 2020

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STOKE NEWINGTON SCHOOL | CLISSOLD ROAD N169EX

Context

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

During this unprecedented time, we have to adjust our policy to reflect current working conditions with young people and for the vast majority of staff and students that means maintaining contact virtually through school systems like SMHW or via email. It is even more important than usual that staff are aware that all young people are at an increased risk. We are aware that there has been a significant increase in Domestic Violence up by at least 40% according to some sources, increased risk to mental health for young people and for families and huge pressure on family finances due to redundancies and no access to casual work or service area work where people are unlikely to have the safety net of being furloughed.

1. Vulnerable Children Current guidance

The current guidance defines vulnerable children as “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 (CP) 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.

In line with the current guidance, we will risk assess those children with an EHC plan in consultation with the SENDCO, parents and any specialist service currently working with the young person, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school 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 with EHC plans can safely remain at home. Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and especially our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), their deputies Heads of Upper and Lower School and Heads of Year 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 but any decision about a young person taking a place in the school hub will lie with the member of SLT on duty in the hub in consultation with the head teacher. Our school will continue to work with and support children’s social workers to help protect vulnerable children and be represented at Core Group Meetings and other professionals’ meetings in a virtual setting. 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. Decisions on the number of young people that can safely be in the school hub will be the member of SLT on Duty in School and they have the final say in conjunction with the Head Teacher on whether a child can attend on any one day.

Vulnerable children who have a social worker will be supported to attend school where this is agreed with the parents/carers and social worker in consultation with our own pastoral staff so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk and will continue to encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed. In circumstances where parents do not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and our school staff will explore the reasons for this directly with the parents. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, school staff or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

2. Designated Safeguarding Leads

Stoke Newington School will always have a DSL or Deputy DSL available on-line to support staff working on site or from home and they are contactable either by phone or through Video conference call in Microsoft Teams. Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, the SLT member responsible for the hub will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site and liaising with the offsite DSL (or Head Teacher) and children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school. All staff on-site will be notified that the Lead SLT member on site is the first point of call for safeguarding on site.

The Pastoral Counsellors will continue to engage with social workers, and co-ordinate remote attendance of case holding staff at all multi-agency meetings.

The safeguarding Team will continue to meet on a weekly basis to review new referrals and to follow up on existing referrals and we will continue to liaise with the WAMHS worker to discuss cases where Mental Health is a major concern.

3. Reporting a concern

In this very strange and difficult time we will continue to encourage and support all staff in reporting concerns around young people without delay and those concerns might arise because

- Young people have not responded to any contact from Tutor or Head of Year
- Young people that have not logged onto SMHW
- A young person or parent/carer has disclosed difficulties within the home.
- Where a young person has submitted a piece of work that may give rise to a concern for their wellbeing or for the wellbeing of someone else.
- Being aware that a young person is out and about in the community rather than staying at home.

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this includes making a report using our childprotection@sns.hackney.sch.uk email address.

If the young person or parent carer discloses something that might mean that they are at immediate risk of harm either because of disclosing suicidal thoughts or because of Domestic violence then the staff member should contact Police emergency on 999 and then contact the school via email and call the main school switchboard number.

Where we are concerned about a young person because there has been no contact response from the young person or family by email phone or SMHW then the Head Teacher will ask the Safer Schools Police Officer to visit the home address to do a safety check. It is vitally important that all staff responsible for contacting a young person fill in the appropriate are of the online registers so that we have up-to-date information on contacts.

Where staff have serious but not life-threatening concerns about a young person, they should email the DSL and deputies or call one of the safeguarding team. This will ensure that the concern is received, and appropriate action can be taken to support that young person or family. All 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 as soon as possible. This should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher within 24 hours. If the staff member concerned feels that their concerns have not been addressed properly then they should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who works within the Hackney Children's Services FAST Team on 020

8356 4569. If for any reason you cannot contact school or one of the safeguarding staff at school and you have immediate concerns about a young person you can contact Children's Services in Hackney FAST on 0208356 5500 or in Islington on 02075277400.

4. Support for staff

All responsibility post holders Heads of Department Heads of Faculty and Pastoral leads are meeting regularly with Microsoft Team and they will monitor the well being of their staff and any concerns should be past to their Line Manager and on to the SLT who will look to put support into place for the staff member concerned. The Heads Briefings that have gone out on a regular basis have reminded people about the support that is available to them and we have carried out an initial staff wellbeing survey.

5. Staff training

Additional staff training will be provided for us in supporting contact work with vulnerable students and all staff involved in this work are offered support through their Line Manager. Reminders relating to the importance of reporting safeguarding concerns have safeguarding concerns have been sent to all staff.

6. Online Safety out of School

We will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements. All staff are made aware of the following considerations when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Currently there are no one-to-one teaching or tutoring sessions
- Teaching to take place within normal school hours
- 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 in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- 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. I would suggest 30 to a maximum of 45 minutes.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by Stoke Newington School to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held and use the record facility in Teams so that students not able to access the lesson will have the opportunity to do so later online through SMHW.

7. Peer on Peer Abuse

Staff need to be aware that there is an increased risk of students becoming involved in Peer on Peer abuse and Sexting and where staff have any concerns about these issues they need to be reported to the school through the normal email system. We will send out information to parents and carers asking them to be aware of these risks and the importance of talking to their children about the risks posed to them by these activities but also to encourage them to report incidents to the school through the contact emails.