



Diverse
Academies



Covid-19 appendix to safeguarding and child protection policy across Diverse Academies Trust November 2020

Additional information for academies

Office use

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Associated documents:			
Safeguarding and child protection policy			
Links to:			
www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-complete-the-educational-setting-status-form			

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1 Context

From 20 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.

From 1 September 2020 our academy settings fully re-opened as determined by government guidance.

In the event of any wholesale closure of academies during 2020-21, Diverse Academies will operate/re-instate hubs for vulnerable children and those of key workers, as covered in the first section of this appendix.

This Covid-19 addendum of the Diverse Academies Safeguarding and Child Protection policy 2020 contains details of our collective safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Key contacts

Role	Name	Email
Chief Executive Officer	David Cotton	dcotton@dalp.org.uk
Trust Safeguarding Lead	Patrick Knight	pknight@dalp.org.uk
Chair of Trustees	Mike Quigley	MQuigley@dalpgov-ac.org.uk
Safeguarding Trustee	Margaret Blore	MBlore@dalpgov-ac.org.uk

2 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 (CPP) 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 education, health and care plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the trust, local authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered an academy hub 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.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. The Trust is committed to maintaining effective provision of free school meals to all eligible children throughout the Covid-19 crisis.

In the event of Covid-19 enforced absence, senior leaders in our academies, especially the designated safeguarding lead (and the deputy designated safeguarding leads) know who our most vulnerable children are. In addition to those children on a CPP, or who are CIN (children in need), CLA (children looked after) or a home carer, the trust expects staff to provide a safeguarding check to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support and to provide educational provision for those who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

In the event of a Covid-19 enforced absence, safeguarding teams across our academies 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 in each academy for this will be the designated safeguarding lead.

There is an expectation across Diverse Academies Trust academies, that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend, so long as they do not have an underlying serious health condition (as defined in the government Covid-19 attendance guidance) that places them at increased risk of infection. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and the designated safeguarding team in the respective academy will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Vulnerable children remain the safeguarding priority – both those in attendance and those absent from our academies.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting Covid-19, the respective Academy safeguarding lead or the social worker will attempt to contact the parent / carer to talk through these anxieties following the latest advice set out by Public Health England at the time.

Academy staff will continue to provide remote learning for those pupils unable to attend due to Covid-19 related absence if the home supports the technology. All Diverse Academies Trust academies will provide online learning resources for their respective cohorts during any period of closure and partial closure (for example a year bubble needing to self-isolate).

3 Attendance and wider monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance during times of Covid-19 enforced lockdown closures

In the event of full closure to the majority of pupils, all Diverse Academies Trust academy settings will record the daily attendance of vulnerable children including those with EHCP and/or the children of key workers. This daily attendance sheet will be submitted to the DfE by 1200h in accordance with the March 2020 guidance as set out in the link below.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings

Since full re-opening on 1 September 2020, Diverse Academies Trust safeguarding teams and social workers expect all to attend school – the respective academy will then follow up, first day absence calls on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, following the protocol issued by the Trust designated safeguarding lead (DSL):

1. Diverse Academies Trust shall adopt the usual practice of first day calls – ‘safe and well’ checks – for any child not attending an academy setting. Once the parent/carer has established the cause of the absence with the academy – all authorised Covid-19 related absence will be in accordance with the DfE guidance – using recognised Covid-19 codes in the respective academy management system
2. In the event of a full re-closure each academy will be able to provide an on-call DSL in the event that they cannot provide an on-site DSL for vulnerable and key worker children. Any concerns when in an academy hub should be reported to the respective DSL/DDSL – this will then be logged on the relevant My Concern within 24 hours
3. Appropriate arrangements remain in place for the safe drop off and pick up of young children. No one under 10 years of age can go home unaccompanied

4. Safeguarding officers must ensure that parental written permission/consent for children of primary school age (Year 5 and 6 and must be over the age of 10) to go home independently is in place
5. Any enquiries around safeguarding or attendance practice should continue to be fed through to the Trust DSL where it will be managed from the centre.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, academy safeguarding staff will notify the child's social worker.

4 The role of the academy Designated Safeguarding Lead

During the period of Covid-19 arrangements – including partial closure and bubble isolation; the DSL shall ensure that the academy safeguarding processes and procedures remain in place. The DSL and the wider safeguarding team shall ensure that provision is in place for those attending and those absent from the academy.

Liaison with outside agencies and where applicable, home visits should continue to take place, prioritising vulnerable children and families.

In the event of a partial closure it is important that all academy staff and volunteers 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 or a designated deputy, will continue to attend all multi-agency meetings which are likely to be conducted remotely until further notice.

5 Reporting a concern

There are no changes to the measures outlined in the main safeguarding policy 2020

Where DAT staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Trust safeguarding policy, this includes making a report via My Concern, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of DAT staff cannot access their My Concern from home, they should email the respective designated safeguarding lead, deputy safeguarding lead and principal. This will ensure that the concern is received and logged.

DAT staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Normal safeguarding whistleblowing protocols are applied.

Concerns around the designated safeguarding lead should be directed to the principal.

Concerns around the principal should be directed to the executive principal.

DAT will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

6 Safeguarding training and induction

DSL and wider safeguarding training continues during Covid-19 pandemic.

The expectation is that accredited, mandatory training is prioritised and delivered via online platforms and training providers.

The Trust will facilitate training opportunities through 2020-21 via the Institute, with a priority being placed on the core safeguarding team in each academy

All existing academy staff continue to have safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

In the unlikely event that staff are deployed from another education establishment or children's workforce setting to any DAT academy, the trust 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 academy child protection policy appendix, access to the DAT safeguarding policy 2020, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

7 Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter any DAT academy or other educational setting (such as alternative provision) or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the trust will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their settings, 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.

In the unlikely event that staff are deployed from another educational setting to our academies due to new Covid-19 arrangements, the trust 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

Where the academy is 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.

Diverse Academies 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.

DAT 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'.

In the event of educational settings reverting to lockdown arrangements (as seen March to September) all referrals should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any academy is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be on site and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, all Diverse Academy Trust academies will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

8 Online safety in Diverse Academies Trust hubs and academies

All Diverse Academies Trust academies will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in an academy setting, appropriate supervision will be in place.

A 'live online lessons protocol' is available on request, with parents asked to complete an 'opt out' reply form if they do not wish their child to attend online timetabled lessons with a teacher, in the event of a school, year group or bubble closure due to Covid-19.

All trust staff adhere to the agreed online learning protocols and safeguarding checks.

9 Children and online safety away from Diverse Academies Trust academies

At all times and in all situations, 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 trust child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police. The threat of online safety being compromised will be heightened during times that children are doing the majority of their learning from home.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the MAT code of conduct – Diverse Academies staff have received the revised live lessons protocol (November 2020).

The Academy senior leaders, in conjunction with trust IT personnel will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

All staff must follow the revised protocols around live lessons/recorded lessons using Microsoft Teams.. This revised guidance was issued by the trust direct to principals during the week ended 20 November 2020.

Below are some key considerations when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved (further detail is outlined in the specific protocol):

- No 1:1s, groups only
- 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
- The live class 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 and follow the usual academy timetable where possible
- Language must be professional and appropriate
- Staff must only use MS Teams approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date, and attendance of any sessions held.

10 Supporting children not attending academy settings due to Covid-19 related absence

Diverse Academies Trust 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 My Concern, as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The respective academy and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. The most vulnerable children identified by the DSL in each academy should have a 'safe and well' call twice per week. All other vulnerable children (including those on an EHCP) should have contact at least ONCE per week.

All communications should be logged using the academy logging system and when necessary, My Concern.

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

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

Academies 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 and parents need to be aware of the trust expectation that the vast majority of pupils should attend school unless they meet the strict Government criteria for authorised Covid-19 absence.

11 Supporting children attending academy settings during the Covid-19 pandemic

Diverse Academies Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Diverse Academies Trust academies will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site. Ensuring staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Diverse Academies Trust academies will refer to the latest government guidance on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other health and safety measures to limit the risk of spread of Covid-19.

Diverse Academies Trust will continue to work with respective trade unions to ensure that the health and safety, safeguarding, and other arrangements set out in each academy are fit for purpose, meet the latest guidelines and mitigate risk as far as possible.

The trust will ensure that where we specifically care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children across our sites – in the event of a partial or full Covid-19 closure; we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on My Concern.

Where the academy has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our designated safeguarding lead or first aiders – they will discuss them immediately with the trust.

12 Peer on peer abuse

Diverse Academies Trust adheres to the guidance as stated in KCSIE 2020.

Concerns and actions continue to be recorded on My Concern and appropriate referrals made.

13 Support from the multi-academy trust

The trust central safeguarding team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the respective DSLs to carry out their role effectively.

This may include, remotely accessing child protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance, and direction.

The MAT will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.

In the event of a full closure, depending on the timeframe, the trust safeguarding checklist for re-opening will be activated in response to any change in local or national conditions.

Each academy will carry out the following:

- A full risk assessment is carried out prior to any staff or students admitted onto any Diverse Academies Trust site
- Adequate PPE issued to academies and routinely used by trained staff in order to address symptoms and conditions present in any child at any Diverse Academies Trust academy setting
- Academy hubs will revert to academy settings in the event of a wider school re-opening – children being accommodated in hubs, that are not their usual place of study, will move back to their home academy
- All relevant Covid-19 safeguarding protocols above will still apply for those not in any academy setting
- Usual safeguarding protocols are to be followed in accordance with the trust safeguarding policy by staff working with children in an academy setting

- A dedicated safeguarding team off-site is identified and tasked by leadership to continue to conduct 'safe and well' calls and execute their safeguarding duties to children and families not present in an academy setting until further notice
- Dedicated off-site safeguarding includes at least once weekly contact with children and families who are vulnerable, have an EHCP or those at risk of becoming vulnerable, in accordance with the Covid-19 arrangements
- Identified teams of staff dedicated to delivering educational provision online follow the trust safeguarding policy in accordance with the agreed protocols. Including recording of disclosures /observed safeguarding concerns
- Staff in academy settings report directly through to DSL/DDSL on site
- Staff conducting remote safeguarding 'safe and well' calls report directly through to the DSL / DDSL via the usual channel.

This policy appendix will be reviewed in light of revisions to the DfE Covid-19 pandemic instructions to schools and early years settings.