



Queen Mary's Grammar School  
Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

# COVID-19 QMGS SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY UPDATE

## January 2021

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the following:

- QMGS Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#)

The Department for Education have updated guidance for schools and Early Years providers. The key document that has been published should be used alongside this policy update:

**Restricting attendance during the national lockdown**

**Schools Guidance for all schools in England January 2021**

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## **Walsall Safeguarding Partnership**

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership continue to provide an informed and effective leadership. As a reminder, they would like to reiterate the Government and NHS guidelines about maintaining good hygiene: only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work, and stay two metres away from other people outside of your household.

On 5th January 2021 England entered a further period of lockdown measure and this document outlines schools responsibilities in relation to this, this does not replace our schools wider Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

### **Purpose**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remains ***everyone's responsibility***. Consequently, everyone who comes into contact with our children, whether it is those in our settings during this period of lockdown or those students learning remotely, has a role to play in safeguarding and child protection. In doing so, all staff and volunteers should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, ***what is in the best interests of the child***.

### **Vulnerable children and young people**

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)



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- care leavers
- others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially our Designated Safeguarding Lead 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.

Queen Mary's 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 Lead [Lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk) for children who are looked after and previously looked after. The lead person for this in school will be Graham Collins.

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 increased risk. In circumstances where a parent/carer does not want to bring their child to school, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Graham Collins will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent/carer.

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

Queen Mary's will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school.

### **Procedures for managing child concerns**

Despite the emergency nature of the current situation everyone in school has a role of recognising and responding to potential indicators of abuse and neglect, all action should be taken by those with statutory powers to help the child. Early contact and close liaison with such agencies are therefore regarded as essential by our school.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that children are identified, and the appropriate agency involved if there are actual or suspected case of child abuse by adults, parents, or any other adult.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead or a named staff member will attend any reviews called by the Local Authority by Skype or other means of social distancing and may call on appropriate members of staff for reports.

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## **Attendance and monitoring**

Vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers can attend school. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are advised not to attend school. A register of those within the Critical Worker and Vulnerable children provision will be taken daily and any absences followed up accordingly.

We will work with parents/carers to encourage the pupil to attend school, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate.

We will continue to record attendance as normal.

We will complete safe and well checks for those vulnerable pupils that are not attending regularly.

Our schools DSL and leadership team are best placed in determining the frequency of safe and well checks based on a pupil's risk rating.

We will use the following code's for recording attendance:-

**C** Leave of absence authorised by the school where a pupil is:

A vulnerable child whose parents have chosen not to send their child to school after the child has been invited in by the school. The parent "should let the school know that the pupil will not be attending", and the DfE "expects schools and colleges to grant such applications for leave given the exceptional circumstances". This is unless another absence code is more suitable.

The child of a critical worker who does not wish to send their child to school in line with the prior agreement that had been established. Critical worker parents and carers "should let schools know if their child will not be attending".

**X** Any vulnerable child who is shielding, self-isolating or quarantining or where the school and parents agree that the pupil would be better suited to remote learning as oppose to attending the Critical worker and Vulnerable pupil provision.

Pupils that are not expected to be in school due to the national lockdown restrictions.

To support the above, we will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

## **Children learning remotely and Online Safety**

Staff in Queen Mary's understand how to maintain effective safeguarding arrangements whilst also providing high-quality remote education and supporting pupil well-being.

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There are clear safeguarding protocols in place to ensure pupils are safe during remote education. It is essential to have and communicate clear reporting routes so that children, teachers, parents and carers can raise any safeguarding concerns in relation to remote education.

Our procedures for ensuring safety are developed alongside Government guidance [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

When we provide remote education using live streaming and pre-recorded videos, teachers understand how to keep children safe whilst they are online alongside Government guidance [Teaching online safety in schools](#). Queen Mary's will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Please view our [Remote Learning Statement](#) here.

Online teaching will follow the same principles as set out in our Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour policy.

Below are some things we consider if there are virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- 1:1s only if agreed with parents'/carers in advance, normally only for well-being checks, music lessons and SEND support
- 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 appropriate.
- Live lessons only occur during normal school hours.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff will only use MS TEAMS via their school Office 365 account for their lessons or for any other forms of video communication with pupils. In addition, all supplementary online written communication within a lesson (or otherwise) will always be via official school Office 365 accounts e.g. Outlook email, SharePoint, Forms etc.
- Staff will monitor engagement and attendance of pupils using MS Insight

It is essential that our pupils are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate communications and online material. As such, our school ensure appropriate procedures, filters and monitoring systems are in place in accordance with the following policies:

- E-Safety
- Web Filtering and Device Monitoring

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Where pupils are using school equipment at home, the ability to filter access is limited. Filtering will be provided to the extent that is possible within the technological constraints the current crisis allows.

Pupils will be reminded regularly about Internet Safety via parental communications, form periods and whole school assemblies and parents will be expected to manage their children's safety whilst at home. Up to date advice and support for parents can be found in the e-safety section of our school website: [E-Safety - Queen Mary's Grammar School \(qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk\)](https://qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk)

Staff delivering teaching online will listen for any cues that indicate a safeguarding concern and report these to the DSL as soon as possible. These cues might include:

- Comments or questions about child abuse or neglect
- Inadequate supervision at home
- The impact of food poverty
- The health status in a family and any young caring responsibilities children have

Our remote learning process ensures children who are being asked to learn remotely have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. We have a dedicated well-being e-mail, [well-being@qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:well-being@qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk) and all pupils have been sent a QR code which they can scan in with their phone should they require SEMH support. As well as reporting routes back to the school we will signpost children to age appropriate practical support through a regular well-being news update and regularly refer to the likes of:

[Childline](#) for support

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content

[CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

### **Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy DSL**

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.

Our school knows that whatever the scenario, it is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL or deputy. **On each day, staff on site will be made aware of that person is and how to speak to them if the DSL or DDSL is not on site.**

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 and will contact Seona Baker (Child Safeguarding Coordinator) or failing that, contact the Local Authority. The senior leader will liaise with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaise with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments in school.

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## **Concerns about an adult**

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in school, they should continue to refer their concern to the head. Concerns about the head should be directed to the Chair of Governors. If any of these people are unavailable due to the Covid-19 context then colleagues must refer the matter to Tina Cooper (LADO) [lado@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:lado@walsall.gov.uk). The matter will then follow usual safeguarding procedures.

We 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.

We will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per Government guidance.

During the COVID-19 period all referrals should be made by emailing [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

## **Safeguarding Training and Induction**

All existing school staff have had 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.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers, Queen Mary's will continue to provide a safeguarding induction.

## **Safer recruitment**

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, Queen Mary's will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our school, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) (KCSIE).

Where Queen Mary's 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity.

As such, we will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020.



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## **Volunteers**

Queen Mary's may use volunteers to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to students and staff members. Other duties may be required such as building test kits, cleaning down areas and directing people.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis in Queen Mary's will be in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer is administering a COVID-19 test whilst un-supervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, the school will follow safer recruitment processes.

## **Mental Health**

Negative experiences and traumatic life events can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Staff are aware of this when considering the setting and expectations of pupils' work where they are learning remotely.

The DfE's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem. Support for pupils and students in the current circumstances can include existing provision in school (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services. You can read the [guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools here](#).

Staff and safeguarding policies are aligned to Government guidance:-

[Mental health related to the Covid-19](#)

[Mentally Healthy Schools](#)



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## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Queen Mary's recognises that during lockdown revised processes may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We 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.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Our school staff are aware and stay alert to domestic abuse, and that the potential for domestic abuse and violence to go unseen is high. We know that many victims will have reduced or limited opportunities to share what is happening to them. We are mindful that some children, whether returning to school, or remaining at home, will have suffered the impact of domestic abuse and we will be vigilant in our professional curiosity and ask those additional questions.

There are a range of resources available to support victims and those working with victims, Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website is being updated regularly and has lots of information on [domestic abuse](#)

## **Key Contacts for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**Head:** Richard Langton

Contact email: [rj-langton@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:rj-langton@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk)

Telephone: 01922 720 696

**Designated safeguarding lead:** Graham Collins

Contact email: [gk-collins@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:gk-collins@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk)

Telephone: 01922 720 696

**Safeguarding and Welfare Officer:** Tom Farnell

Contact email: [t-farnell@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:t-farnell@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk)

Telephone: 01922 720 696

**Safeguarding Governor:** James Picken

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** Tina Cooper

Contact email: [lado@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:lado@walsall.gov.uk)

Telephone: 07432 422205



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**Local Authority Social Care (MASH):**

Contact email: [MASH@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@walsall.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 0300 555 2866  
0300 555 2836 (out of hours service)

**Virtual Head:** Lorraine Thompson  
Contact email: [Lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 07825 860581

**Helpline numbers**

NSPCC Adults Helpline 0808 800 5000 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)  
Refuge 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247  
NSPCC Childline 0800 1111  
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>  
Find your nearest foodbank [Trussell Trust](#)

**Links to associated school policies and procedures**

Links to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• Staff Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Behaviour Policy</li> <li>• Safer Recruitment/DBS policy</li> <li>• E-safety Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEND policy</li> <li>• Allegations Against Staff (Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures)</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Acceptable Use Policy</li> </ul>

