

Birch Copse School COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Based on West Berkshire Council Model Policy for Community, Voluntary Controlled, Community Special, Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units

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5	January 2021 11 th	Updated section 2, 4 and 9	JB

Headteacher	Sign & Date:	
Chair of Governing Board	Sign & Date:	



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1. Key Contacts

Key Contact list for Safeguarding in **Birch Copse School**

	Name	Telephone contact	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr J Micklewhite	0118 9427442	headteacher@birchcopse.wberks.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Mr P Massey Mr K Cooling Mrs S Smith Mrs D Keymer	0118 9427442	c/o htpa@birchcopse.wberks.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs D Vought	c/o 0118 9427442	c/o htpa@birchcopse.wberks.sch.uk

Key Contacts within the Local Authority

Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Procedures: <http://berks.proceduresonline.com/>

	Name	Address	Telephone contact	Email
Contact, Advice & Assessment Service (CAAS)	Duty Social worker	Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD	Professionals only contact number: 01635 503190 Parents only Contact number: 01635 503090 or Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours) Tel: 01344 786543 Fax: 01344 786535	child@westberks.gov.uk
Prevent Officer Thames Valley Police	Prevent officer	Reading Police Station Castle Street Reading RG1 7TH	07788 307 178	Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk
Building communities together Team Manager and PREVENT Lead, WBC	Susan Powell	Council Offices Market St Newbury	(01635) 264703 07881 856801	susan.powell@westberks.gov.uk www.westberks.gov.uk
Service manager for early years, vulnerable learners and families	Avril Alley	Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD	01635 519014	AvrilAlley@westberks.gov.uk



Principal Education Welfare Officer, Lead Officer in Education for Safeguarding, and PREVENT Link for Education	Linda Curtis	Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD	01635 519788	Linda.curtis@westberks.gov.uk
Schools Safeguarding Officer	Joan Ball	Council Offices Turnham's Green Park Pincents Lane Tilehurst Reading Berkshire RG31 4UH	07795333536	joan.ball@westberks.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer Contact can be made via CAAS	Fiona Goussard	Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD	via CAAS on 01635 503190	cpadmin@westberks.gov.uk or cpadmin@westberks.gcsx.gov.uk
Senior Education Welfare Officer,	Sally-Ann Looker	Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD	01635 519789	sal.looker@westberks.gov.uk
Virtual School Headteacher	Robin Douglas	Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD	01635 503195	Robin.Douglas@westberks.gov.uk
Exclusions Officer	Roslyn Arthur	Council Offices West Street House West Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 1BD	01635 503409	Roslyn.Arthur@westberks.gov.uk



2. Context

From 20th 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 September 2020 pupils will be expected to return to school

From Tuesday 5th January 2021 parents were again 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 also remain open for vulnerable children and those with an EHCP.**

This addendum should be used in conjunction with the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

3. 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/child in need plan 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 EHC plan will be expected to attend school unless they have a health condition which prevents them from attending.

Those children who have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by education providers or the local authority for example those children who are:

- On the edge of receiving support from childrens social care
- Adopted
- At risk of becoming NEET (not in employment education or training)
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Young carers

Eligibility for free school meals in itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are.

Birch Copse School 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 for this will be Mrs Sarah Smith.

4. Attendance monitoring

We will continue to record attendance in the register and follow up on absences of the pupils who are expected to be in school but where a parent wishes for their child to be absent, we will authorise the absence during this national lockdown period; absence will not be penalised.

All pupils who are not eligible to be in school will be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice. As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they will not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know. This will be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Where any child we expect to attend school doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up their absence with their parents or carers
- Notify a Social Worker if they have one

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Birch Copse School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr Micklewhite

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Mr Massey, Mr Cooling, Mrs Smith and Mrs Keymer

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). Staff will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

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

Best practice 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 member of the senior leadership team will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection files and liaising with the offsite DSL. If you have children attending from another school, liaising with the DSL from their school, and if required, liaising with children's social workers.

6. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy.

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

The school is aware that the number of disclosure from pupils and the number of concerns from staff are likely to increase with pupils returning to school.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report immediately to the DSL/Headteacher

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors:
Mr Mat Graham, or Joint Vice Chairs Mrs Jane Hardie or Mrs Daniela Vought

DSLs will continue to report concerns to CAAS in the usual way.

During office hours call **01635 503190**

Out of office hours, Emergency Duty Team Tel: **01344 786543**

7. Safeguarding Training and induction

Designated Safeguarding Lead training is available via remote learning from the Local authority.

The DSL and deputies will make sure that their training is refreshed every two years.

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

Free online Safeguarding training is available for staff.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the school, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, 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 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

8. 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, Birch Copse School 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 (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.

If the school 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.

Birch Copse School 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.

Birch Copse School 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

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, **(School)** will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 169 in KCSIE 2020.

9. Children and online safety.

Birch Copse School will continue to provide a safe environment for pupils including online.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and report any concerns immediately to the DSL

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

Birch Copse School will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider if delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Only use online learning platforms once a thorough risk assessment has been completed and you can show that actions have been taken to negate Safeguarding risks, and that additional staff are available to cover these lessons/activities.
- Make sure the platform has sufficient security, use passwords and waiting rooms.
- You must receive permission from parents/carers for their children to be involved.
- Ensure all pupils have access to the required equipment to access online learning.
- The recording of lessons must be inline with GDPR.
- A code of conduct should be agreed for pupils and staff online.
- Staff should encourage pupils to place themselves in front of a plain background if possible. This will cut down the possibility of anyone else coming in to view and reduce the possibility of bullying due to their home environments. Or use the “blur background” option if available.
- When emailing pupils copy in a parent/carer and a member of the senior management team.
- Do not use whatsapp to contact pupils, parents or to have professional discussions with colleagues, it is not GDPR compliant and may blur professional lines. In these circumstances School email addresses should be used.
- Staff should dress appropriately and always use professional language.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and participation of any sessions held.

All staff at Birch Copse School should remind themselves of the following policies:

- Staff code of conduct
- ICT/Acceptable use policy
- Social media guidance.

Additional guidance can be found here:

- You can find all the DfE related updates here: [DfE Remote Teaching](#) . DfE have set up a free **Professionals Online Safety Helpline** which supports the online safeguarding of both children and professionals. Call **0344 381 4772** or email helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- NSPCC [Undertaking remote teaching safely](#) | <https://coronavirus.lgfl.net/safeguarding>

9.1 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides

10. Supporting children not in school

Birch Copse School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all of 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 the pupils file.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, and door-step visits (observing social distancing). Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

11. Safeguarding all children

Birch Copse School Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line with the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and child protection policy.

Face coverings will be used by staff and pupils in line with government advice and school policy.

11.1 Children returning to school

The DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before the child returns.

If this is the case for your school include: The DSL (and deputy) will be given more time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as more children return to school.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see pupils in person.

11.2 Children at home

The school will maintain contact with children who are not attending school.

Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home.

Staff and volunteers will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls ts DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

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

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

Birch Copse School 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 need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Birch Copse School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded appropriately.

12. Supporting children in school

Birch Copse School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Birch Copse School will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Birch Copse School 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 COVID19.

Birch Copse School will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded appropriately.

13. Peer on Peer Abuse

Birch Copse School recognises that during the partial closure a revised process may have be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where the 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 of the Child Protection Policy.

The school 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.

Concerns and actions must be recorded, and appropriate referrals made.

All staff will be sent this additional policy to read and to will sign to say they have read and understood the content.

If staff are working from home they will be asked to email confirming the above.

