

Addendum to Safeguarding Children Policy (Including Child Protection) March 2020 due to Coronavirus COVID-19.

This addendum is written due to the unprecedented times we have due to Coronavirus COVID-19 and its impact on how Rigby Hall School can safeguard its children. We no longer see our children and families on a daily basis but we still have a responsibility to monitor and report any safeguarding concerns that we have and ensure that these are acted upon.

It is the responsibility of the whole school to ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are followed and this guidance will clarify roles and responsibilities during this period.

Governors

Governors need to be aware of the interim safeguarding advice released by the government on Friday 27th March. This has been shared with both the Chair of Governors and the Safeguarding Governor along with details of what staff have done in order to ensure the safeguarding of our pupils.

Governors will be in contact with the school Head (deputy DSL) and Deputy Head (DSL) for updates as and when needed.

Any changes in guidance will be communicated to the Governors by the DSL.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

It is the responsibility of the DSL to coordinate the contact with parent carers and ensure that we have a clear picture of the well-being of all our pupils.

The pupils have been divided between the Welfare team, Samantha Hayward (DSL), Shelley Hughes (DDSL and Primary Assistant Headteacher), Ben Homer (DDSL and Secondary Assistant Headteacher), Rebecca Harrison (Complex and SLD Phase Lead), Kelly Ferran (Key Stage 3 Phase Lead), Rhian Smith (Key stage 5 Phase Lead), Emma Brookes (class teacher SLD) and Letisha Smith (Pastoral HLTA). Tracey Smith (Headteacher and DDSL) will be making calls to families we identify as particularly vulnerable or where she can support in the volume of calls.

Phone calls must have their number blocked by using 141 before calling on a landline or blocking their number on a mobile. Personal phone numbers should not be shared with parent carers. Tracey Smith, Samantha Hayward and Shelley Hughes have work phone numbers and these have been shared with parents.

Each Phase has been set up with an email address that parent carers can contact Phase Leaders through. Although these are legitimate sources of contact which we will log, in an ideal situation we should try to speak to every parent carer in order to assess the situation and check that they are ok.

All communications between parent carers and the welfare team should be logged as an update on My Concern, that way we have a running log of what is happening for a family. Communications range between once a week and five times a week, dependent on the needs of the family. The number of calls to families can change dependent on arising need or concerns of the DSL and DDSL's.

The DSL is tracking the number of calls, emails or texts made to ensure no one is missed out. The Headteacher is tracking the changes in responses to monitor any concerns that may arise. In the event of not being able to contact a parent carer or a welfare concern one of the team will go to the house to check on the family.

When the school is open there MUST be a DSL or DDSL on site. The staff who are in school need to know which member of staff that is and ensure that they report any concerns to them. The DSL must know which staff are working in the building on that day.

Currently the school does not intend to run as a hub and is not expecting to use volunteers in the school. However, in the unlikely event that this should occur, it is the DSL's responsibility to ensure that all the relevant DBS checks are made and recorded on the single central record. These staff will need to be inducted and this will be the responsibility of the DSL.

The school will need to know who should be in school on each day and if they are not there the reason why. Any attendance should be reported to the DFE using the form provided.

The DSL has compiled a document that lists all the pupils who are Looked After with Social Workers, their contact details, authorities and the Virtual school Head. This document also contains the names of the Previously Looked After Children and those with allocated social workers through Children With Disabilities or safeguarding. This list is kept securely by the DSL and DDSL and is vital to ensure that we have communication with key agencies. Contact with social workers will be made and updates given on a regular basis.

The DSL is also the Designated teacher for Looked after children. She is responsible for ensuring LAC reviews and PEP reviews continue. This may be in the form of telephone calls or skype calls. As best as possible the DT will gain the child's view to record on the PEP, where they are non-verbal she will speak to carers to gain a perspective. All PEPS are completed on an online platform and are an official document.

If the DSL and DDSL's formal training runs out of date during this period of time they can continue to act as DSL. We will however, access the DSL refresher training on SSS CPD if the pandemic continues beyond September 2020.

Class teachers and teaching assistants.

There is no expectation to contact your parent carers through phone contact. Teachers may be occasionally asked to email parent carers with additional work however this is usually coordinated through the Phase Leaders. If there is a response that indicates any welfare concerns or positives then these need to be logged on my concern. Additionally if a parent carer contacts the class teacher or teaching assistant for advice or support this should be flagged through the usual process of reporting a concern on My Concern, where the DSL can process it, act upon it and log it.

There may be times when the Designated Teacher or DSL (Sam Hayward) may request reports on the child's academic and social emotional wellbeing for a meeting or a review.

Staff Conduct

At No point should a member of staff use any video platform to contact a parent carer or a child, new government guidance states you should not use WhatsApp either.

Any phone calls made should have the number blocked using 141 before a landline or blocking the mobile number. Private numbers should not be shared with a parent, carer or child.

Any concerns about the conduct of staff should be reported to the Headteacher who will investigate, as per the safeguarding policy and reported to the LADO if required.

Risks to our pupils

In this difficult time our pupils will be exposed to some changing risks that will impact on their wellbeing.

Parent carers have been contacted and given the work phone number of the DSL and the DDSL as well as the email address wellbeing@rigbyhall.worcs.sch.uk to contact school if they have a safeguarding concerns, these may include some of the following issues.

It is likely that some of our pupils will be increasingly using gaming platforms. This will lead to a risk of peer on peer abuse and online bullying. It is important that we as staff are aware of this and ensure that our parent carers are aware if this is reported. Questions about online usage should be a regular part of our welfare calls to ensure our pupils are being responsible.

In a similar light parent carers and pupils may be exposed to cybercriminals who are trying to exploit this situation. Parent carers have already been warned of scam Free School Meal vouchers that asked for bank accounts. Similar scams are out there and our parents will be warned of these when we hear about them.

All our parent carers who are entitled to free school meals will receive a voucher to use in supermarkets. This has been actioned and vouchers have been received. It is important to check that the families have the food and resources they need to stay healthy.

If we have concerns about the safety of a child in the home we will increase our monitoring of the family, using phone calls or visiting the family home, we will refer to the Family Front Door in the usual manner and if seriously concerned will call the police to do a welfare check.

Mental health will be a big challenge for our pupils and our parents. Many of our children have high levels of anxiety in normal times, and this will escalate now. Regular contact through phone calls and twitter will support them, ensuring that any medication is available. We have tweeted out local mental health support groups for our parent carers to access and we have contact with CAMHs workers. We can flag up support networks such as Childline to support our children, this will be put on our website.

Bereavement is likely to be our biggest challenge in the coming months. We will be dealing with families who will have lost loved ones and friends, who may well become hospitalised themselves. It is important that at these times we contact organisations such as The Primrose Hospice and Winston's Wish to try and support our pupils and families. We will coordinate a list of agencies that can support our families if and when this time arises.

Rigby Hall school aims to ensure our pupils, parent carers, staff and governors stay happy and healthy throughout this difficult time. Our commitment to safeguarding our pupils remains as strong as ever.