



**Brownhill**  
LEARNING COMMUNITY

# COVID-19 Child protection and safeguarding policy

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## Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home wherever possible and for schools to remain open only for keyworkers' children (who absolutely need to attend, who cannot safely be cared for at home) and for children who are vulnerable (who have an allocated social worker and/or an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan and their needs are unable to be met at home).

This addendum of Brownhill Learning Community's (BLC) Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

1. Vulnerable Children
2. Attendance Monitoring
3. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
4. Reporting a Concern
5. Safer Recruitment/Volunteers/Movement of Staff
6. Online Safety
7. Supporting Children not in School
8. Supporting Children in School

## **1. Vulnerable Children**

Includes those who have a social worker and children and young people with EHC Plans.

Those with an EHC Plan have been risk assessed by SMT/SLT to determine whether they need to attend school during this pandemic or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. The majority of our students with EHC Plans can safely remain at home. SLT/SMT have identified the students with EHC Plans who should continue to attend school.

BLC will continue to work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

The expectation is that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend school, so long as they do not have any underlying health conditions that would put them at risk to do so. Where a parent does not want their child to attend the social worker and BLC staff will explore the reasons for this with the parent.

If parents are concerned about the risk of their child contracting COVID-19 staff will talk through their anxieties by explaining the current health and safety precautions in place, following advice as set out by Public Health England.

## **2. Attendance Monitoring**

Schools do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance during this period.

BLC staff must follow up on the identified list of vulnerable students who we are expecting to attend who do not. BLC will also follow up with any parent/carer who is a keyworker who has arranged for their child who then does not attend. Admin staff will make daily contact for this group of vulnerable students and keep an electronic record.

BLC staff will confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional numbers when they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their school place (after any period of self-isolation) or discontinues attending, staff will notify the Welfare Team by email so the child's social worker can be notified.

Students who have a social worker who are not attending school will receive a home visit at least once per week by BLC Welfare Team staff. Access to the home should not be made if child or family are self-isolating but a request made to see the child through the window or ideally at the door to be seen at a safe distance.

If the child/young person is not seen during an attempted home visit, then a follow up visit should be made the next working day until they are seen.

### **3. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)**

Existing arrangements in regards to DSL & Deputy DSL posts and responsibilities remain the same as outlined in previous policies

### **4. Reporting a Concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy. This can be done electronically or by telephone (later followed up in writing) if staff are working remotely.

Staff are reminded to report concerns in a timely fashion.

The same process applies regarding whistleblowing, reporting any concerns about adults working with children in the school.

### **5. Safer Recruitment**

Whilst acknowledging the current challenges of this National emergency, it remains essential from a safeguarding perspective that BLC is aware of any staff or volunteers who will be in school and that appropriate checks are undertaken.

### **6. Online Safety**

BLC will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. Appropriate supervision will be in place for students using computers in school.

Online learning can provide staff with the ability to differentiate and cater learning for the children in their own class and their needs. 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 Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to the Welfare team.

We 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 when delivering virtual lessons. These will be done via email only. We do not expect teachers to produce or take part in virtual video lessons;

- No 1:1 emails, groups only – try and maintain a group email including two members of school staff (teacher and TA). Where children create a 1:1 reply remind them of the correct way to reply to the group.
- Students should be encouraged to show the emails to their parents/carers so they are aware of the contact being made
- In classes that have more than one teacher for the different subjects, the form teacher will be the point of contact and will provide learning for their own form class.
- If a child makes a disclosure via email, the usual safeguarding process should be applied.
- The emails between staff and students must not be deleted, to ensure that we have a record of any dialogue should any issues arise. This is to safeguard both staff and students.
- Teachers are not expected to continually check their emails. However, there is no reason why they cannot be checked daily and those which require a response should be replied to within a reasonable amount of time.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, from both staff and students.
- Ground rules with students about appropriate use should be made clear
- Staff need to consider child/young person's mental health when making requests to access additional work whilst they are at home
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils – only school email addresses must be used, via our server.

Any children who are unable to access online learning, must be provided with a hard copy of the equivalent learning.

Staff working remotely who do not have access to a work mobile phone and are using their personal phone for work purposes must ensure they withhold their contact number and only make contact with parents **and not** directly with students. Staff should not have student's mobile phone numbers This assumes that most staff's phone contracts include unlimited data and calls. If this is not the case staff should contact their line manager to discuss financial reimbursement.

## **7. Supporting Children not in School**

Weekly welfare calls need to be made to ensure regular pastoral support for children who are not accessing school. These will be made by the form teacher and T.A. Records of weekly calls need to be recorded on the communication log on SIMS with staff member's initials of who has made the call. If there is no response to the call, a follow up call must be made the following working day. If after three day's attempts there is still no response, then notification should be made to the Welfare Team.

Any student/family who is known to BLC Welfare Team will continue to receive support/intervention. This will be overseen by the Welfare Lead.

Any concerns arising from these contacts of a safeguarding nature should be referred to the Welfare Team.

BLC recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people and the current circumstances can affect their mental health and their parents/carers. BLC will provide an in-house telephone counselling service that students and parents can access. This service will be provided by BLC's qualified counsellors. Teaching staff need to be aware of the mental health impact in setting expectations of work being set to complete at home.

## **8. Supporting Children in School**

BLC will continue to be a safe space to attend. Head teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff need to be flexible to ensure that student's needs are met safely.

BLC will adhere to Government guidance for education on how to implement social distancing and following advice from Public Health England.

## **9. Off-site provision**

BLC Learning Support Lead will oversee the vulnerable students who access alternative or off-site provision by following usual processes and procedures. BLC Home Tuition Lead will be responsible for co-ordinating contact and visits for home tutored students.