



## COVID-19 PLT academy closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

January 2021 – Review 2

### WEBSITE VERSION

<b>Approved by:</b>	<u>Senior Leadership Teams</u> Werneth Hathershaw OSFC	<b>Date:</b> w/b 25/1/21
	Trust Board (via Chair and Safeguarding Lead)	w/b 25/1/21
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	25/1/21	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	1/3/21 (or earlier depending on return to education timings)	

## Context

From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 parents/carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools/colleges to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend. This was the second lockdown affecting academy opening following the March 2020 closure.

Schools, colleges 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. In this lockdown, schools and colleges were asked to make sure additional provision was made for those children and young people with limited access to online learning.

Despite the conditions of the lockdown, each PLT academy Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This addendum of each PLT academy Safeguarding & Child Protection policy is in response to the latest Government guidance:

### Contents

Context	2
Key contacts	3
Vulnerable Children	4
Attendance Monitoring	4
Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session	5
Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not	5
Designated Safeguarding Leads	6
Reporting a Concern	6
Safeguarding Training and Induction	8
Safer Recruitment/Volunteers and Movement of Staff	9
Online Safety in School/College	10
Children and Online Safety Away From School/College	10
Supporting Children Not In School/College	11
Supporting Children in School/College	12
Peer on Peer Abuse	13
Support from the Trust Executive Team	13

## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Leads	<b>Werneth</b> Jonathan Bell <b>Hathershaw</b> Ashley Travis <b>OSFC</b> Mark Crilly	<p>During school opening hours, please use the main contact number for the required academy:</p> <p><b>Telephone Number:</b></p> <p>Werneth: 0161 770 5333</p> <p>Hathershaw: 0161 770 8555</p> <p>OSFC: 0161 287 8000</p> <p><b>Email:</b></p> <p>Werneth: <a href="mailto:support@wernethprimary.org.uk">support@wernethprimary.org.uk</a></p> <p>Hathershaw: <a href="mailto:support@hathershaw.org.uk">support@hathershaw.org.uk</a></p> <p>OSFC: <a href="mailto:support@osfc.ac.uk">support@osfc.ac.uk</a></p>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	<b>Werneth</b> Jackie Hodgkiss Katy Gregory <b>Hathershaw</b> Martina Hutton <b>OSFC</b> Jenny King	
Principals	<b>Werneth</b> Jonathan Bell <b>Hathershaw</b> Mark Giles <b>OSFC</b> Jayne Clarke	
Executive Principal	Jayne Clarke	
Chairs of Governors	<b>Werneth</b> Suzannah Reeves <b>Hathershaw</b> Ateeque Ur-Rehman <b>OSFC</b> Irene Howard	
Chair of Trust Board	Andrew Kilburn	
Trust Board safeguarding lead	Dave McEntee	

Local Authority Designated Officer	Colette Morris	07583 101863	<a href="mailto:Colette.morris@oldham.gov.uk">Colette.morris@oldham.gov.uk</a>
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Emergency/ Out of Hours Contacts	Contact Details
<b>Police</b>	101 Non-Emergency      999 Emergency
<b>Oldham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub</b> MASH, Level 9, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UT	0161 770 7777 <a href="mailto:child.mash@oldham.gov.uk">child.mash@oldham.gov.uk</a>
<b>The Emergency Duty Team</b> Adults and Children- Out of Hours Social Work Service for People in Crisis: 5.00pm - 9.00am, Mon to Fri- 24 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays.	0161 770 6936
<b>NSPCC</b> Whistleblowing Advice Line Worried about a child?	0800 028 0285 <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a> 0808 800 5000

## 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 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.

Other vulnerable groups will be invited into PLT academies in line with current government guidance as of 6th January 2021.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a PLT academy place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home. If, following risk assessment, this is not the case, a plan for their care for the duration of the closure of the relevant PLT academy will be agreed with the local authority and parents/carers accordingly, the outcome of which will be recorded on CPOMS/MyConcern/Cedar.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability. Children and young people in receipt of free school meals or a bursary payment continue to be supported by the relevant PLT academy through direct payments/vouchers.

All PLT 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 for this will be: Werneth: Katy Gregory (Assistant Principal), Hathershaw: Ashley Travis (Vice Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead), Mark Crilly (Assistant Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead).

In circumstances where a parent does not want to send their child to an education setting, and their child is considered to be in a formal vulnerable category (have an EHCP and/or Social Worker involvement), individual academies will conduct a risk assessment to determine whether the decision is in the child's best interests and to ensure that they can be well cared for at home.

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

## **Attendance Monitoring**

From the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, PLT academies should follow the below guidance:

- Each PLT academy will resume taking an attendance register
- Each PLT academy will use the codes suggested by the DFE in accordance with their setting
- Each academy will submit daily attendance figures using the [educational setting status form](#).
- At the end of each two-week period, each academy will be required to return a Vulnerable Groups return to the Local Authority to aid them in their monitoring and follow-up

The relevant academy and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school/college – the academy will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The relevant academy will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged for their child(ren) to return to school and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend, and for looked-after children this will be confirmed with Virtual School Heads.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the relevant academy will notify their social worker, if applicable.

If for any reason whilst making ‘safe and well’ calls to pupils, staff are unable to get hold of a family, the DSL (or deputy) must be informed and appropriate contacts made to ensure the child/young person is safe. In instances where attendance is continually poor and engagement is low, DSLs may consider whether there are grounds for a referral on the grounds of educational neglect.

### **Monitoring Engagement**

During the period of partial closure, we will monitor student engagement with remote learning and non-engagement will be followed up accordingly. The main focus for all staff will be to ascertain if there are any underlying welfare issues and to take into consideration the home situation of the child/young person. Throughout any follow-up, all staff should be mindful if the student is ‘vulnerable’ and if there is a safeguarding concern. If so, staff should follow the process outlined in the college/school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This includes making a report via MyConcern/CPOMS, which can be done remotely. If a vulnerable child/young person does not engage with remote learning, a member of the safeguarding team may choose to notify their social worker and/or local authority virtual school head (VSH) accordingly.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads**

Each academy within the Trust has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Jonathan Bell (Werneth), Ashley Travis (Hathershaw) and Mark Crilly (OSFC).

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Jackie Hodgkiss & Katy Gregory (Werneth), Martina Hutton (Hathershaw) and Jenny King (OSFC).

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 - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to My Concern (Werneth), CPOMS (Hathershaw) or Cedar/CPOMS (OSFC) and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

It is important that all Trust 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 & DDSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## **Reporting a Concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in their academy's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy; this includes making a report via My Concern (Werneth) or CPOMS (Hathershaw/OSFC), which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their safeguarding reporting package from home, they should email the relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead and Principal. This will ensure that the concern is received.

For concerns where a child/young person may be at **immediate risk of harm**, staff are expected to directly contact the DSL, Deputy DSL or member of SLT if that concern is during the opening hours of the relevant academy using the appropriate mobile numbers. If this occurs outside of opening hours, and staff are unable to contact the DSL/DDSL or a member of SLT, staff are expected to make contact themselves with the police and/or social care. This would then be followed up by the DSL of the relevant academy during opening hours.

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

Oldham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (Children's Social Care-MASH) contact details are:

Oldham MASH Team  
Level 9 Civic Centre,  
West Street,  
Oldham,  
OL1 1UT  
0161 770 7777

<https://adt.oldham.gov.uk/mashreferrals/WROOMASH.aspx>

Should a child be at risk of significant harm in the academy's view, and local agencies are not able to respond, the academy will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure, available here:

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/lscb/download/downloads/id/18/thresholds\\_for\\_assessment](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/lscb/download/downloads/id/18/thresholds_for_assessment)

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the academy, they should report the concern to the relevant Principal. If the Principal is not physically available, for example due to working from home, the report should be done verbally by telephone and followed up with an email to the Principal.

Concerns around any Principal should be directed to the Executive Principal: Jayne Clarke.

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

## **Staff Will Be Aware of Increased Risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below).

Colleagues will be mindful that there may be an increase of new concerns and disclosures from children as they return to the academy buildings. For some children, this may be the first time they have had access to a trusted adult since lockdown.

Staff will inform the relevant DSL about any concerns they have regarding any child or the child's parents/ families immediately.

## **Safeguarding Training and Induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place in person whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. Each academy DSL should consider whether accessing online training would be beneficial.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training. However, DSLs should continue to make best endeavours to source appropriate online training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

All existing PLT academy staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The relevant DSL should 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 are employed or deployed by the Trust, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction, which can be facilitated remotely where necessary

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to any of the Trust's academies, 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

For movement within the Trust, academies can obtain assurance that the member of staff has an up to date DBS in place and has received appropriate safeguarding training via the Trust HR department ([HR@osfc.ac.uk](mailto:HR@osfc.ac.uk)).

Upon arrival at an academy other than their usual 'base', staff should be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

### **Safer Recruitment/Volunteers and Movement of Staff**

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged- see the 'key contact details' above.

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, the Trust 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 staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to any of the Trust's academies, 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

Where the Trust 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.

The Trust 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.

The Trust 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](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk)

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that each academy 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, each academy will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **Online Safety in Schools and Colleges**

The Trust will continue to provide a safe environment. This includes the use of an online filtering system within PLT academies.

It is not possible for filtering software to operate remotely on devices used outside of the buildings, so it is the responsibility of academies to communicate with young people and parents, for example through email or social media, on how to protect themselves against online risk.

Where students are using computers in any of the academies, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Staff will be mindful that lots of children will have been accessing online platforms and the internet more than usual and therefore may have been at increased risk of online bullying, coercion and possible grooming in relation to CSE, CCE and Radicalisation/ Extremism. As more children return to the academy buildings, it is a good time to recap online safety information and remind children how to report concerns. Staff will also need to communicate this message with those children who are still accessing work from home.

## **Children and Online Safety Away From Schools and Colleges**

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 & Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the code of conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2019.

The Trust 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:

- 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, or blank
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day. Teachers should also be mindful of the health implications for both themselves and children/young people of lengthy periods of inactivity
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should keep a record of the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the academy, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the academies approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the academy (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

## **Supporting Children Not In School/College**

The 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/college, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. A record of contact that has been made should be kept - CPOMS (Hathershaw and OSFC). At Werneth the record of calls will be logged on a secure spreadsheet accessible only to the DSL and deputies. Any safeguarding concerns will also be logged onto My Concern.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, doorstep visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Each academy and their DSL Team will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication.

The DSL Team will review the process for making contact with families and the outcomes of any resulting conversations regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the relevant DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

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

The Trust recognises that school/college 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 across the Trust need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

- Werneth class teachers/ support staff will contact their pupils at least once a week via telephone, and conversations will be logged centrally. The DSL, or deputy DSL will make weekly welfare calls to pupils who school have identified as vulnerable but are remaining at home during this period of national lockdown.
- At Werneth, daily phone calls will be made to those families where the children are not engaging with remote learning.
- At Werneth, if staff are unable to make contact with families on four consecutive days the DSL or deputy DSL will make further attempts to contact and may conduct home visits.
- At Hathershaw, contact will be made at least weekly by either the Year Manager/Support staff, the SENCO or HRC Manager, with the outcome of communication recorded centrally. In addition, all students will receive regular contact via email with wellbeing and safeguarding information, advice and guidance.
- At Oldham Sixth Form College, regular contact will be maintained with all students via Google Classroom. Contact with students is reviewed and priorities for contact discussed at all team meetings. For those students in vulnerable categories, contact will be made weekly by designated LSA and other members of the welfare team as required, for all other students Progress Tutors will make arrangements to make contact.

## **Supporting Children in School/College**

The Pinnacle Learning Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children, across all academies.

Each academy will continue to provide a safe space for children to attend and flourish. Each academy Principal will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The Trust 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.

The Trust will ensure that where we have 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.

Where any Principal has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Leads or first aiders – they will discuss them immediately with the Executive Principal.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

The Trust recognises that for those children accessing work from home a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

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

The academy 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 on My Concern (Werneth), CPOMS (Hathershaw) or Cedar/CPOMS (OSFC) and appropriate referrals made.

## **Support from the Trust Executive Team**

The Trust Executive Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable each academy's DSL and SLT to carry out their roles effectively.

This includes remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

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