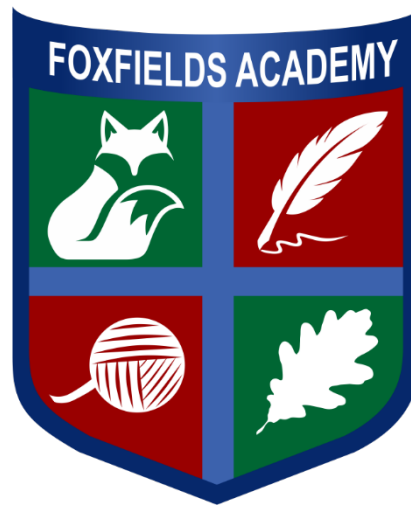


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### **Covid19 Child Protection Policy Addendum:**

#### **COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

This addendum outlines the procedure in the event of any COVID-19 related school closures, or a pupil who is well but unable to attend school due to household isolation.

This addendum is to be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy and Remote Learning Policy.

The information and guidance in this policy is subject to change and alteration as the government advice is updated and the school will follow the latest advice issued by the Department for Education and Public Health England in order to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and our wider communities.

### **Rationale**

In the event of a school closure due to COVID-19 implications, or the need of a household to self-isolate in line with government guidance, Foxfields Academy is committed to safeguarding our pupils.

### **Aims**

This addendum aims to:

- Ensure consistency in the approach of safeguarding pupils who are not in school due to COVID-19 implications
- Set out expectations for all members of the school community with regards to safeguarding our pupils
- Outlines how all members of the school can report concerns throughout any period of self-isolation

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## **Communication**

### Pupils

Throughout the duration of a COVID -19 related absence all pupils will receive a personal remote learning timetable. Within this timetable there will be a weekly opportunity for pupils to have a scheduled social interaction session with their class teacher and/or an identified staff member via the telephone or over Microsoft Teams. This will provide the pupil an emotional check in to discuss any concerns or seek support.

### Parent/Carers

Throughout the duration of a COVID-19 related absence, parents/carers will receive weekly communication with their child's class teacher, to discuss their child's progress with the remote learning provision. This communication will be increased to daily communication if the pupil requires additional support with their remote learning.

A weekly welfare call will be made by the designated safeguarding lead, or deputy designated safeguarding lead in their absence, to provide the opportunity for parents to discuss any welfare concerns they may have.

### Teaching Staff

Efficient contact with all agencies supporting a pupil is key to supporting pupils and families. Teaching staff will continue to communicate with all agencies supporting a pupil, such as a pupil's social worker, throughout the duration of a pupil self-isolating or a school closure due to COVID implications. This communication will continue to be made by the relevant staff members and the Senior Leadership Team will carry out such communication in the absence of identified staff members.

Teaching staff will continue to follow all safeguarding procedures and raise concerns with the DSL or DDSL regarding pupil or family well being throughout the period of COVID-19 related absence.

### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL, or DDSL in their absence, will ensure communication is efficient with all agencies supporting a pupil and attend all scheduled safeguarding meetings throughout any COVID-19 related absence. Where a pupil is known to social care and not attending school as a result of COVID-19 implications, the DSL, or DDSL will immediately inform the social care worker allocated to the case.

In addition to the communications of teaching staff, the DSL, or DDSL in their absence, will have weekly welfare telephone calls with all parents/carers and weekly telephone calls or Microsoft Teams contact with all pupils that are on a safeguarding plan.

If a pupil or family appear to require or request additional support throughout the period of a COVID-19 related absence, the following will be arranged; additional weekly social interaction opportunities for pupils, additional welfare calls for parents/carers and early help support will be sought if required.

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## **Reporting Concerns**

Where staff have a concern about a pupil, they should continue to follow the safeguarding procedures outlined in the Child Protection policy.

**Referrals to Children's Social Care must continue to be made in the usual way. The need to refer a child to social care is unlikely to decrease and may possibly increase during the period of isolation, the school will therefore continue to refer or request a consultation to ensure children remain safe.**

The DSL, and DDSL in their absence, will be contactable for all staff, and parents/carers between the hours of 08.00am and 06.00pm.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lizzie Papworth

Telephone: 07436 336736

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: James Ellis

Telephone: 07725 595382

## **Free School Meals**

In line with the government guidance, at the time, free school meal vouchers will be provided for pupils eligible for free school meals during a period of COVID-19 related absence. The vouchers will be facilitated through school and sent electronically to parents/carers at the earliest convenience.

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The following information related to the Government Guidance at the time of the initial National Lockdown. This information will be reviewed and implemented in the event of an enforced school closure, or change in school provision as a result of a National Lockdown.

### **Vulnerable children**

Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance requires schools and the LA to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Whilst the majority of people are being urged to stay at home and adhere to guidance about social distancing, the DfE guidance Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for schools and other educational settings sets a clear expectation that schools stay open and make provision for vulnerable children where education is a protective factor.

### **Children assessed as vulnerable by school**

In addition to the children and young people identified as vulnerable in the recent government guidance, Foxfields Academy will identify children on the edge of social care or who normally receive pastoral-type support in school to ensure their safety and wellbeing. This information will be established through discussion with the designated safeguarding

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lead from the pupil's previous educational establishment and other agencies involved with the pupil.

### **Vulnerable children not in school**

Whilst a number of vulnerable children will attend school regularly, there may be some who do not. It is the role of the school to make day to day decisions based on the vulnerability of a child and it remains the Local Authority Children's Services responsibility to assess and respond to the safeguarding concerns raised by the school, whether or not they are within the identified vulnerable categories. Therefore, given the current circumstances, it is more important than ever for school and Children's Services to work collectively to ensure the safety of our children and to facilitate joint working so appropriate support and interventions are provided.

### **Remote Learning**

All pupils will receive a personal remote learning timetable encompassing the full curriculum offer at Foxfields Academy. Within this timetable there will be a weekly opportunity for pupils to have a scheduled social interaction session with their class teacher and/or an identified staff member via the telephone or over Microsoft Teams. This will provide the pupil an emotional check in to discuss any concerns or seek support. See the Remote Learning Policy for more information.

### **Communication**

In order to respond efficiently and timely to the needs of vulnerable children, communication is vital.

**Communication with parents/carers** – Foxfields Academy will ensure that up to date contact details for parents and other identified responsible adults are kept. Those responsible for safeguarding and home contact will establish best times to call with the parents and a process for follow up if no response is forthcoming. For any child who has another key worker involved e.g. social worker, the school will endeavour to coordinate contact with the home and establish who is calling, when and the purpose of the call, to reduce undue duplication of contact to parents/carers.

**Parents/carers communication with schools** – Foxfields Academy will provide parents/carers with contact details for staff who they can talk to about any concerns and update this regularly to reflect staffing variations. The fixed hours that the school is open, and when the school office is manned, will be communication to parents and carers. Considerations will be made for how key messages can be received outside the school opening hours, and Foxfields Academy will ensure this information reaches those families that do not have access to technology.

**Schools communication with social worker/Early Help and SEND worker** – Efficient contact with a child's social worker or SEND worker is key to supporting pupils and families.

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All communications will be made promptly and recorded via the school's electronic recording system.

### **Making Decisions about Vulnerable Children Attending School**

The school will conduct a risk assessment regarding the vulnerability of every child. The school will determine the frequency of this assessment based on current and of any newly identified needs of a child. This information will be gathered through consultation with any other professionals supporting the pupil, and discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead from the pupil's previous educational establishment.

The majority of the children who are not attending school will be classified as 'not currently vulnerable'. For these children, weekly welfare checks and arrangements for home learning will be made.

If a parent/carer of a vulnerable child (as defined above), does not want them to attend school, the social worker/ SEND caseworker and school staff should joint risk assess in consultation with the parents/carers. Where the child does not have a social worker or SEND caseworker, the risk assessment will be carried by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Senior Leadership Team, the relevant professionals from the pupil's previous educational establishment and together with parents and carers.

The risk assessment should explore the reasons for the parent/carer not wanting the child to come to school and talk through these with them, including any anxieties they may have about the risk of contracting the virus. Efforts will be made to reassure them of the processes that the school are taking to minimise the risk. Each child will be considered individually according to the school environment, the child's needs and family circumstances. The following issues will be taken into account:

- i) The potential health risks to the child from COVID-19, bearing in mind any underlying health conditions and available health advice
- ii) The ability of the child's parent or carer to ensure their health and care needs can be met safely at home
- iii) The level of vulnerability and any associated risks and whether these are likely to increase if the child was not attending school
- iv) The potential impact on the child's wellbeing as a result of any changes to the child's routine or the way in which their provision is delivered
- v) The likelihood of any increased risk to the child if some or all elements of their plan (including EHCP where appropriate) cannot be delivered; including consideration of associated risks if some or all elements of the plan cannot be delivered in the usual way or in the usual setting
- vi) The ability of the school to continue to provide the specific support the child requires, especially if key trusted staff are not available or the school delivers provision from another site
- vii) How easily the child can access another setting which has capacity to meet need

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The risk assessment process is dynamic in order to address any changes to the national advice and guidance as well as any changes associated with school capacity or home circumstances, for each child.

The risk assessment must take the form of, at least, a recorded conversation with agreed actions, ensuring that all appropriate agencies and workers are informed. For children on child protection plans, this will feed into the Covid19 risk assessment completed by the social worker.

The frequency and pace of review will be determined by the nature and level of identified risk for the child within the context of the changing national landscape. However, a risk assessment should be completed at least every two weeks.

### **Risk Assessments**

Following risk assessments, it is expected that children will fall into the following categories, and could move between this over time:

- 1) Attending school in best interests
- 3) Parental choice for child to not attend
  - I. Shielding/self-isolating due to underlying health condition
  - II. Family member shielding for 12 weeks
  - III. COVID19 related illness and self-isolation for 7 days
  - IV. Other illness
  - V. Family member unwell and family self-isolating for 14 days
  - VI. Other appropriate reason
  - VII. No appropriate reason established

Depending on the outcome of the risk assessment for each individual child, there may be increased safeguarding concerns for children whose parents choose not to send them to school although this is considered to be in their best interests. Over time, social isolation is likely to increase pressure on some families. Where pre-existing concerns exist about domestic abuse, for example, some children may be at increased risk of likely significant harm as a result. For these children, school will continue to play a critical safeguarding role.

### **Outcome of Risk assessments**

The senior leadership of the school will have oversight of all the vulnerable pupils during this time. They will be responsible for ensuring appropriate care and welfare, through effective communication, takes place between the parents and the school that reflects the level of vulnerability of the child. Any safeguarding concerns that become apparent during such communication will be managed following the school's safeguarding procedures.

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Following the initial and continual risk assessment, the vulnerable children will be grouped depending on the level of support they require, for example,

1. Those who need daily monitoring
2. Those who need monitoring 3 times per week
3. Those who need weekly monitoring

**All vulnerable children must be contacted on a weekly basis as an absolute minimum.**

### **Recording of contact and actions**

The designated safeguarding lead will hold an up to date current list of identified vulnerable pupils including those who are medically shielding. All communications, agreed actions, and outcomes of risk assessments will be recorded and monitored via the school's electronic recording system. All safeguarding concerns and notes will be recorded as per normal safeguarding practice.

### **Communication plan with parents of vulnerable children**

All welfare communications will be made through telephone calls. Other communications may be made via and email, to those parents/carers that deem this a preferable method of communication. All email correspondence will be carried out through authorised school emails and recorded on the school's electronic system. If telephone contact has not been achieved within a period of seven days, a home visit will be conducted by the designated safeguarding lead and/or a member of the senior leadership team.

As per government guidance, home visiting should be kept to an absolute minimum and all other means of assessing the child's safety should be attempted beforehand. If the child has a social worker the school first will check to confirm if a social worker intends to conduct a visit. The school will follow the social distancing guidelines; check-in visits can be conducted from the doorstep.

**Referrals to Children's Social Care must continue to be made in the usual way. The need to refer a child to social care is unlikely to decrease and may possibly increase during the period of lockdown, the school will therefore continue to refer or request a consultation to ensure children remain safe.**

### **Communication with vulnerable children**

For pupils who are risk assessed as being the most vulnerable, contact should take place with them directly (phone call), in line with the agreed actions from the assessment. Coordination and communication will take place between the school and social care e.g. the child's social worker or early help staff to agree what is being asked and by whom.

**Referrals to Children's Social Care must continue to be made in the usual way. The need to refer a child to social care is unlikely to decrease and may possibly increase**

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**during the period of lockdown, the school will therefore continue to refer or request a consultation to ensure children remain safe**

**DfE coronavirus helpline**  
Telephone: 0800 046 8687

**For further information access:**

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for schools and other educational settings](#)

[Leicestershire County Council: Coronavirus Information](#)

[Guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection](#)