



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Hilltop First School

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Context

As on 20th March 2020, parents were asked **again** to keep their children at home from **6th January 2020**, 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.

This addendum of the Hilltop First School Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lynn Bima	01753863502	safeguardinghilltop@rbwm.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	David Morgan Lucy Johnson	01753863502	safeguardinghilltop@rbwm.org.uk
Headteacher	Lynn Bima	01753863502	safeguardinghilltop@rbwm.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Derek Moss	07771804445	mossd12@rbwm.org.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Derek Moss	07771804445	mossd12@rbwm.org.uk

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.

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 school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

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

Senior Leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support

Hilltop First 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: Lynn Bima

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Hilltop First School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Hilltop First School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Attendance monitoring

Daily attendance registers will be taken for those children attending school, including those that are of Key Worker parents and or vulnerable.

Full attendance data will be forwarded to the DfE daily. Weekly attendance records for Vulnerable pupils will be shared with the borough.

Hilltop First School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Hilltop First School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Hilltop First School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

How will this look in Hilltop First School?

To support the above, Hilltop First School will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Hilltop First School will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Hilltop first school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Lynn Bima

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: David Morgan & Lucy Johnson

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 co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection files 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 Hilltop First School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of 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.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy. Written records should be filed in red class logs and shared with the DSL. In the case of staff working remotely, should refer concerns over the phone and in writing, emailing them to the DSL using the secure FirstClass email system. In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access FirstClass from home, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Any safeguarding or Early Help referrals to the Local Authority should be made by email. Hilltop staff can still use the online safeguarding form and early help form as normal. School staff should only call to alert attention to safeguarding concerns: 01628683150 option 5. Similarly, if a member of school staff would like to speak to a Social Worker to gain advice on a situation, they should send an email to MASH@achievingforchildren.org.uk containing a telephone number in the first instance and the social worker will call them back.

Social workers may be working from home and as a result, may contact school staff using mobile phones to request information. Should school staff need to clarify a social worker's identity, they should ask that the social worker send an email. If a member of Hilltop staff has additional concerns regarding a child who is open to social care, they should continue to contact the social worker or their POD duty worker directly. As ever, if a member of staff has any concern that anyone is at immediate risk of harm, they should call 999.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should follow the current safeguarding policy and report the concern to the Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Derek Moss. The Governors will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. 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.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). Classroom, office and site staff have access to an online safeguarding training portal and have recently completed required updated training. The 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 enter Hilltop First School, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction, as well as a copy of the full COVID-19 compliant school Risk Assessment.

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 (safeguarding) policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

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, Hilltop First 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 (2019) (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.

Where Hilltop First 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.

Hilltop First 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.

Hilltop First 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, Hilltop First School 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

Hilltop First School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Children and online safety away from school

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 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 Schools' code of conduct.

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

The following should be considered when communicating with pupils and families remotely:

- Staff may not use personal telephones or email addresses to communicate with pupils or families
- Staff must only use platforms agreed by Hilltop First School to communicate with pupils
- Language and communication content must be professional and appropriate
- Staff must follow Hilltop School Closure communication Protocols (See Appendix I)

Parents and carers will be offered advice and signposted to useful resources with regard to supporting safe internet use at home.

Supporting children not in school

Hilltop First School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and Young people. Where the SLT 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. The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact or door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. A record of the date and time of contact and any relevant concerns or updates must be recorded in writing and saved in a shared folder accessible to the DSLs and all Team Leaders.

In the case of a child who currently has an allocated Social Worker and the parent does not wish for them to be in school, the Social Worker will be consulted as to whether it is safe for the child to remain at home during the period of school closure.

Door-step visits, either to make contact with families or to deliver food parcels and/or printed learning, will always be carried out by school staff in pairs. Staff will follow PHS Social Distancing guidelines.

Hilltop First School and its 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 parent communication updates.

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

Supporting children in school

Hilltop First School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Hilltop First 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.

Hilltop First 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.

Hilltop First 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 communicated through Team Leaders.

Where Hilltop First School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or First Aiders – will discuss them immediately with the governors and Local Authority.

Attendance data summary for all pupils in school will be communicated with the DfE using the schools secure login platform by 12 noon each day. Full pupil attendance data will be emailed to the LA each evening. Absence of a child who has an allocated Social Worker will be followed up with a phone call to the family. The outcome of the phone call will be shared with the child's Social Worker on the same day.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Hilltop First School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where a 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 multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded in writing and appropriate referrals made.

APPENDIX I: Staff Protocol for communicating with Pupils/ Parents/ Carers during extended school closure

Staff Protocol for communicating with Pupils/ Parents/ Carers during extended school closure

Due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 virus, we, as teachers and other staff members, have started communicating with parents and pupils from online platforms and over the telephone on a more regular basis. Although it is essential that we stay in touch, particularly with those vulnerable families, it is also essential that we put some protocols in place that protect ourselves as well as the families we are communicating with. The Senior Leadership Team have therefore put the following protocols in place and would ask all members of staff to adhere to these points.

- 1) Where possible, staff should contact parents/ carers from a school telephone and must never email using a personal number/ email address. If you are self-isolating and have the consent from the Headteacher, then contacting parents from home can be done ensuring your number is withheld. You should contact the parent/carer prior to your phone call via Class Dojo/Tapestry to inform them of your intention to call from a withheld number.
- 2) Only with permission from the Headteacher, should Zoom calls be made from a teacher's home. In these instances, a 'background' should put on screen to ensure any privacy on the teacher's part. The Zoom calls (from home and from School) should be recorded and saved in the School Closure 20/21 folder in case of any safeguarding concerns or as evidence to anything raised by parents/carers or pupils. 4 weeks after the return to school, these videos can be deleted.
- 3) The use of online platforms, namely Tapestry and Class Dojo, should be restricted to normal working hours (9am until 4.30pm) and during normal term times. This includes responding to messages or 'liking' work that's been sent by a pupil in your class. We understand that there may be times when you will need to message the class or parent directly but parent/ carers will be informed that you are not obliged to respond outside of these working hours.
- 4) When sharing personal 'stories' or messages with pupils/parents/carers, we ask that you don't directly reference (include details/photos) of wives/husbands/partners. However, we do recognise the importance of sharing some of your personal home life with your pupils and therefore will allow staff members, at their own discretion, to include photos/details of your children or pets.
- 5) During the school holidays, to protect your personal life and wellbeing, there is to be minimal contact between staff and children using these online platforms. If the children send photos, messages or videos, staff members can 'like' or send simple emoticon responses. We request that written responses are not used during the school holiday period.
- 6) No contact on any online platform is to take place on weekends. This is considered downtime for teachers and so we are requesting this to protect your personal life and wellbeing.
- 7) All staff will be encouraged to contact 'silent' families, adhering to the protocol set out in point 1. There may be several families who appear to be not engaging with any of the online platforms being used. If this is the case, please contact your team leader. Class teachers are responsible for contacting silent and vulnerable families at least once a week by phone. All telephone contact must be recorded on the silent/vulnerable families tracking sheets
- 8) If at any point you become aware of anything you consider to be a safeguarding issue, you must contact one of the DSLs immediately.
- 9) It is expected that Teachers in Team E & A will set work via class story at least once a day during the school week. Regular 'check-ins' each day are also expected so the children get responses to the work and photos they are submitting. Only when work/photos are shared by student over the weekend period should a response take longer than 1 day.