

Merchant Taylors' School



SAFEGUARDING POLICY ADDENDUM: COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURE ARRANGEMENTS

Policy Custodian: *Second Master*

Approving Governors Committee: *Full Governing Body*

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1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, 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.

Schools 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.

2. The status of this addendum

The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy continues to apply in all respects. This addendum contains details that apply in addition to that policy as a result of the change in circumstances due to COVID-19. It should be read in conjunction with that document and not in isolation.

3. 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.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Leads (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.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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 the DSL at Merchant Taylors' School or Merchant Taylors' Prep.

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 increased 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 Merchant Taylors' School or Merchant Taylors' Prep will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Merchant Taylors' School, Merchant Taylors' Prep or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

4. Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

If Merchant Taylors' School or Merchant Taylors' Prep have any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

If the school has closed, we will complete the return once as requested by the DfE.

Merchant Taylors' School, Merchant Taylors' Prep and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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.

To support the above, Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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, Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep will notify their social worker.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead Availability

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep each have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a Deputy DSL and further staff who are members of the Safeguarding Team.

The optimal scenario is to have a trained member of the Safeguarding Teams available on each site. Where this is not the case a trained member of each Safeguarding Team 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 member of SLT will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include 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 Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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 DSLs or members of the Safeguarding Teams will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

6. 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 includes making/submitting a Record of Concern which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access a Record of Concern from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and another member of the Safeguarding Team. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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

Staff are also reminded to follow up on any concerns they have communicated, including actively seeking confirmation that their concerns have been received (given the inability to physically hand over a form in person).

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should follow the usual procedures as laid down in the Safeguarding Policy. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head Master or Head whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email.

Concerns around the Head or Head Master should be directed to the Chair of Governors or the Safeguarding Governor, details of whom are in the Safeguarding Policy.

7. Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is 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). The DSL will 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 Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of the receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

8. 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, Merchant Taylors' School

and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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.

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

Where Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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, Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

9. Online safety in schools and colleges

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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.

10. Children and online safety away from school and college

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 children's social care and as required, the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in each School's existing policies, guidance and code of conduct.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

10.1 Code of Conduct for delivering virtual lessons

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Staff should only use school-registered accounts, never personal ones;
- Staff should only use systems that SLT have approved (check if unsure, but approved include Firefly, Microsoft Office, ISAMS, SOCS);
- Staff should ensure that, when livestreaming, they and their pupils have a safe and appropriate place with no bedrooms/inappropriate objects/information visible;
- Staff should take care not to livestream by mistake;
- Staff should ensure that at least one other colleague is a co-owner of any Team and/or can join in on any livestream at any point (this will typically be the Head of House for tutors, or the Head of Department for academic classes);
- Staff should only livestream during the equivalent lesson time in the timetable, or through a meeting scheduled in the 'Calendar' function of Teams;
- Staff must avoid livestreaming 1-2-1 unless the above guidelines are followed. Check with SLT if unsure;
- All Acceptable Use Policy agreements are still in force for all staff and all pupils, this includes the illicit recording of staff.

10.2 Code of Conduct for one-to-one Skype correspondence for pupils in Nursery to Year 4

- Skype conversations must be approved by a member of SLT first;
- The date/time of the Skype conversation will then be agreed with the parent;
- All Skype conversations will take place on a school registered account with a parent registered account (not one belonging to the pupil themselves);
- All conversations should remain school-focussed;
- Skype conversation for both teacher and pupil must take place in an appropriate room (i.e. not a bedroom) with no inappropriate objects or unsuitable information visible – teacher can use the blur background function on Skype if required;
- Both teacher and pupil should be in appropriate dress – it is recognised that this won't be business clothes or school uniform but something that might be worn on a mufti day;

- A parent must be in the background of the conversation between teacher and pupil (although it is not a Parent-Teacher meeting) – for this reason the pupil should not use the blur background function of Skype so that the parent can be seen;
- Teachers will keep a log of their conversations (who, when, with whom and brief notes) on iSAMS;
- Teachers, parents and pupils should not make a video or audio recording of the Skype conversation;
- Parents will email to say that they agree to this Code of Conduct at the start of term – this must take place before any Skype conversation is arranged.

11. Supporting children not in school

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep are 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, 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, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep and their DSLs will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep recognise 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 Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

12. Supporting children in school

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head Master and Head will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate to maximise safety.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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.

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep 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.

13. Peer on Peer Abuse

Merchant Taylors' School and Merchant Taylors' Prep recognise 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 the School Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies.

The school 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 as usual and appropriate referrals made.