

# **Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum**

**COVID-19 school full-opening arrangements for  
Safeguarding and Child Protection at  
Schools in the Mead Academy Trust:**

The Mead Community Primary School  
Castle Mead Primary School  
River Mead Primary School

In this document will refer to the Mead Academy Trust (TMAT) which includes all these schools.

This Policy addendum is effective from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Date shared with staff: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Approved by the Trustees: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

## Context

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, The Prime Minister announced the government’s roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England. This included a direction that from 8 March 2021, all pupils should attend school.

TMAT SCHOOLS will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education (as amended, Jan 2021).<sup>1</sup>

We will ensure that where we care for children on site, we have appropriate support in place for them.

We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners.

We 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 coronavirus.

This addendum of the TMAT Schools’ Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/954314/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2020 - Update - January 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf)

## Key contacts

Remain as per the School Safeguarding Policy.

## Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989<sup>2</sup>, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child;
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health.
  - other vulnerabilities include risk of criminal, county lines, sexual exploitation or radicalisation, particularly increased from far-right groups. Whilst targeted at secondary age children there are cases in primary schools or children may talk about siblings

TMAT Schools 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 and other LA and health services. The lead person for this will be:

The Mead – Jennie Jones DDSL/LAC  
Castle Mead – Polly Marsh DDSL/LAC  
River Mead – Leala Purdie DDSL/LAC

In circumstances where a parent is hesitant about or does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and TMAT Schools will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/17>

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

TMAT Schools will encourage all pupils to attend school.

### **Attendance monitoring**

We expect all pupils to attend school.

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of the illness and inform us of the reason for absence so that the correct attendance codes can be used in every case of absence. We expect parents or carers to make contact to make us aware of the status of any COVID-19 tests that have become necessary and to update the school on the welfare of the pupil.

From 8th March 2021, we will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)<sup>3</sup> for all pupils.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

- have symptoms or have had a positive test result
- live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive and are a household contact
- are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally.

For children self-isolating or quarantining or shielding – we will use code X.

In compliance with the Remote Education, Temporary Continuity Direction<sup>4</sup> will provide remote education to pupils who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

Also, we will offer pastoral support to pupils who are:

- self-isolating
- shielding
- vulnerable (and off-school)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/923539/Remote\\_Education\\_Temporary\\_Continuity\\_Direction\\_-\\_Explanatory\\_Note.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923539/Remote_Education_Temporary_Continuity_Direction_-_Explanatory_Note.pdf)

The Department for Education expects schools to grant applications for leave in exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be penalised.

### **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 a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

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

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern immediately to the Headteacher. In the case of a concern regarding the Headteacher, staff should contact the Chair of Academy Advisors – the office has contact details.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). 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 TMAT Schools, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

### **Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

When recruiting new staff, TMAT Schools 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) (as amended, Jan 2021).

### **Volunteers**

TMAT Schools will use volunteers to assist in handing out and securing COVID-19 test kits to students and staff members. Other duties may be required such as building test kits, cleaning down areas and directing people.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

In appointing volunteers, the school will follow safer recruitment processes.

### **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 TMAT code of conduct.

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

Below is further guidance for staff when working virtually with pupils:

- Any meetings for those learning at home can be made via Google Meet
- In google meet, 'quick access' should be turned off
- Cameras must remain on for the duration of the meeting
- All online meetings, class or individual must be recorded, (automatically saved to google drive)
- Wherever possible, children should sit in somewhere communal at home. If this is not possible, they should ensure that where they take part from is appropriate and that they are conscious of what else may be seen.
- Participants may blur their background if they choose
- Two members of staff should be present, this may be physically in the same room or digitally by joining the meeting.
- One to One online meetings may be used to support individuals, these may be done using teams, google meet or zoom following these guidelines
- Any staff remoting into a meeting from their home must be in an appropriate place in the house, this should not be a bedroom.
- All participants should be dressed appropriately
- If any inappropriate language or behaviour is audible or visible in a home then the members of staff can remove anyone from the meeting.
- It may be appropriate to end the session immediately or remove an attendee.
- Any concerns arising from an online meeting would be recorded on CPOMs in the usual way

## **Supporting children not in school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

TMAT Schools are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our Children.

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.

Details of these plans are recorded on specific safeguarding contact document in each school.

The communication plans can include remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods could be considered and recorded.

TMAT Schools' 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.

TMAT Schools 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 TMAT Schools need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

## **Supporting children in school**

TMAT Schools are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all their children.

TMAT Schools will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish.

TMAT Schools will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing<sup>5</sup> and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19.

TMAT Schools will ensure that appropriate support is offered to all pupils with respect to their mental health.

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<sup>5</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963541/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

## **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

TMAT Schools will encourage parents to send their children to school, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Where an application is made, TMAT Schools will consider whether a parent's decision to educate at home gives greater cause for concern compared to remaining in school.

Where we feel that there is additional cause for concern the designated safeguarding lead will then consider making a referral to the local authority in line with existing procedures. This will happen as soon as a TMAT School becomes aware of a parent's intention, or decision, to home educate.

If a parent wants to admit their child to TMAT Schools, we will follow our normal processes for in-year admissions applications.

## **Contingency planning**

TMAT Schools will ensure that for individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding, we follow government guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19), remote education plans.

TMAT Schools will continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in schools are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, we will refer to the contingency framework<sup>6</sup>, which has been updated and outlines how schools should operate in the event of any restrictions.

## **Support from the Multi-Academy Trust**

TMAT Central Team consists of: Kirsty Jamieson, Head of Inclusion & Safeguarding Lyssy Bolton, Executive Headteacher and Lindsay Palmer, Head of Teaching School. They are all qualified at an advanced safeguarding level and will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSLs to carry out their role effectively.

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

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings-excluding-universities>