

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Covid-19 Update (January 2021):

Guidance for WAT employees, other workers and contractors

Safeguarding children remains the first priority of all Wootton Academy Trust [WAT] directors, governors, employees, workers, contractors and volunteers during the enforced Covid 19 school closure whilst most children are required to study at home.

This appendix to WATs Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains guidance of our safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

- ❖ **Context**
- ❖ **Vulnerable children**
- ❖ **Attendance monitoring**
- ❖ **Designated Safeguarding Lead**
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- ❖ **Supporting children in school**
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Context

To support public health efforts during the return to school in January, settings will invoke a phased return to face-to-face provision at the start of term.

From 4th January 2021, parents with children of school age were asked to keep them at home, wherever possible; schools were asked 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.

Return dates for primary and secondary schools and colleges in England

Year group	w/c 4 Jan	w/c 11 Jan	w/c 18 Jan
Exam years (years 11 and 13)	Prioritise remote education	Return to school	Continue at school
Primary (years 1-6)	Return to school with some local exceptions*	Continue at school with some local exceptions*	Continue at school with some local exceptions*
Secondary / college (years 7-10 and 12)	Prioritise remote education	Prioritise remote education	Full return to school with some local exceptions*
Primary / secondary vulnerable and critical worker	Return to school	Continue at school	Continue at school
Special school	Return to school encouraged	Continue at school	Continue at school
Alternative provision	Return to school	Continue at school	Continue at school

* In some local areas, under the contingency framework students will have remote education except for exam years and vulnerable and critical worker children. Special schools for primary years should continue to allow pupils to attend full time.

Key contacts

Remain as per the WAT Safeguarding and CP 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, 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 at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
- 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.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself is not a 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.

WAT 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 heads (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Katy Enser (Deputy Head of Wootton Upper School).

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 WAT will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

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

Attendance monitoring

In mainstream schools, all secondary-age pupils who are not expected to be in school during the national lockdown, should be recorded as 'code X'.

Children for whom on-site provision is being provided should be recorded in line with the normal school attendance requirements.

Shielding advice is currently in place in all areas, and so all children still deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

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

WAT 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.

Phone calls will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

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

Designated Safeguarding Lead

WAT has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Katy Enser

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Carol Farrant, Sarah Rydeheard and Corinne Cain

Additional senior staff who are Level 2 Safeguarding trained: Carrie McMorn, Tim Detheridge, Liz MacKay and Nicola Genders

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.

WAT staff and volunteers will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy).

The DSL (or deputies) will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

Reporting a concern

All WAT employees, workers and contractors should be aware that the uncertainty that has been caused by the coronavirus outbreak may affect families in a variety of ways; removing school as a protective factor, disrupting the continuity of everyday life for a young person and potentially affecting the financial stability of families.

During the course of their communications with children and young people via email or Show My Homework, WAT employees, workers and contractors may become aware of something which gives rise to cause for concern. All WAT employees, workers and contractors must be vigilant to anything which may suggest that a young person is at a risk of harm or that a family

is struggling. This should be logged via CPOMS, the process outlined in the WAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, but may also be followed up by calling a member of the WAT Safeguarding Team.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the safeguarding@wootton.beds.sch.uk. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children at the Trust, they should report the concern to the Executive Principal, Michael Gleeson. If the concern refers to the Executive Principal, then the concern should be reported to the WAT Safeguarding Director, Mr David Claire (contact details available via Kami Patel, Human Resources Lead).

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, WAT 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).

Where WAT 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. There is an expected duty on staff to ensure that Kami Patel, Human Resources Lead, is made aware at least five working days in advance of any volunteer or contractor who has been invited into Wootton Upper School or Kimberley College. Reception staff must ensure that any volunteer arriving at the school or college to work with children and could be left alone with them, checks that the volunteer has had the appropriate checks completed.

WAT 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. Additionally, referrals will be made to the appropriate LADO. Full details can be found at paragraph 163 of KCSIE.

WAT 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.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the pandemic, 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, WAT will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Volunteers

WAT may 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.

Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis provide personal care on a one-off basis at WAT, will be in regulated activity. This means that if a volunteer is administering a COVID-19 test whilst un-supervised, they will be in regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

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 who may be left in unsupervised activity, the school will follow safer recruitment processes.

Online safety in schools and colleges

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

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

WAT employees, workers and contractors [for example, long term supply teachers] are required to follow safe working practises at all times.

All email communication with Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College children and young people by WAT employees, workers and contractors must be through WAT email accounts [accounts with email addresses ending @wootton.beds.sch.uk] or through Show My Homework and Microsoft Teams.

To avoid doubt, WAT employees, workers and contractors:

- ❖ **must not** use students' private email addresses;
- ❖ **must not** use their personal phones to contact students or their families;
- ❖ **must not** use social media to contact students or their families (any exceptions must be agreed in advance with the DSL e.g. in the case of family links);
- ❖ **must not** respond to contact from students or parents/carers who approach them via social media.

The following have been agreed as protocols for delivering live lessons:

- ❖ Staff must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- ❖ Any computers used should be in appropriate areas and the background should be blurred.
- ❖ Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- ❖ Staff must only use platforms specified by the Executive Leadership Team to communicate with students.
- ❖ Staff should record the attendance of all live lessons in Class Charts.

Supporting children not in school

WAT is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College.

Where the DSL, or a deputy DSL, has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral support in school or college, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person. This contact must be recorded centrally with specific details of communication logged on CPOMS.

Communication plans will be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the DSL, and deputy DSLs, will consider any referrals as appropriate.

WAT recognises that school and college is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children/young people and their parents/carers.

Supporting children in school

WAT is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

WAT will continue to be a safe space for all children and young people to attend and flourish. The Heads of School and College will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

WAT will refer to 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.

WAT will ensure that appropriate on-site support is in place for vulnerable children and for those children of essential workers where care is required.

Peer on Peer Abuse

WAT 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 the WAT Peer on Peer Abuse Policy.

The school and college 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 CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

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