

Annex to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

18th January 2021

Response to COVID-19

From January 5th 2021 parents were asked once again to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools and colleges to remain open 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.

There have been significant changes within our College setting in response to the pandemic and we continue to implement new ways of working and teaching, as our staff and students continue to respond to the exceptional pace, scale and rate of change. Many young people are now learning at home again and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation over the next few weeks and months as we move through this current wave/peak.

Despite the changes, the College's Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy is fundamentally the same: children, young people and vulnerable adults always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Safeguarding team in line with our established safeguarding procedure.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the College and following advice from government and local agencies.

The current position from Government

The most recent advice for Colleges was published in January 2021 and is set out in the guidance document: **Further education guidance for restricting attendance during the national lockdown.**

The document can be accessed online at: [Further education guidance for restricting attendance during the national lockdown \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90222/further-education-guidance-for-restricting-attendance-during-the-national-lockdown.pdf)

The current College position and local advice

The College is working with Norfolk County Council and local Public Health and taking advice from local safeguarding partners as appropriate, including advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated and children's social care.

Safeguarding team

The College arrangements continue in line with our Safeguarding and child protection policy.

The Safeguarding Officers are: Marie Pacey (Norwich and Paston) and Sam Warner (Easton.)

You can contact the safeguarding team through one email address: safeguarding@ccn.ac.uk or to call safeguarding: mobile number for Norwich and Paston 07795 487645 (Marie Pacey) and mobile number for Easton 07772 785346 (Sam Warner.)

The Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Corrienne Peasgood, Jerry White, Julia Buckland, Jacky Sturman and Helen Richardson-Hulme.

The Designated Safeguarding Governor is Andrew Barnes.

Reporting arrangements

The Deputy DSLs are: Jo Riseborough (Residential), Chris Caddamy (NES)

The College's approach ensures that a DSL is always on site while the College is open. In the unusual and unlikely circumstance this is not possible, a Deputy DSL will be on site and a DSL will be contactable at home.

Staff will continue to follow the Safeguarding procedure and advise the Safeguarding Officers immediately via the red button about concerns they have about any child or vulnerable adult, whether in College or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's Services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for contacting Norfolk Children's Services are:

'If you are a professional concerned about a child in Norfolk and want to speak to someone, you can call the Children's Advice and Duty Service, on our direct line **0344 800 8021**. If you are a member of the public, you can do this through our Customer Service Centre on **0344 800 8020**.'

Should a child in the College's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the College will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure, available on the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership website <https://www.norfolkscb.org>

Identifying vulnerability

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable young people at our College. We have identified young people who are active to Children's Social Care, have a social worker or and EHCPs, or who identify themselves as Young Carers. As an additional step we have identified students who we feel have vulnerabilities and who we know are actively engaging with wellbeing and/or safeguarding support.

We have put in place specific arrangements for young people in the following identifiable groups:

- Looked After Children
- Previously Looked After Children
- Children¹ subject to a child protection plan
- Children where we know have, or have previously had, a social worker. There is an expectation that children with a social worker must attend school or College unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Children with an EHCP
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker who we know are engaged with our safeguarding service. Where required these children will be offered a place at school.

¹ For the purposes of this annex and for complete clarity, we are using the term Child / Children to describe a young person who is under the age of 18, rather than our usual terminology where we would refer to a 'young person'

Each of these children has an individual plan which can be / or has been shared with other agencies involved in their care, including where appropriate their social worker and the Virtual School Head for Looked After and previously Looked After Children.

In addition, the following groups have specific arrangements around contact and support from the College.

- Children of critical workers who may attend College
- Other children the College considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the Safeguarding team. These children can be offered care at College if required.

Remote learning vulnerability

Vulnerable children may also be where there is a difficulty or barrier preventing a student from engaging with remote education. This could be due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study. In such cases, the College is working with children and their families to look at what access they need to be able to engage in their remote learning. For example, this could be by providing data and laptops where possible. To ensure that we are enabling as many of our students to stay at home (where home is a safe place) as possible during the lockdown we are working through requests on an individual basis and we are only inviting students to study on College site if there is no other option for them to engage in their learning.

Holiday arrangements

The College will update individual students who have bespoke arrangements in place to attend during the lockdown with regards to any arrangements that need to be in place during holiday periods.

Attendance and engagement

The College is following up with students in the identified vulnerable groups and carrying out regular weekly welfare checks on these students. This plan has been shared with College staff and with Children's Social Care. If a vulnerable student cannot be reached, this will be reported back to Children's Social Care colleagues for follow up.

Where staff have additional concerns about the engagement of other students who are not in the vulnerable groups i.e. those who may not be engaging with online learning, these students will be followed up in curriculum areas.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. College staff will be aware of these additional pressures and will make appropriate referrals to the Safeguarding team about any concerns. Staff are aware to look out for the signs of mental health and wellbeing distress and to make a referral where appropriate.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a College closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision e.g. signs of on-line bullying or on-line abuse taking place.

Online safety

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The College is using online approaches to deliver training or support to students during this period. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the College.

- The College continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place and has issued home working protocols to staff working from home
- Our Governing Body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The College has issued a reminder to staff about Code of Conduct particularly in relation to working from home and online working and the importance of only using College systems to communicate with students and their families
- The College has shared resources about on-line life including common social media platforms with parents/cares and staff about on-line safety and how to report concerns. This information has been sent to staff and is on a newly published specific page on our website: <https://www.ccn.ac.uk/safeguarding-and-online-safety/>

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from professionals including staff or volunteers who are working with them and their families. We remind all staff through our Safeguarding training and regular updates to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team. The College has a robust Whistleblowing procedure in place and staff know how to use this.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged.

If necessary, the College will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk

New staff or volunteers

The current procedures for New starters will remain in place during this period and new members of staff will have an induction. They must read the College safeguarding procedure, the Code of Conduct and Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One 2020. Line managers will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the safeguarding procedure. New starters will continue to receive a welcome email from a DSL.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other registered education or childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers,
- they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- The College will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with DBS guidance.
- All ID checks and DBS checks will be carried out and seen by the HR team.
- The College will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the College, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept by the HR team.

Governance and oversight

This policy will be approved by Governors on 09/02/21 and will be made available on the College website at link <https://www.ccn.ac.uk/safeguarding-and-online-safety/>