



COVID-19 SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY UPDATE (TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ATLP'S MAIN POLICY)

The ATLP Trust Board reviews this policy annually. The policy was last reviewed in October 2020.

However, the Trust Board has authorised Sue Bailey (Safeguarding Lead) and Nicky Lawton (Data Protection Officer) to accept updates on matters of detail between reviews. These changes would normally be listed in the codicil at the end of the policy.

Whereas the policy has not changed in its fundamental function, that is to keep our children safe, the changes are not matters of detail and consequently an addendum has been created rather than an extensive list in a codicil.

This is the third addendum to this policy and in line with the two previous addenda has been approved by the Chair of the Trust under the emergency powers entrusted to him.

The addendum has been used to update the policy following updates from the DfE on January 4th, 2021 and in line with DfE Covid 19 Safeguarding in Schools, Colleges as well as guidance from other providers including Birmingham Children's Trust Staffordshire Children's Safeguarding Board, Warwickshire Children's Safeguarding Board and Solihull Safeguarding Board.

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1. Version control and dissemination

This is the third addendum to this policy and sits alongside the codicil which reflects other minor changes. It will be reviewed by our Safeguarding Lead on a regular basis or as circumstances continue to evolve or following any updated advice from the DfE. It will be made available on each school's website and will be shared with all staff.

We will ensure that on any given day all staff and volunteers in attendance will be aware of who the DSL and deputy DSLs are and how staff and volunteers can to speak to them.

2. Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all children at our school, whether they are currently at home or in attendance, continues to be our priority. Creating a culture of virtual safeguarding is a priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- the best interests of children continue to come first.
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern, they will act immediately.
- a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL will always be available.
- no unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to children.
- Children and staff should continue to be protected when they are online.

3. Context

From 5th January 2021 parents were asked to support public health efforts by keeping their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were also 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.

Schools must continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, keeping children safe in education. [Keeping children safe in education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90421/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2016.pdf)

This is the third addendum to The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership (ATLP) Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy in direct response to the guidance issued on January 4th 2021

Some information and guidance issued via previous addenda has been included where still relevant and key to keeping children safe.

4. Vulnerable children

ATLP defines vulnerable children as 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. This includes those with a Child in Need plan.

We recognise that previously looked after children are a potentially vulnerable group who may not have a social worker but may still need support.

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 place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals or lack of access to suitable devices should not be the sole determining factors in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy (DDSL) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to other vulnerable groups such as those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

We 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 (LAC) and previously looked-after children (PLAC). We will work with social workers to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for LAC are up to date with the current education offer that they are accessing.

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

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

ATLP will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school. We can then offer daily support. For those vulnerable children who are not in school, special provision will be made to keep in touch and check on their welfare.

We recognise that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and that the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. We are very much aware of the impact of lockdown on children's mental health during the previous lockdown. All staff are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. We also acknowledge that some children might be unwell and as such unable to complete work set and that some families do not have access to the technology required to complete some tasks.

If this is known to be the case alternatives should be sought. Lack of appropriate technological devices should be brought to the attention of staff so that school can make every effort to remedy this situation.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers on site, that appropriate support is in place for them and recognise the immense pressure that these families might be under.

We will also ensure that staff receive appropriate support via supervision where appropriate and that staff are signposted to external support agencies who can help them

5. Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

[Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

The full list can be found here:

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

ATLP recognises the need to offer school places to both vulnerable children and the children of critical workers but must also balance the need to keep its schools safe. On rare occasions when the number of children within school means that a safe environment cannot be maintained the headteacher will work with the appropriate director of education to seek a solution.

6. Supporting vulnerable children not in school. Prioritising need and contact

We are all committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children and young people.

The vast majority of our children will remain safely at home and each school will do its best to deliver an appropriate education to these children based upon our Remote Education Policy updated January 2021

However, there will be some vulnerable children, who may not be in school, for whom additional measures must be put in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing. These measures will consist of "keeping in touch" phone calls and in some very rare cases, home visits will be carried out. No member of staff however must enter a child's home and they should follow social distancing guidance at all times.

The Lead DSL should review each vulnerable case and prioritise based on the level of need and concern. They should establish how often contact should be made if that child is not in school, by whom and by what method. The DSL may discuss this with the child's social worker or other professional involved with the family. Maintaining contact is not the sole responsibility of the school.

The DSL should also consider any local guidance given by the Children's Safeguarding Board as to the frequency of the contact. We acknowledge that this advice differs across the partnership. DSLs should use their professional expertise, knowledge of their families and use the risk assessment process to determine the frequency and nature of contact.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be vulnerable, on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support within school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child if they are not in school. The communication plans can include email contact, phone contact or video call contact. Door-step visits are not recommended under the current conditions and should only be undertaken in line with the Home Visits Policy and **as an absolute last resort**. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. Details of this plan must be recorded as should a record of any contact made using My Concern, or individual student records.

Our DSL's 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.

We will all share safeguarding messages on our website and social media pages to further support our children.

The child's best interests should always come first but we are aware that we must protect our staff as well. As such staff **should not** enter a child's home and should adhere to **social distancing** recommendations at all times. Reference should be made to The ATLP Home Visits Policy.

Doorstep visits or the equivalent can be used to drop off equipment, food or to see a child from a distance. However, these should be to an **absolute minimum** to keep staff safe and are discouraged. Contact can be made by phone, post, email or video link. Staff should follow the guidelines already distributed plus the Staff Code of Conduct and Remote Education Policy (updated January 2021) and Acceptable Use of IT policy

As a general rule all children should be contacted at least weekly. There are many ways this contact can be established including phone calls and emails. Schools should monitor engagement in learning and staff should raise concerns if this becomes an issue.

Those with increased vulnerabilities should be contacted at least weekly, If not more regularly and by a safe and well phone call.

DSL's must be clear in their assessments regarding the frequency and type of contact and record their decisions. Where contact is made this must be recorded ideally using My Concern It is vital that staff speak to the child and ask about their welfare and make note of this conversation.

DSL's will need to divide the children appropriately between the designated safeguarding lead(s), special educational needs co-ordinator(s) and designated teacher(s) for looked after children and pastoral staff ensuring they are appropriately trained for the role they are undertaking. Ensure that each member of the team knows which child they are allocated to, what their role is and are able to record the contact details on the appropriate system.

Home visits of any kind **are not allowed** during this period. If deemed absolutely necessary a doorstep visit should be considered with headteacher consent, in twos and following strict social distancing guidelines. **Staff should not enter family homes.** However, if you are not able to make contact and are concerned, consider the following before embarking on a doorstep visit.

- Try all the available numbers for the family, including the emergency contact numbers.
- Re-assess the risk, does the lack of contact escalate your concerns?
- For CP/CiN children - speak to their allocated social worker or any other professional involved with the family
- Consider speaking to your local Social Care provision such as MASH CASS or First Response?
- If the risk is deemed critical - speak to the Police, they may do a 'safe & well' check. Do not hesitate to call 999 if you think a child has been harmed or is at serious risk of harm.
- Contact the Senior Education Safeguarding Officer for support if needed along with your headteacher and ATLP Safeguarding Lead.
- Record all your concerns and actions in line with school child protection.

If after a doorstep visit you still have not made contact and are still concerned revisit the list above and then seek advice from Children's Social Services and the Police.

7. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the ATLP Safeguarding Policy.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. Staff in school must be made aware of how to contact a DSL. Staff are reminded that this should be within normal working hours. Staff should avoid making contact with DSL's out of hours or at

weekends. In the case of an absolute emergency staff are encouraged to phone Children's Social Care out of hours duty line or if a child is in danger to contact the Police.

Headteachers should ensure that they have an internal system for sharing DSL phone numbers with all staff and that staff are made aware who is on duty each day. Details of this rota should be kept in an easily accessible place, known to all. Wherever possible and following the ATLP policy the report should be in person or at least by phone or video link. This may be followed up by an email.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children, they should report the concern to the headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from the site, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email. The headteacher will then follow the procedures laid out in KCSiE and The ATLP Safeguarding Policy. Headteachers are advised to always contact ATLP HR for support.

Concerns around the headteacher should be directed to the appropriate director of education.

Any concerns around a director of education should be reported to the CEO.

Any concerns around the CEO should be reported to the Chair of the Trust Board.

ATLP will continue to offer support in the process of managing any allegation.

8. Weekly Supervision and Case discussions

It is recommended that the Lead DSL co-ordinates a weekly meeting of the DSL team, remotely if necessary, to undergo a Group Supervision and Case Review. Individual supervision should also be offered.

When a case is discussed it is good practice to record this on the child's file.

Any concerns must be acted upon immediately. Some local authorities are asking that these are at a set time each week and that the meeting is then recorded and returned to the LA.

Please refer to The ATLP Supervision policy for a group proforma and meeting structure. It is good practice to ensure that every child with an allocated Social worker is discussed and findings recorded.

9. Attendance monitoring and DSL provision

In all our school's pupils who are not expected to be in school should be coded as X

Children for whom onsite provision is being provided should be recorded in line with normal school attendance requirements.

All children deemed clinically vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

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

Wherever possible and to support good practice we 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, we will notify the relevant social worker or VSH (Virtual School Head)

Across ATLP we aim to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on every site, every day. Where this is not the case a trained DSL will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home. We will draw up a rota to ensure all our schools and DSL's are fully supported and can always access support. This should ensure that DSL's do not have to work in isolation and are always supported by a colleague from within our partnership.

Where a trained DSL is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader must be on site and will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. However, they will always have access to a DSL from within the partnership.

It is important that staff coordinating safeguarding as described above has access to online systems such as My Concern

All relevant information must be recorded on My Concern S or on individual paper files.

It is very important that a detailed account is recorded including any views expressed by the child. In line with normal practice any decisions must be recorded along with the justification.

It is important that all staff and volunteers are made aware how to contact a trained DSL. Staff on site will be made aware, on a daily basis, of who that person is and how to speak to them. A list should be kept in a central location if appropriate. e.g., Reception/ School Office.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely if required to do so.

ATLP will continue to offer support in the process of managing any allegations.

10. Safeguarding Training and induction

ATLP understands that DSL training will need to continue during the pandemic to ensure that we have sufficient trained staff, and that knowledge is kept up to date. For this purpose, online training will be made available.

All existing ATLP staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020. The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child. Contact numbers and emails for DSL's/DDSLs' if not on site will be made available.

Where new staff are recruited, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. This should be provided by a trained DSL in each school. Resources will be provided to support this. New staff should also read KCSiE Part One and sign to say that they have done this (link to be provided by DSL). Other documents including Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Remote Education Policy and The Guide to Safer Working Practice, including the MAY 2020 update will also be made available.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting **outside** ATLP, HR will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the original school 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

For movement amongst schools within ATLP, assurance should be sought from the donor school that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training. 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. This will be particularly important if we move to a Hub model to safeguard our children.

11. 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, we 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).

The recruitment of staff in terms of undertaking safer recruitment checks is a function of ATLP HR. As such they will continue in this role and adjust any procedures in light of Brexit and the new requirements

12. Online safety

Our schools will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system operated by Smooth Wall. Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Whenever possible children will be reminded of the how to keep themselves safe online and how to report any online abuse.

13. Remote online contact

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Staff should be reminded of these, particularly those that might be visible online. Any such concerns should be dealt with in line with Child Protection Policy and where appropriate, referrals should be made to children's social care and as required or the police. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the ATLP Staff Code of conduct and the new guidance issued in the Remote Education Policy. Staff should also follow the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 and A Guide to Safer Working Practice including May 2020 addendum.

Staff should use every opportunity to remind the children they are in contact with of staying safe on the internet. Staff should also remind children of our expectations in terms of their behaviour whilst engaging in online learning.

We will also convey key messages to parents and carers via social media and our websites.

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

14. Supporting children in school

We are all committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our pupils. Our schools will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. Our governors and headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

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, respiratory hygiene, social distancing, face masks, isolation and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19. We will use every opportunity to remind children how to keep themselves safe both online and other wise.

We will endeavour to create safe opportunities that enable and encourage children to talk to us about their lived experiences during lockdown.

Where we have concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders we will they will discuss this with our Directors of Education, either primary or secondary.

We are also aware of the current DfE guidance on testing of staff and pupils in secondary schools and staff in primary schools. ATLP will follow the DfE guidance and put the necessary procedures in place following a risk assessment at each setting to ensure we keep everyone safe.

15. Peer on Peer Abuse and concerns around mental health

We recognise that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where we receive a report of peer-on-peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within our Child Protection Policy. Our schools 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.

We will, wherever possible respond to all cyber bully alerts as raised by Smooth Wall and continue to monitor these throughout the period.

Concerns and actions will be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

We are also aware of the increase of domestic violence and abuse during the pandemic and the impact this can have upon children. Staff are asked to be particularly vigilant and are reminded of the indicators of such abuse that they may notice either with children in school or those they come into contact with online.

We are also aware of the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of both staff and students. Staff are reminded that there is access to free confidential counselling.

We are aware of the impact of the negative experiences and distressing life events on the mental health of children, parents and staff. We will, as we always have, ensure there is appropriate support and signposting to relevant support agencies in place, and also supporting those children who continue to work from home.

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust, either to a return to learning at home or being in school without their peers, and some may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be content with the change in circumstances.

The return to remote learning for most will limit pupils' social interaction with their peers, carers and teachers, which may have an impact on wellbeing.

To support school staff to understand how coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, and what they can do to look after, promote and support their own, other staff's and children and young people's wellbeing and mental health, the government has recently launched the [wellbeing for Education Return programme](#)

Schools should also provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified that individual pupils may need help with, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. Schools should also consider support needs of particular groups they are already aware need additional help (for example, children in need.)

Staff will notify the DSL of any student they are concerned about in terms of mental health issues. The DSL will follow our usual safeguarding procedures as outlined in our policy.

16. Support across ATLP

Within our Trust we have access to a large number of highly experienced and skilled DSL's Pastoral support worker and Head teachers.

We are also well supported by staff within Children's Social Care and the Virtual Schools.

As such no one should feel that they are isolated or left to manage on their own.

We have a number of staff who are now qualified to undertake supervision or support another colleague dealing with a difficult case.

ATLP recognise the huge stress that this current situation has put on staff and encourages all staff members to ask for help as soon as possible.

Key contact numbers

Birmingham families

CASS. 0121 303 1888

Out of hours 0121 675 4806

Education Safeguarding Team-0121 675 4874

West Midlands Police 0845 8005000

LADO 0121675 1669

Adult Health and Social Care (for those over 18)

Staffordshire families

First Response 08001313126

Emergency Duty Service 0845 6042888

Education Support Service 01785 8985 836

LADO 08001313126

Warwickshire families

MASH 019264 414 144

Education Support Service 01926742525

Out of hours 01926 886922

Family Information Service 01926 422 74

LADO 0192643433

NSPCC 0800800500/Whistle Blowing hotline 0800.

ATLP Safeguarding Lead 07701009811

It is very likely that many key aspects of this update will be amended and revised over the coming days and weeks.

We are confident we have the leadership and expertise across our Partnership to keep our children safe during these challenging times.