



# ST MARGARET'S

## SCHOOL

### **COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at St Margaret's School, Bushey**

**School Name:** St Margaret's School, Bushey  
**Policy Owner:** J Chatkiewicz  
**Updated:** January 2021

## Context

To support public health efforts to arrest the rising cases of Covid-19 (Coronavirus), on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the Prime Minister announced a new national lockdown for England with people instructed to 'stay at home' as they did during March's first lockdown.

All primary schools, secondary schools and colleges were instructed to move to online learning.

This addendum of the St Margaret's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas for when children may be asked to remain at home as a result of a response to Covid-19:

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## Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Number	Email
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Julie Chatkiewicz	<b>Mon – Fri 020 8416 4535 alternatively 020 8416 4589 (only in an emergency)</b>	<b>j.chatkiewicz@smbushey.com</b>
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Emma Gray	<b>020 8416 4575</b>	<b>e.gray@smbushey.com</b>
<b>Head</b>	Lara Péchard		<b>head@stmargarets.herts.sch.uk</b>
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Justin Alford		<b>clerk@smbushey.com</b>
<b>Safeguarding Governor</b>	Judith Fenn		<b>j.fenn@smbushey.com</b>
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b>	LADO Team		<b>LADO.Referral@hertsfordshire.gov.uk</b>

## 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 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 Lead (and deputy) 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.

St Margaret's will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. The lead person for this will be: Julie Chatkiewicz.

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 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 Julie Chatkiewicz/Emma Gray will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Julie Chatkiewicz/Emma Gray or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Julie Chatkiewicz/Emma Gray will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school, including remotely if needed.

### **Attendance monitoring**

At St Margaret's all pupils are required to attend their remote learning sessions as if they were physically in school. There will be two formal registration periods, one in the morning and one at the end of the School day. Pupils will also be registered in each lesson. Any absence which is not pre-arranged will be reported to parents and the form tutor/teachers will report the absence to the HoY/JUC.

### **Working with other agencies**

We will continue to work with children's social care.

We will continue to update this policy where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners
- The local authority about children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

The following guidance from **Hertfordshire County Council** is currently in place:

#### **Safeguarding during the Coronavirus (Covid -19) pandemic**

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (Covid-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in a school or college has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and / or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

School and college staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This will be especially important during the Covid-19 period.

If you have concerns about immediate risk of harm to a child, a referral should be made immediately to Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services on 0300 123 4043.

Schools and colleges can ring the Consultation Hub (for concerns that are not of immediate risk of harm), details are in Appendix 1.

Referrals to LADO should be made on the LADO referral form and sent to:

[LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk).

If the LADO referral is out of office hours please ring 0300 1234043 or the police on 101

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

St Margaret's School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Julie Chatkiewicz

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Emma Gray

A trained DSL (or deputy) will be 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 i.e. Google Meet – 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.

This might include updating and managing access to the child protection online management system, MyConcern and 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.

It is important that all St Margaret's staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or Deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to speak to them.

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

## **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 MyConcern, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their MyConcern account from home, they should email or telephone on the numbers provided for the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Head. 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 in the School, they should report the concern to the Head. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Head.

Concerns around the Head should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Justin Alford.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead Training**

DSL training is very 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.

## **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 should 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, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction via Google Meet and issued electronically with the School's Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Induction Leaflet.

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

It remains essential that people that are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, St Margaret's 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).

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.

St Margaret's 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.

St Margaret's 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](mailto: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, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, St Margaret's will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## **Online safety in schools and colleges**

St Margaret's will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system whilst pupils are using the School's network.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Parents will be asked to monitor their child's online activity whilst at home.

## **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 in the Staff Code of Conduct.

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

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

- 1:1s, for pastoral 'catch ups' should be at pre-arranged form times and with the knowledge of the HoY/DSL.
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing i.e. not pyjamas, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should preferably be blurred.
- Live classes should be recorded for overseas students accessing remote learning only.
- Live classes should be kept to the stated times on the School timetable, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.

- Parents should not participate in online lessons and should communicate with teachers through email.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by St Margaret's School to communicate with pupils.
- Staff should record attendance on SchoolBase at any of the sessions held. Those children who do not attend should be reported to Form Tutors and Head of Year who will make contact with home and follow up on any absence which is not pre-arranged.
- Staff working from home should ensure that they are complying with GDPR guidelines.
- When using a shared computer at home staff should ensure that they log out of their St Margaret's accounts when they are not using the device.

### **Supporting children not in school**

St Margaret's is 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.

Details of this plan must be recorded on MyConcern, as should a record of contact have been made.

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

St Margaret's School and its DSL 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.

The School will share safeguarding messages with parents by email, on its website and social media pages.

St Margaret's School recognises 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 St Margaret's need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

St Margaret's 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on MyConcern.

### **Supporting children in school**

St Margaret's is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

St Margaret's will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

St Margaret's 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 COVID-19.

St Margaret's will ensure that where we can care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on MyConcern.

Where St Margaret's has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – will discuss them immediately with the Head and Governors.

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

St Margaret's recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

If the School receives a report of peer on peer abuse, staff will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within the Child Protection Policy.

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 MyConcern and appropriate referrals made.