

Annex 1



GESHER SCHOOL
ENGAGE EMPOWER EDUCATE

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Date	Shared with Staff	Coordinators
27 November 2020	02 December 2020	Tamaryn Yartu & Christopher Gurney

1. Context

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020. It reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners (Brent NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Brent Council, and the West Hampstead branch of the Metropolitan Police) and local authority (LA) Brent.

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of coronavirus, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

This addendum is subject to change, in response to any new or updated guidance the government may publish. It will be reviewed every half-term by the DSL, and subsequently approved by the Safeguarding Governor.

In this addendum, where we refer to measures to protect pupils who are at home, this means those who are learning at home for reasons to do with coronavirus – for example, due to clinical and/or public health advice, such as if there's a local lockdown or if they need to self-isolate.

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

1. Context.....	2
2. Key Contacts	3
3. Vulnerable Children.....	3
4. Attendance Monitoring	4
5. Designated Safeguarding Lead	4
6. Reporting A Concern	5
7. Safeguarding Training And Induction	5
8. Safer Recruitment/Volunteers & Movement Of Staff.....	5
9. Online Safety In Schools And Colleges	6
10. Children And Online Safety Away From School And College	6
11. Supporting Children Not In School	8
12. Supporting Children In School.....	9
13. Peer On Peer Abuse	9
14. Mental Health And Wellbeing	9
15. Children Returning To School	10

2. Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Acting Designated Safeguarding Lead	Christopher Gurney	0754 2929 111	chris.gurney@gesherschool.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Tamaryn Yartu	0776 9226 134	tamaryn.yartu@gesherschool.com
EYFS Designated Safeguarding Lead	Tamaryn Yartu	0776 9226 134	tamaryn.yartu@gesherschool.com
Acting Headteacher	Tamaryn Yartu	0776 9226 134	tamaryn.yartu@gesherschool.com
Safeguarding Governor	Laurel Freedman	0785 5394 849	laurel.freedman@gesherschool.com
Chair of Governors	Howard Zetter	0780 1187 768	howard.zetter@gesherschool.com

3. 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. Some children with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

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.

Gesher 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 authorities. The lead person for this will be Christopher Gurney.

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

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

4. Attendance Monitoring

We will resume taking our attendance register. We will also follow [guidance](#) from the Department for Education on how to record attendance and what data to submit.

All pupils of compulsory school age will be expected to attend school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health advice, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

Where any child we expect to attend school doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by contacting them before 9:30am on the day of absence
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

To support the above, Gesher 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. A termly audit of contact details will also be conducted by the school office.

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

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Gesher School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL (DDSL).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Christopher Gurney

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Tamaryn Yartu

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.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS 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 or college.

It is important that all Gesher staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). 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.

6. Reporting a Concern

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

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 (using CPOMS) to the acting headteacher and notify them immediately. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the acting headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done via CPOMS and followed up with an email/phone call to the acting headteacher.

Concerns around the acting Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Howard Zetter.

7. Safeguarding Training and Induction

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.

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, or new volunteers enter Gesher, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

8. Safer Recruitment/Volunteers & 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, Gesher 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).

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that staff and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

When carrying out DBS checks and right to work checks, we will follow the latest guidance from the DBS, Home Office and Immigration Enforcement as appropriate (for example, with regards to the process for verifying documents). We will inform candidates about the intended process as soon as reasonably practicable.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 183-188 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Gesher 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.

Gesher 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

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 or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Gesher will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

9. Online Safety in School

Gesher 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.

10. 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.

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

Due to the specific needs of the cohort at Gesher, virtual lessons/live classes will not be taking place. However, teachers may still wish to send videos to support with learning at home or make contact with the pupils. Below are some things to consider when doing so, especially where webcams are involved:

- All videos are only to be sent using the school's online learning platform, SEESAW or from a school e-mail address. Other communications may also take place via school e-mail addresses, as per Gesher's Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and Data Protection Policy
- In all video communications, staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred where possible
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including that used by any family members in the background

Teletherapy sessions may also be taking place at this time so as to support families within the home. If a therapist is working off-site, these sessions should preferably take place via Google Hangouts/Google Meet. Other video conferencing platforms can be used at parental request but they must be made aware that these are not as secure as Google Hangouts/Google Meet. All teletherapy sessions must follow the guidelines below:

- When using live communications from home, staff must never be 1:1 with a student – a parent must always be present. If taking place within the school environment, the sessions may be 1:1 but may not be conducted in a closed space with no window access.
- When using Hangouts as a Google streaming communication with pupils, staff may record the event and **MUST** do so if working from home; it must subsequently then be saved with a password or encrypted securely.
- Staff must be appropriately dressed at all times.
- Staff ensure they feel competent using Google Hangouts/Google Meet before carrying out sessions; if they do not feel confident doing so, they should request further support from the Senior Leadership Team or IT Support team.
- Sharing screenshots over hangouts should only be done in limited circumstances and ensuring no personal data is displayed when doing so.
- Video conferencing settings should ensure that other users in the call cannot record video conversations.
- The background needs to be appropriate (for example, a bedroom would not be considered an appropriate venue).
- All users must have a complex password and must only use their School email address.
- Any safeguarding issues should be reported to the DSL immediately and logged via CPOMS.

Alongside the measures put in place to ensure appropriate staff usage of online platforms, we will also make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, where relevant, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

11. Supporting Children Not in School

The school will maintain contact with children who are at home. Staff will try to speak directly to children at home to help identify any concerns. They will use school phones and devices to make calls home. Or, if necessary they will use personal phones but they will withhold their personal number.

Staff will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families
- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

Gesher 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 Gesher need to be aware of this when setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

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. This should include:

- How often the school will make contact – this will be at least once a week
- Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
- How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone, video conferencing, or a combination of both
- The key concerns or signs that staff need to be extra vigilant for

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant, and will review them termly.

If we can't make contact, we will be make a referral to social care for cases where there is no existing case worker, or speak directly to a social worker where the family has one assigned for that child.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

12. Supporting Children in School

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

Gesher will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The acting Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Gesher 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 COVID19.

Gesher will ensure that whilst our provision and teaching will inevitably need to be adapted during these times, we will continue to ensure appropriate support is in place for them so as to meet their needs as closely as possible.

Where Gesher has concerns about the impact of staff absence (such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders), the most senior member of staff available will discuss them immediately with the school governing body.

13. Peer on Peer Abuse

Gesher 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 Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

The school 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.

Concerns and actions must be recorded in the bullying log, and appropriate referrals subsequently made.

14. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. Teletherapy sessions with one of Gesher's creative arts therapists will be offered to all pupils at least weekly, as well as consultations for parents from the school educational psychologist. Daily contact will also be made with the class teacher (where health and personal logistics allow) to help maintain a tangible connection with the school.

We will also signpost all pupils, parents/carers and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

Staff will be alert to mental health concerns in children who are at home, and act on these immediately; they will be reported via e-mail to the school Wellbeing Lead or via the Gesher CPOMS site where appropriate.

15. Children Returning to School

The DSL (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of before children return.

The DSL (and deputy) will be given time to support staff and children regarding new concerns (and referrals as appropriate) as children return to school.

Staff and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they see pupils in person.

Staff and volunteers will be aware of the possible effects that this period may have had on pupils' mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed. This may include further sessions or advice from the school art therapist, dramatherapist, or educational psychologist, as well as whole class lessons themed around SEMH.