



## COVID-19 arrangements for safeguarding and child protection at Gosden House School

**School name:** Gosden House School  
**Policy owner:** Cindy O'Sullivan  
**Date:** 14/4/20  
**Date shared with governors and trustees:** 21/4/20  
**Date shared with staff:** 21/4/20

This is also in line with DFE guidance  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

## COVID-19 changes to our Child Protection Policy

Annex to Child Protection Policy  
21/4/20

### Response to COVID-19

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Many young people are now at home and staffing is likely to be significantly affected through illness and self-isolation.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL 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 school and following [advice from government](#) and local agencies.

### The current school position and local advice

Gosden House School is providing a dual offer to children and families. Children of Critical Workers and some vulnerable pupils are attending school, while most pupils remain at home, in line with Government Lockdown guidance. Gosden House are working closely with Surrey Children's Services to keep all pupils safe, even as circumstances change.

### Reporting arrangements

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

Role	Name	Phone	email
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	Cindy O'Sullivan	01483 892 008	cindyosullivan@gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk
<b>Headteacher if not DSL or DDSL</b>			
<b>Deputy Designated safeguarding lead (DDSL)</b>	Annie Welch	07864 721 931	safeguarding@gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk
<b>Chair of governors/trustee</b>	Pat Adams	01483 892 008	padams@gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk
<b>Safeguarding governor/trustee</b>	Pat Adams	01483 892 008	info@gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk
<b>Deputy Designated safeguarding lead (DDSL)</b>	Fiona Williams	01483 892 008	fwilliams@gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk
<b>Deputy Designated safeguarding lead (DDSL)</b>	Emily Mainwaring	01483 892 008	emainwaring@gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk

The school's approach ensures the DSL or a deputy is always on site while the school is open. In the unlikely event that a DSL is not able to be on site, DSLs will still be contactable by phone, email and CPOMS.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school 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. Requests for support should be made securely by email to [cspa@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:cspa@surreycc.gov.uk) using the [Request for Support Form](#) urgent referrals should be made by telephone 0300 470 9100 (and ask for the priority line).

Should a child in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure, available here: <https://www.surreyscp.org.uk/resources-category/escalation/>.

### **Identifying vulnerability**

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable children. This is recorded on our risk assessment spreadsheet, which was completed by the school DSL Team, in conjunction with teachers, families and professionals. Where a child has a Social Worker, that professional has been involved in reaching a decision on the balance of risk to child and family.

We have put in place specific arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Looked After Children – risk assessment in collaboration with Social Worker.
- Previously Looked After Children – risk assessment in collaboration with carers and any professionals involved.
- Children subject to a child protection plan – risk assessment in collaboration with Social Worker.
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker – risk assessment in collaboration with Social Worker. There is an expectation that children with a social worker must attend school, 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 – risk assessment based on needs and circumstances.
- Children on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker – risk assessment in collaboration with Children's Services. Where required these children will be offered a place at school (or another school by arrangement).
- Other children the school considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DSL. These children can be offered care at school if required.

Each of these children has an individual plan which 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 school.

- Children of critical workers who may attend school – Offer made to children where the provision is required to enable parents/ carers to work.
- Children at home – Daily class "registration" and check-in, using Microsoft Teams. Online and posted (where necessary) learning programmes. Weekly phone call for all pupils who have not been seen online. Pastoral phone call for identified vulnerable pupils who are at home.

The plans in respect of each child in these groups should state how often they are to be reviewed.

### **Holiday arrangements**

Gosden House will remain open over the Easter holidays, excluding bank holidays. However, consideration will be given to Critical Workers requiring provision over this time.

### **Attendance**

The school is following the [attendance guidance issued by government](#). Where a child is expected and does not arrive the school will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DSL must be informed. The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (phone, email, MS Teams) but if necessary arrange a home visit by the school or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

The school will also follow the attendance procedure if contact proves impossible with children at home, following Surrey reporting protocols, outlined as follows:

#### *Expectations of an Education Setting to track, identify and action non- attendance of vulnerable children and Automated Tracking Mechanism*

*We know that some families need more support than others and that attending education settings is an important protective factor for children receiving support. We also know that some families may over estimate their ability to cope in these extraordinary times.*

*All professionals need to be mindful that there will be some examples where the current Covid 19 pandemic could be used by families as a reason to avoid contact from professionals when the family may not be symptomatic and to prevent identification of safeguarding issues.*

*To ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep children safe and protected we require all education settings to identify through a new automated tracking mechanism the non-attendance of vulnerable children that are expected to attend an education setting.*

*Education settings must act by notifying the local authority on the first day of non-attendance and any day following, when a vulnerable child, that is expected to attend an education setting is absent, by using the following link to the Automated Tracking Mechanism:*

*<https://www4.surreycc.gov.uk/social/child/absence-submission-portal/>*

*Education settings must continue to take action as soon as they are aware of non-attendance using first day calling and other internal tracking and follow up procedures. Education settings must continue to inform relevant agencies (including Social Work Teams) and professionals of any concerns that require a response.*

### Expectations of the Social Work Team response to non-attendance

The Automated Tracking Mechanism, described above, immediately alerts the Social Work Team to act in response to the child's non-attendance at the education setting. Surrey Virtual School will be informed if the child is looked after.

On receipt of an alert the social work team must act to contact the family to find out why the child hasn't attended and act to encourage them to attend if it's safe to do so.

The social work team must act to contact the education setting to further inform their assessment of the risk to the child of non-attendance.

If a child is not presenting at an education setting because they are symptomatic or self-isolating it is essential that the social worker contact the education setting and any relevant partner (including Surrey Virtual School), to action arrangements for maintaining contact with the child and agree who will contact the child and how.

It may be necessary for a Social Worker to take action by visiting the child in person to establish their wellbeing

Keeping in touch with the child and the family during any isolation period is the responsibility of the team around that child. A clear plan for visiting (virtual or in person) must be made and acted upon by all partners. The team around the child partners must communicate to the Social Worker findings from each visit they undertake.

Due to the number of notifications it is not possible for social care to guarantee a response time, each response time will be based on the Social Work Team's analysis of risk.

If an education setting has significant concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing the education setting should ring the child's Social Worker for an urgent discussion. If the child's social worker is not available a discussion should be held with the Social Work Team Manager. If neither are available contact must be made with the Social Work Service Manager. If you are not satisfied with the response you get from the Social Work Team education settings must follow the SSCP Inter- Agency Escalation Policy and Procedures.

### Expectations of a SEND/Vulnerable Learner Team response to non- attendance

Where a child with an EHCP has a Social Worker, the process above will be followed by the Social Work Team.

The Automated Tracking Mechanism, described above, will collate data for EHCP children to be sent to the Vulnerable Learners Service once a week for action.

Attendance and any known history of the child will be considered by the appropriate professionals within the Vulnerable Learners Service to establish further action.

The Vulnerable Learners Service will establish with the family the reasons why the child has not attended and act to encourage them to attend if it's safe to do so.

*If a child is not presenting at an education setting because they are symptomatic or self-isolating it is essential that the Vulnerable Learner Service contact the education setting to inform them of this and act to establish the ongoing point of contact while the child is not attending the education setting.*

*Where circumstances change the education setting should act to ensure any changes to risk are notified to the Local Authority in a timely manner (within 24 hours of being informed of the change) via the SEND Team area email address.*

*Children and young people who are "otherwise vulnerable" expectations on the education partnership*

*This cohort is defined as children and young people who have been assessed as "otherwise vulnerable" by education settings, the local authority or partner agencies; examples may include Young Carers, adopted children and/or children with mental health and wellbeing concerns.*

*The Vulnerable Learners Service will contact education settings to assist the identification of these children and young people.*

*Education settings should use their discretion to encourage the attendance of children and young people that they or partners feel would be safer by attending provision. In the case of non-attendance education settings should act to follow up with both the parent/carer and any partner agency involved to establish the reason for absence and act to encourage attendance.*

*The Vulnerable Learners Service will provide support to education settings to identify "otherwise vulnerable children" who do not have a Social Worker or an EHCP. The Vulnerable Learners Service will assist the setting to make arrangements with families to provide for these children and track and encourage attendance.*

*Where any professional continues to have concerns about the safety of a child they should email a Children's Services Request for Support Form to [cspa@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:cspa@surreycc.gov.uk) or contact the C-SPA on 0300 470 9100.*

### **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. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both [children](#) and their [parents and carers](#), informing the DSL about any concerns.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school 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. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

## Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. 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 school.

- The school continues to ensure [appropriate filters and monitors are in place](#)
- Our governing body will [review arrangements](#) to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) on safe remote learning and guidance for [safer working practice](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly.
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Staff are advised to read the [20 safeguarding considerations for livestreaming](#)
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, [Childline](#), the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and [CEOP](#).
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
  - [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
  - [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
  - [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
  - [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers
- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

## Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned. We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged: 0300123 1650 option 3 LADO; Email: [LADO@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@surreycc.gov.uk)



If necessary, the school 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 paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk).

### **New staff or volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

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 school 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](#).
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to [initially check these documents online](#) through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.
- The school will update the Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers working in the school, including those from other settings. This will include the risk assessment around the DBS. A record will be kept of who is working in the school each day.

**All staff will be sent this additional policy to read and will respond to confirm that they have read and understood the content.**