



The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Scope:	Federation	
Date Adopted:	15 April 2020	
This Review:	NA	Every 3 months
Next Review:	July 2020	
Approved	EHT:	F Hawkes
	Governor:	T Tamplin

1. Context

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

Schools and all childcare providers were 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.

This addendum of the The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools' Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas. This document should be read in conjunction with the annually approved Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

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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 or college 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.

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 deputies) 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.

The Federation of St Elphege’s and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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 and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Flo Herzog and St Elphege’s and Tessa Christoforou at Regina Coeli.

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 increased 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 The Federation of St Elphege’s and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Croydon LA have categorised vulnerable pupils into priority groups as seen in the grid below and the Federation has adopted the arrangements to safeguard these pupils as proposed.

Priority	Arrangements to safeguard
1) Without continued regular contact with this child they will be at significant risk of harm. <i>For example, children on a child protection plan.</i>	Contact is made with the family (speak to the child where possible) twice weekly by telephone call from the DSL or DDSL. Contact the social worker weekly by email or telephone to update or the SPOC or Children’s First Contact Centre if concerned. Parents encouraged to take up the school place and/or supported with the online learning provision.
2) Active contact needs to be maintained with this family on a regular/weekly basis to monitor how the family are coping and to escalate if necessary. <i>For example, children on a Child in Need Plan.</i>	Contact is made with the family (speak to the child where possible) weekly by telephone call from the DSL or DDSL. Contact the social worker weekly by email or telephone to update or the SPOC Children’s First Contact Centre if concerned. Parents encouraged to take up the school place and/or supported with the online learning provision.
3) Less frequent contact can be maintained due to stability in this child’s safety network. <i>For example, those children who may be vulnerable as a result of their financial situation etc.</i>	Contact is made with the family fortnightly by telephone call from the DSL or DDSL. Parents encouraged to take up the school place and/or supported with the online learning provision.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, The Federation of St Elphege’s and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools or the social worker

will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

Attendance monitoring

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.

If The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>.

If the school has closed, we will complete the return once the school reopens and as requested by the DfE.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school - The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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, The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead On Site

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 records 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 staff and volunteers at The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). This will typically be the senior members of staff on duty on any given day.

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 completing a cause for concern form.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access a DSL physically, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher. 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 raise their concern with the head of school, head teacher or chair of governors. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Tom Tamplin.

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 (2019). 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 The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer 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 within the Federation, schools should seek assurance from the Head of School or Executive Head Teacher that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

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, The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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 (2019) (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.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer 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

Where The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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, The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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.

Children and online safety away from school and college

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 set out in the Federation's code of conduct.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will ensure 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:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- 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.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.

- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, 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.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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 all contact made should be recorded.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

Where concerns arise as a result of monitoring communications, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

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

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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 The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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.

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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.

Peer on Peer Abuse

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools 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.

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.