COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Torquay Boys’ Grammar School

Date: 21/04/2020
Date shared with staff:

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 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 our Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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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 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.

TBGS 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, Mr S. Lyne-Ley.

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 safeguarding team will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

TBGS 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.

TBGS and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – we will then follow up on any student that they were expecting to attend, who does not. TBGS 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.

Children on Child Protection Plans are contacted weekly, in line with current local authority guidance (April 20) by a member of the safeguarding team, unless a specific request from the social worker has been put in place. Children who are currently at CIN or TAF level are contacted bi weekly, by their Head of House.

To support the above, 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, TBGS will notify their social worker.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

TBGS has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mr S. Lyne-Ley
The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Mr A. Kosmaczewski

Our aim is to have a trained Child Protection Officer available on site, during those times when school is open. 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.

It is important that all TBGS staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). Staff who are working in school will be made aware of who our safeguarding officer 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 CPOMS – staff can do so remotely. Staff are able to email the safeguarding team using slyneley@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk (DSL) akosmaczewski@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk (DDSL)

Staff at TBGS are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. Staff are also reminded that email reporting is not appropriate where there are child protection concerns and they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm. In these situations, TBGS staff will make verbal contact with the safeguarding lead. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available and they cannot reach a member of the safeguarding team, they should call the Torbay Multi Agency Hub, or Devon Multi Agency Hub – details can be found below.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Head teacher. 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 Head teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Mrs Christine Weston cweston@tbgs.co.uk

Members of the public and school community are able to report a safeguarding concern by contacting:
The Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mr S. Lyne-Ley slyneley@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk
The Head teacher - Mr P. Lawrence plawrence@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk
The Chair of Governors (acting) - Mrs Christine Weston cweston@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk

Students have been provided with safeguarding information and are able to email their tutor, or Head of House, using the email addresses contained on our school website [https://www.tbgs.co.uk/about-us/staff/](https://www.tbgs.co.uk/about-us/staff/)

If you are worried about a child contact the relevant safeguarding hub:

**Torbay Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub:**
Tel 01803 208100/Email: mash@torbay.gov.uk

**Devon Children’s Family Partnership**
Tel 0345 155 1071/Email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

For all emergencies, contact 999
Safeguarding Training and induction

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 TBGS, 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

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.

Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

It remains essential that people who are deemed unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children’s workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, TBGS 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 using 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.
TBGS 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.

TBGS 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, we 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

TBGS 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 sent out by the senior leadership team.

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

Below are some things staff have been encouraged 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.

**Supporting children not in school**

TBGS is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being 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 support in school, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of welfare checks for these individuals will be recorded on CPOMS, as should a record of contact have made.

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

TBGS 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 on via regular email communication with parents.

TBGS recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances can affect the mental health of students and their parents/carers. Our staff are aware of this when setting expectations of students’ work whilst at home.
Supporting children in school

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

TBGS will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to student ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

TBGS 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.

TBGS will ensure that where we care for children of key workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Peer on Peer Abuse

TBGS 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 of 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 CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.