

# TEFAT Additional Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection During Covid-19 school closures

This document forms version 1.0 of this annex; it is an extraordinary addition to the TEFAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, September 2019. The information is operational from 2nd April and is subject to weekly review and updates by the TEFAT Safeguarding Special Interest Group (SIG) and will evolve to reflect updated Department for Education advice or guidance. It is available on the TEFAT and academy website and will be disseminated to all staff via email.

## Context

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 schools have been directed by the government to close to the majority of pupils and to remain open only for the children of identified critical key workers (related to the COVID - 19 virus and emergency measures in place) and vulnerable children (those who have a social worker, meet the definition of need in s17 of the Children Act 1989 and those with an EHCP). The way schools are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual.

This document should be read alongside the TEFAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, September 2019 and outlines the adjustments TEFAT academies are making to operational practice and safeguarding practice during the COVID -19 emergency measures. It is written in line with Government guidance [Coronavirus \(COVID – 19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers – published 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020](#).

All schools will adhere to the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2019 irrespective of the school location within their respective regions and, if the need arises in the future, within locality/emergency hubs coordinated by Local Authorities.

## Key Principles

Academies are operating in response to COVID-19 whilst retaining TEFAT key safeguarding principles:

- The welfare and safety of the child is paramount; children must be listened to
- It is the responsibility of all adults who work with children (staff and volunteers) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to take action where children are at risk from harm
- Safeguarding goes beyond implementing basic child protection procedures, it is an integral part of all activities and functions of the Trust
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which might lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- The same professional standards should be applied regardless of culture, gender, language, disability, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity
- Staff and volunteers will report concerns regarding an adult in the usual way in line with TEFAT 'Safeguarding and Child Protection policy' supported by the Trust 'Managing Allegations Against A Staff Member'. It is noted that a referral will be made to the LADO in the usual way, either by phone or email.
- The TEFAT 'Whistle Blowing Policy' remains in place and is available on the [TEFAT website](#).

### **Additional Agreed COVID-19 Principles:**

At this exceptional time, additional principles have been reviewed and are in place across the Trust including:

- The use of 'My Concern' remains the Trust wide agreed online system for recording concerns and all relevant information regarding communication with families and other services
- Where possible, a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy (DSL) will be available either on the academy site or remotely by phone or hangout each day. For further support, academies are able to contact TEFAT DSLs, Caroline Oliver and Travis Latham, in the usual manner
- DSLs names are detailed in local academy policies on academy websites and they will continue to fulfil their key responsibilities in respect of safeguarding
- DSLs will endeavour to engage with other services remotely, e.g. via email, phone or hangout, to retain effective communication and multi agency collaboration to safeguard children
- Where possible, safety plans have been created by DSLs for vulnerable children and families to ensure they have contact details for social workers and key emergency services such as NSPCC and Childline
- Key contact details for staff, emergency services and helplines are available on all academy websites
- Where possible, risk assessments have been conducted in collaboration with families and social care to assess the risk of vulnerable pupils not attending the school
- School landlines or school mobiles will be used to contact families and children for safe and well checks and will be remotely conducted by two members of staff e.g. DSL leads the call and another member of staff listens to the call remotely to verify the conversation held
- The TEFAT home learning site displays a 'Report A Concern' button to enable pupils to log concerns directly to the academy DSLs with regular oversight from Trust DSLs
- Online engagement in learning and appropriate use of google classroom will be monitored and tracked by academy staff
- The most up to date contact details of children (ideally three contact numbers and as a minimum two contact numbers) are in place
- Academies will share with parents/carers any relevant updated advice received from our three safeguarding partners: local authorities regarding 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

### **Attendance of Pupils and Vulnerable Children:**

The government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. The government guidance states that children of critical workers and vulnerable children can, where required attend school. Critical workers are defined [here](#).

Vulnerable children are defined as:

- Those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- Those who have a social worker include those who are subject to 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.

Further guidance on vulnerable children is available [here](#). The school also has flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support or where there are other significant concerns about their wellbeing.

The Principal and DSLs are aware of the most vulnerable children in their respective academies and have ensured that those pupils who meet the criteria have been offered places at school. Where the pupils are not in school, for example if they have an underlying medical health condition that would put them at significant risk, an academy risk assessment has been completed, where possible, with the social worker and family to consider risk and plan mitigation. Where possible, remote regular safe and well checks are being made and recorded, adhering to Trust risk assessment guidance and government [social distancing guidance](#). If DSLs are concerned about pupils at any time and in relation to safe and well checks they are advised to contact the named social worker, escalating to the social care team manager or MASH to promptly refer their concerns.

Local authorities and education settings do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance. If a vulnerable pupil is expected to attend and fails to do so, the DSLs will notify the allocated social worker in the first instance and escalate concerns to the team manager and MASH if the social worker is non contactable. 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 communication plan is in place for that child, where possible utilising online learning communication.

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 during the COVID-19 crisis 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. However, academies recognise that families whose children qualify for FSM may be experiencing particular challenges during this crisis, and have made arrangements to ensure that FSM children either have access to a meal or are provided with food vouchers in line with government guidance.

### **Online Safety:**

All academies have home learning packages in place that are monitored through google classroom to provide children with online education and a means of raising concerns if needed. All staff who interact with children and young people, including online, will continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk.

Online teaching should follow usual principles for safe and acceptable use of technology in line with each academy locally owned Acceptable Use policy and the TEFAT overarching Acceptable Use policy.

The school has communicated/ reminded parents and carers of basic information where online learning platforms are being used which has included:

- Confirmation of online tools and or sites that the school will be using
- Confirmation of what the child may be asked to do online
- Confirmation as to who their child will be interacting with online
- Allowing the parent or carer the opportunity to voice any concerns
- The importance of regular checks with the child when alone during screen time
- Maintaining open communication with the child about online safety

- How to report a concern using the TEFAT 'Report A Concern' button on the home learning page

Parents and carers have also been provided with details / links to support services eg Internet Matters, CEOP, Net-aware, ThinkUKnow, etc

The school recognises that not all children will have access to a computer or internet facilities in the home, and where possible, has ensured that age appropriate resources have been provided on request.

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

In response to the current situation the Government has issued guidance in relation to required checks. Staff who are already working in regulated activity and have undergone appropriate checks do not need to be rechecked if required to work on a different site temporarily, provided the details required are confirmed by the current employer.

Any new staff or volunteers will be checked in line with relevant processes and details recorded on the Single Central Record in the usual way. Note, there have been [temporary changes to ID checking requirements for the purposes of a DBS Check](#)

All existing staff have had safeguarding training and have read Part One of KCSiE. DSLs will ensure all staff are informed of any updates or variations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any new staff or volunteers will be provided with a safeguarding induction to ensure they are clear about expected processes.

DSL training is unlikely to take place at present. The Government has advised that any DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL even if they miss their refresher training. If any staff member requires initial DSL training during this period, as they need to take on DSL responsibilities they have not previously had, the school will take advice from the Trust and an appropriate level of input will be provided.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

The school recognises that during the closure / partial closure staff must continue to remain vigilant to any signs of such abuse, listen to and work with any child who may have suffered abuse from a peer, their parents and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of the child or young person concerned. DSLs will continue to adhere to the principles as set out in Part 5 KCSiE. Concerns and actions must be recorded on 'My Concern' and appropriate referrals made.

### **Supporting children in school**

TEFAT academies will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend. The Principal/ leader in charge will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety. The academy will adhere to the government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing, TEFAT risk assessments and will continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

TEFAT academies 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. Where academies have concerns about the impact of staff absence, such as DSLs or first aiders, they will discuss these immediately with the Trust.

### **New Children at the school**

In the future, through Local Authority led planning, children may join our academies from other settings. When they do, we will seek from those settings the relevant welfare and child protection information. We are awaiting further DfE and local authority guidance on these arrangements.

### **Useful Links:**

**ChildLine:** 0800 1111 who are operating a 9am – Midnight service in response to COVID19..

**UK Safer Internet Centre:** <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/report/>

**The Safeguarding Alliance:** [www.thesafeguardingalliance.org.uk](http://www.thesafeguardingalliance.org.uk)

**CEOP:** <https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

**Young Minds Crisis Messenger:** 85258 – free text service for 24/7 crisis support across the UK mental health crisis - If you need urgent help text YM to 85258

### **NSPCC Helpline:**

Phone: 0808 800 5000

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**HOPE line UK:** 0800 068 4141

**Samaritans:** 116 123

**Mind:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline:**

Email: [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0800 046 8687

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.

**If you need urgent/ life threatening medical attention call 999 or attend your local A&E**