St Michael's School

ANNEXE TO SAFEGUARDING POLICY COVID-19

SCOPE: This policy applies to the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage

This policy has been agreed by the Chair of Governors but has not been formally ratified by the governing body and should be treated as a working document.

Introduction - Response to COVID-19

There have again been significant changes within our setting in response to the second outbreak of the virus. The way that St Michael's is operating is again fundamentally different from business as usual but will be very similar to how it operated during the first lockdown. This annexe sets out the application of the Safeguarding Policy with regard to the closure of the school and it is operating under online learning procedures. Priority pupils will be in the school under COVID-19 protective measures. The school's Safeguarding Policy and its application is fundamentally the same though.

Children always come first, and staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure. A flexible approach is key to the situation, of which advice from the government is subject to change.

The current school position and local advice

The current school position is in line with government advice. From the week commencing 4th January, the school will have children in nursery, and priority groups, educated and looked after in the school. These children will be attending for a full day 5 days a week and be educated and looked after in discrete areas of the school with controlled groups or bubbles.

The rest of the pupils will continue to be educated online from their homes, although children of key workers may continue to attend the school under supervision from staff should their parents so choose. Some vulnerable children may attend the school too. Teaching Staff will continue to provide home learning opportunities, work and teaching videos through our online platform: Google Classroom, and online safety protocols still apply.

Returning to School

School can provide a stability and normality for pupils even with additional protective measures. We are aware that the return to school for pupils will not be the same for all. The different experiences all pupils will have had at home, at a festive time under COVID restrictions, will naturally play a large part in how easily they re-adapt to attending school and its routines. Staff will need to be mindful of possible safeguarding issues as well as wellbeing and bereavement. In addition, protective measures will be in place to ensure safety. Please see the Behaviour Policy Covid 19 Annex for more information, the Bereavement Policy and Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK and Planning guide for primary schools - GOV.UK

Reporting arrangements
The school arrangements continue in line with our Child Protection Policy. DSL provision is as per the Safeguarding Policy as are the 'on-call' arrangements. The DSL and DDSLs are the same as in the Safeguarding Policy, with the addition of the Headmaster and SENDCo. However, should a DSL or DDSL not be available or contactable, then a senior leader from the SMT may take responsibility for coordinating the safeguarding on site.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL, even if they have not attended refresher training. In line with KCSIE, all staff can make a call to social services should they have a concern.

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. The arrangements for contacting children's services are the same as in our existing Safeguarding Policy.

Should a child be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, Essex or Thurrock safeguarding teams should be called. Failing that, the police should be informed without delay.

Awareness of increased risk
The pressures on children and their families at this time remain significant. There still may be increased wellbeing demands for families, as the restraints of the last weeks. Online learning will continue for most of the school. Economic uncertainty remains real for many families too. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home and school, for SEND pupils and or key worker and vulnerable children attending school. Staff will need to be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, and of the increased risk of neglect and harm to children and families. www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing

Should staff have concerns over the mental health of children or their families then the DSL or SENDCo should be contacted. The school has two mental health first aiders, namely the DSL and Head of PSHE who can be consulted too. The School Nurse is also available and the mental health policy can be used too as a reference for support.

Identifying vulnerability
The school has identified the most vulnerable children making reference to guidance on vulnerable children and young people. and from 31st December: Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings

For those pupils not meeting the vulnerable definition but who are still a concern to the school, then arrangements would be drawn up in consultation with their class teacher, DSL and Headmaster so as their needs could still be addressed. Children with SEND needs will have their requirements

communicated under the direction of the form or subject teacher, overseen by the SENCo. Children of key workers may still attend school. Vulnerable children may also still attend school at this time, advice from the Government offers more advice on this issue.

Children attending school safety arrangements
In addition to the children returning to school the children of key workers and those considered vulnerable may still be attending the school. Please consult the COVID Behaviour annex and the Health and Safety COVID annex for more details.

Staff should be aware of their own safety and wellbeing mental health and wellbeing guidance. Social distancing within education and childcare settings with very young children will be harder to maintain. Staff should implement social distancing as far as they are able, whilst ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for within their settings. Regular handwashing guidelines should be followed, and the surfaces kept clean. Concerns about the wellbeing and mental health of children and safeguarding should be communicated to the DSL.

Holiday arrangements
This school has provided places for priority children over previous breaks. Further arrangements will be made if necessary.

Attendance
The school is following the attendance guidance issued by the Government. Attendance is recorded and reported to the Department of Education and the Local Authority on a daily basis.

Remote learning and online safety
The School's E-Safety Policy should be followed and adhered to. Young people will be using the internet more during this period for home learning and safety for families and staff is the highest priority. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support through the IT Manager and Head of ICT. Should no IT staff be available, then one of the staff digital leaders can be sought for advice.

Staff should be aware that normal restrictions imposed by Blocksi have been temporarily lifted as children are not using school-issued equipment. Therefore, it is even more important that links and videos being provided by staff for students to use have been fully vetted in advance. We are relying on parental internet controls and parental supervision at this time to ensure that appropriate use of the internet is occurring at home.

The school will provide a closed controlled environment for online learning. Children are given secure logins and they are not able to contact anyone or share work with anyone outside of the organisation. All work is set through Google Classroom and with oversight from SMT. The Head of ICT and IT Manager are to be included as teachers in every classroom to ensure accountability and to be able to provide technical support when required.

Any concerns that a staff member has concerning a child at risk online should be dealt with as in the safeguarding policy. All pupils and staff must remind themselves of and adhere strictly to the acceptable use agreements and online safety policy, including the COVID - 19 extension policy. The Digital Learning and Continuity Plan for COVID-19 sets out in detail, digital learning strategy.

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. Further advice concerning useful cyber safety websites can be found from advice from the Government. This list is not exhaustive and safety and new applications and websites are constantly being evaluated. Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pastoral support

Those children being educated and facilitated in school will receive the usual in school pastoral support. For children being educated at home, staff will be in regular contact with pupils through the online learning and weekly PSHE google meet sessions and will continue to be vigilant for signs of safeguarding risk or emotional distress.

Pupils or parents with a pastoral concern should contact their Class Teacher in the first instance or the Pastoral Lead or one of the DSLs. Where a pupil is already known to the school as being in need or is in receipt of pastoral-type support in school, the DSL will ensure that a communication and support plan is in place for that child. This may include email or phone. The plan will be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate. www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/

Guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Where children move between schools, welfare and child protection information will be shared as required. GDPR requirements do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff, other children and volunteers. Staff should be aware of their possible vulnerability too. When communicating through email with parents, staff should bcc in their line manager.

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 DSL. Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction as usual. Teacher misconduct will be addressed following the usual procedures, Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

New staff or volunteers

The procedures are the same as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy. 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 - guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking. Under no circumstances should a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to work in regulated activity. It is essential that the school knows, on any given day which staff will be in the school and that appropriate checks have been carried out.

Staff training and safeguarding induction

All new staff should continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction. New staff would be supplied with the same policies as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy as well as this COVID- 19 ANNEX. Use of the Educare online training for Level 2 Safeguarding would be used.

Help and support
[Advice for the education sector](#) is being updated daily.

D Webb
Pastoral Lead and DSL   January 2021

APPROVAL
This policy was reviewed by the Chair of Governors, Mark Stennett, in January 2021 and was approved for full adoption and implementation.