



Pathfinder

Multi Academy Trust

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# COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

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This policy has been adopted by the Board of Directors of Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust and is applicable across all schools that make up the Trust. In line with the MAT's Scheme of Delegation, this Policy must be duly applied by each Local Governing Committee and the Headteacher of each school that is part of Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust.

Where there are specific details or any discretions in the policy that apply to an individual school or Local Governing Committee this has been made clear within the wording of the policy.

This policy will be reviewed formally by the MAT Board of Directors in line with the agreed timetable for policy review or sooner as events or legislation changes require.

Date Adopted: **April 2020**

Date for Review: **April 2021**

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## 1 Context

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible. 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 Pathfinder Multi Academy Trusts (PMAT) Safeguarding and Child Protection Statement contains details of our safeguarding arrangement.

## 2 Support from Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust

The PMAT Central Safeguarding Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the school Designated Safeguarding Lead's (DSL) to carry out their role effectively.

This includes, remotely accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction.

PMAT will also provide regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting.

## 3 Key contacts

| Role                              | Name             | Contact number | Email  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| CEO                               | Andrew Daly      | 01904 411341   | <a href="mailto:adaly@archbishopholgates.org">adaly@archbishopholgates.org</a>         |
| COO                               | Michelle Bowling | 01904 411341   | <a href="mailto:mbowling@pmat.academy">mbowling@pmat.academy</a>                       |
| PMAT Designated Safeguarding Lead | Gaynor Stainsby  | 07834 281560   | <a href="mailto:gstainsby@archbishopholgates.org">gstainsby@archbishopholgates.org</a> |
| Chair of PMAT Board               | John Hattam      |                | <a href="mailto:john@thecatalystconsultancy.com">john@thecatalystconsultancy.com</a>   |
| Safeguarding Trustee              | Samantha Pugh    |                | <a href="mailto:spugh@pmat.academy">spugh@pmat.academy</a>                             |

## 4 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, and specifically the school DSL will know who our most vulnerable children are. They will have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Our 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 the DSL for the school.

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 School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, the school or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

PMAT schools will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

## 5 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.

All PMAT schools who has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) 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 as requested by the DfE.

Where a school has closed, arrangements can be made with another PMAT school for any children/students to share their facility, discretion should be given to vulnerability of the students that need to attend another PMAT school and the logistics should be given consideration.

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

## 6 PMAT Designated Safeguarding Lead

The PMAT Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Gaynor Stainsby

The PMAT Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- support and advise schools with any concerns they may have.
- maintain communication with all school DSL's and pastoral staff of the school via email, telephone or virtual meetings weekly and daily.
- liaise with CYC MASH and their Virtual Head for Looked after Children/ Safeguarding Advisor and Attendance Advisor.
- contribute to any decision and new procedures that develop through COVID-19.
- provide MAT schools with a template of an additional safeguarding policy's that may be required during the COVID-19.
- will report to the central PMAT team any concerns that may arise with PMAT schools as soon as practical but no later than every week.
- have access to CPOMS in all PMAT schools to help and support with concerns. This may include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS 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.

## 7 School Designated Safeguarding Lead

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 and contactable 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 may include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS 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 PMAT School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site must be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## 8 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, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher and the PMAT Safeguarding Lead. 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 contact their Headteacher and DSL and report their concern to the LADO. 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 of a PMAT school should be directed to the schools Chair of Governors: or in their absence to the PMAT chair of the board John Hattam or the PMAT DSL Gaynor Stainsby.

The Multi Academy Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

## 9 Safeguarding training and induction

DSL training is 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 School DSL should communicate any new local arrangements with staff to ensure that they know what to do if they are concerned about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter a PMAT School, 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 Trust, schools should seek assurance from the PMAT HR Manager that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

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.

## 10 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, our

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.

If a school is 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.

PMAT 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.

PMAT 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](mailto: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, PMAT schools will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

## 11 Online safety in schools and colleges

Our 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.

## 12 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 PMAT code of conduct.

Our 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 PMAT to communicate with pupils.
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

## 13 Supporting children not in school

Our School 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 this plan must be recorded on CPOMS, as should a record of all contact made.

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

The MAT School 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 its website and social media pages.

A MAT school 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 and teachers at their school.

School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.



## 14 Supporting children in school

A MAT School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

A MAT School 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.

A MAT School 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 COVID-19.

A MAT School 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. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on CPOMS.

Where a MAT school has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the trust.

## 15 Peer on peer abuse

The MAT 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 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.

## 16 Phased Return

As part of national social distancing measures to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), we have had to limit the numbers of children and young people attending educational and childcare settings, to ensure that pupils and staff attending can do so safely. That is why, since 23 March 2020, education and childcare settings have only been open to priority groups ([vulnerable children](#) and [children of critical workers](#))<sup>1</sup>.

As well as offering face-to-face provision for those able to attend, settings have also done a huge amount to support the remote education of those who have been staying at home. Innovative and fast-paced work has taken place, by committed staff, to develop resources to make this education the best it can be.

Throughout this period, the work and dedication of critical workers has been crucial to our country. This of course includes all our critical workers working with children and young people – leaders, teachers, support staff, childcare workers, social workers and others, who have worked tirelessly to support the education and welfare of young people.

From the 1 June 2020 our primary schools will be welcoming back children in nursery, reception year 1 and year 6 alongside priority groups. Our secondary school

will welcome back year 10 and year 12 on June the 15 and will offer face to face tuition. Children will be taught in small groups 'bubbles'

A phased return of pupils to the school, starting with reception and year 1. The children will be in bubbles (**groups of 8 or 9**) and will remain in these bubbles with a teacher and a teaching assistant at all times.

We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in [the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#) are operating effectively.

Our MAT schools will adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus has decreased.