



# Learner protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

**Last reviewed :** May 2020

**Next review due by:** Sept 2020

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## Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Sue Martin	<a href="mailto:s.martin@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk">s.martin@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk</a> 07538 862473
Deputy DSL	Naomi Hague	<a href="mailto:naomi@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk">naomi@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk</a> 07923 217485
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) can't be on site	Lindsay Harris	<a href="mailto:lindsay@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk">lindsay@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk</a> 07984 728314
Principal	Lindsay Harris	<a href="mailto:lindsay@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk">lindsay@trinityspecialistcollege.co.uk</a> 07984 728314

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Local authority designated officer (LADO)		
Chair of Trustess	Liz Garnham	

## 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of college closure due to COVID-19, and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners **[insert names]** and local authorities (LA); Birmingham, Sandwell, Warwickshire, Solihull. .

It sets out changes to our normal learner protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in colleges, colleges and other providers](#), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal learner protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable learners' includes those who:

- Have a social worker, including learners:
  - With a learner protection plan
  - Assessed as being in need
  - Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

## 2. Core safeguarding principles

We will still have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Although we are operating in a different way to normal, we are still following these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of our learners must come first
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any learner, they should continue to act on it immediately
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy should be available at all times (see section 4 for details of our arrangements)
- It's essential that unsuitable people don't enter the college workforce or gain access to learners
- Learners should continue to be protected when they are online

### **3. Reporting concerns**

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a learner immediately. It is still vitally important to do this, both for learners still attending college and those at home.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support learner's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable learners/young adults.

### **4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements**

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL contactable remotely or on site wherever possible. Details of all important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

We will keep all staff and volunteers informed by email or phone if there are any changes to DSL arrangements and if applicable, who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable learners in our college are.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. This will be Lindsay Harris, Principal. Their contact details are shown in the important contacts section of this document.

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure they (the senior leader) can:

- Identify the most vulnerable learners in college
- Update and manage access to learner protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with learner's social workers where they need access to learners in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

### **5. Working with other agencies**

We will continue to work with social care, and with virtual college or college heads for looked-after and previously looked-after young adults.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners

The local authority: about learners with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and learner's social services, reporting mechanisms and referral thresholds

### **6. Monitoring attendance**

As most learners will not be attending college during this period, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any learner we expect to attend college doesn't attend, or stops attending. In these cases we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by telephone

- › Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education's daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending college.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible. The DSL will be responsible for this process.

## **7. Peer-on-peer abuse**

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about both learners attending college and those at home.

## **8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer**

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a learner or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address [Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk](mailto:Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk) for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

## **9. Support for learners who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns**

We have the option to offer places in college to learners who don't meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this. For example, learners who have previously had a social worker, or who haven't met the threshold for a referral but where staff have raised concerns.

If these learners will not be attending college, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

## **10. Contact plans**

We have contact plans for learners with a social worker and learners who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- › They won't be attending college (for example where the college, parent/carer and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this wouldn't be in the learner's best interests); or
- › They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

Each learner has an individual plan which sets out:

- › How often the college will make contact – this will be at least once a week
- › Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well

- › How staff will make contact – this will be over the phone, doorstep visits, or a combination of both

We have agreed these plans with learner's social care where relevant, and will review them on a fortnightly basis during COVID 19. If we can't make contact, we will [contact social services or the police].

## **11. Safeguarding all learners**

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all learners at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on learners' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line with the procedures set out in section 3 above. For learners at home, they will look out for signs like:

- › Not completing assigned work or logging on to college systems
- › No contact from learners or families
- › Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

Learners are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside college.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support learners' mental health.

## **12. Online safety**

### **12.1 In college**

We will continue to have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place in college.

### **12.2 Outside college**

Where staff are interacting with learners online, they will continue to follow our existing Acceptable use of IT policy [delete as applicable].

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a learner may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure learners know how to report any concerns they have back to our college, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

### **13.3 Working with parents and carers**

We will make sure parents and carers:

- › Are aware of the potential risks to learners online and the importance of staying safe online
- › Know what our college is asking learners to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our college
- › Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our college provides
- › Know where else they can go for support to keep their young adults safe online

### **13. Mental health**

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for learners mental health for all learners. E.g. offering counselling over the phone, video calls .

We will also signpost all learners, parents and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for learners learning remotely and not attending college, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on learners' mental health.

### **14. Staff recruitment, training and induction**

#### **14.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers**

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our college are safe to work with learners.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our college.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers, and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who aren't in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

for any new information.

#### **14.3 Safeguarding induction and training**

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction
- A copy of our learner protection policy (and this addendum)
- Keeping Learner Safe in Education part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our learner protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

#### **14.4 Keeping records of who's on site**

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our college each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

## **15. Learners attending other settings**

Where learners are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving setting is provided with any relevant welfare and learner protection information.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the learner is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The learner's EHC plan, learner in need plan, learner protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the learner's social worker
- Details of the virtual college head

Where the DSL or deputy can't share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

We will share this information before the learner arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

## **16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3-4 weeks] by Carol Davies, HR & Welfare Manager]. At every review, it will be approved by the full board of Trustees.

## **17. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Learner protection policy
- Staff code of conduct policy
- IT acceptable use policy
- Health and safety policy
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-bullying