



FRAYS

Academy Trust

Frays Academy Trust Child Protection Policy Addendum COVID-19

Review Date: July 2021

COVID-19: Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Frays Academy Trust

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1. Background and Context

Since 20th March 2020 our schools have been responding to the global coronavirus pandemic. This has included school closures, to all but the children of keyworkers and those considered to be vulnerable. This addendum of the Frays Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements following on from the COVID-19 DfE Guidance.

At the Frays Academy Trust, we will continue to follow safeguarding principles, as laid out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020. This addendum lays out our contingency plans for safeguarding, in the event of a partial or full closure, due to a coronavirus outbreak or as a response to restrictions put in place due to local or national lockdowns. This policy addendum has been written with due regard to the DfE guidance: Contingency Framework: implementation guidance. (Dec 2020).

This is a highly unusual time and due to the constantly evolving COVID-19 response we will ensure our Child Protection policy is under regular review. If further guidance is issued to schools, this appendix will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

2. Vulnerable Children

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for Frays Academy Trust. Vulnerable children, for the purpose of the COVID-19 response, include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans. 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. Across the Trust, our senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputies know who our most vulnerable children are.

Vulnerable children across all year groups continue to be expected to attend educational provision.

Frays Academy Trust will ensure all our schools 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 in each school.

3. Attendance Expectations and Monitoring

If the school is open then school attendance is mandatory and normal reporting procedures for non-attendance will be followed.

If the school is subject to restrictions, the following process will be followed:

Children of critical workers: Where a critical worker parent or carer notifies a school that their child requires full-time on-site provision, the school will make every effort to accommodate them.

Vulnerable children: Vulnerable children are expected to attend full-time on-site provision where it is appropriate for them to do so. This will remain a priority for the school. If they do not attend and it is not a previously agreed leave of absence, we will:

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing concerns using supporting guidance, and deciding whether any adjustments could be made to encourage attendance, considering the child's circumstances and their best interests.
- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child's attendance would be appropriate.

High quality remote education should be provided for all other pupils.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each school in the Frays Academy Trust has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at least one Deputy DSL. The names of these key members of staff can be found on page 18 of the Child Protection Policy.

Each school will be expected to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. In exceptional circumstances, where this is not possible due to high levels of staff absence, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This would include updating and managing access to child protection files or as and when necessary, liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments. In dealing with any new safeguarding concerns, a DSL from one of our other Frays schools will provide professional support to ensure cases are dealt with effectively and in-line with guidance.

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

Frays Academy Trust will hold regular safeguarding team meetings with all DSLs to ensure all schools are fully up to date with the latest guidance. This will ensure a consistent approach.

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Frays Child Protection Policy. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. New arrangements for teaching pupils within smaller ‘bubbles’ should not be a barrier to quick reporting of concerns.

With such different arrangements, young people could be at greater risk of abuse. 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 safeguarding team.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authority remain unchanged. Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern immediately to the Head of School. Concerns around the Head or School should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer as per the Child Protection Policy. The Trust will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

All existing school staff have had annual safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). The DSL in each school will 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 supply teachers enter one of the schools in the Frays Academy Trust, they will continue to be provided with clear safeguarding information. New staff must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DSL or a deputy. They must read the school child protection policy, the behaviour policy, the whistleblowing policy and the staff code of conduct. The DSL or deputy will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff

At Frays we understand that it remains absolutely 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 school’s 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 (KCSIE, 2020).

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. Where our schools are 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. Frays Academy Trust 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. The Trust will also 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, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Frays will continue to ensure each of our schools keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).

If staff are deployed across settings, we will take into account the previous DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employing Head of School 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 employing Head of School that the member of staff has had the appropriate checks completed and received appropriate safeguarding training. This will be monitored by the Trust as part of our safeguarding monitoring procedures.

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.

8. Online safety

Frays Academy Trust will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. We have read and understood the DfE guidance 'Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus' (2020) and each school has a 'Remote Learning Policy'. This will be applied in the event of partial or full closures.

We understand that many children will be using computers with access to the internet at home and that 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 Frays Academy Trust Code of Conduct policy and the Remote Learning Plan and Online Safety Policy, all of which have been updated to reflect this new guidance.

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

At Frays, we agree that there is a need for guidelines to be adhered to by all staff when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved. Therefore, we agree the following:

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing.
- Any filming should be undertaken in an appropriate space, preferably a classroom. However, if this is not possible then online video should take place in area with an appropriate backdrop, not in a bedroom; and the background should be blurred.
- Online lessons 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
- Staff must only use platforms provided by Frays Academy Trust to communicate with pupils.
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

9. Supporting children not in school

Due to the nature of this pandemic, and in line with “Guidance for Full Opening: Schools” (DfE, 2020), we understand that there will be times when children will not be in school, this may be due to isolating or partial/full school closure. Frays Academy Trust 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 in their safeguarding file, along with a record of each contact made.

The communication plans can include; phone contact, door-step visits at the home, or parent contact at the school.

- Door-step visits – these should always be undertaken with two members of staff. Staff should follow and maintain the social distancing rules, as outlined by the most up to date government advice.
- Phone calls – The DSL should make contact with all the pupils they have categorised as the most vulnerable, every week via a phone call home. The phone call should also take place with another member of staff present. When talking to children directly, the DSL must strictly adhere to all guidelines, as outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct policy.
- Parent Contact – If appropriate and both parties agree, parents can meet the DSL at school. They should, however, follow and maintain the social distancing rules, as outlined by the most up to date government advice.

Frays Academy Trust will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. This plan must be reviewed weekly and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The schools within the multi-academy trust will share safeguarding messages on their websites and social media pages.

The Trust 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. Our teachers are aware of this and consider it when setting expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home.

10. Support from the Multi-Academy Trust

The Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.

This includes, accessing Child Protection files for the purpose of quality assurance, support, guidance and direction. The MAT will also facilitate regular group and individual supervision sessions. This may take the form of online meetings.