

## **Annex 1**

# **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

School Name: Forest Way School  
Date: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020  
Date shared with staff:

## **Context**

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 HM Government asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response and those children who are vulnerable and cannot be safely cared for at home.

As a Special School, Forest Way has 230 pupils, all of whom have an EHCP. Through this definition, all such pupils could be deemed 'vulnerable'. Government advice was clear; it directed parents to keep their children at home wherever possible. We worked closely with parents to risk assess who needed a school place and who could be cared for safely at home. Those children with a Social Worker were risk assessed by School Leaders and DSL/Deputy DSLs in consultation with Social Care to ascertain if they needed a school place or whether their needs could be met at home. Also considered was whether the young person was medically vulnerable and hence safer at home.

This sub-section of the Forest Way School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

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## Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead Headteacher	Gail Seaton	School: 01530 831899 Mob: Staff have mobile number	gseaton@forestway.leics.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Andrea Brown	School: 01530 831899	
Deputy DSL	Leanne Larder	School: 01530 831899	
Deputy DSL	Gaynor Donerley Williams	School: 01530 831899	
Safeguarding governor	James Shanley	School: 01530 831899	
Chair of Trustees	James Shanley	School: 01530 831899	

## 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. As a Special School, Forest Way has 230 pupils, all of whom have an EHCP, thus through this definition could all be deemed vulnerable.

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 (LA) 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, especially the DSL (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are and have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Forest Way 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: Andrea Brown**

### **Critical workers**

Although HM Government is clear that children should be at home wherever possible, schools and other educational settings have been asked to provide care for the child/ren of any critical workers who need this support. This may include days and times on which the school would not normally be open, including the school holidays. If our school cannot remain open, due to staff illness or self-isolation, we will notify our local authority and/or the relevant placing authority, who will be responsible for arranging for the child/ren to be cared for in an alternative setting that can meet their needs.

The HM Government guidance for educational settings regarding critical workers can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers#critical-workers>

### **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.

Forest Way and social workers will agree with families whether children in need should be attending school – Forest Way will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Forest Way will also follow up with any 'critical worker' parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) but the child(ren) subsequently do(es) not attend.

To support the above, Forest Way will, when communicating with parents, carers and allocated social workers/placing authorities, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, Forest Way will notify their social worker.

If Forest Way has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable, the children of critical workers) we 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.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Forest Way School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead and a number of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads – these are named on the front sheet.

We will have a trained DSL or deputy available on site at all times when pupils are present. If this is not possible, for example due to staff illness or self-isolation, a decision may have to be made to close the school.

On each day, staff on site will be made aware of who that person is and how to contact them.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school safeguarding policy.

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 report the concern to the head teacher immediately. If there is cause to make a notification to the Head teacher whilst away from school, this should be done by telephone. Staff must not just leave an answerphone message. If the Head teacher is not contactable, the member of staff should contact the Deputy Head teachers either Andrea Brown/Gaynor Donnelly Williams.

Concerns about the Head teacher should be directed to the Chair of Trustees, James Shanley.

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL training is very unlikely to take place during this period.

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 at least part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The Designated Safeguarding Lead should 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 volunteers enter Forest Way they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

### **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, Forest Way will continue to

follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of 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 – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>

Forest Way will continue to comply with 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.

Forest Way 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 environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school or college 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, Forest Way will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Online safety in schools and colleges**

Forest Way will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online monitoring and filtering system.

Where children are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **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 by the police.

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the school's or college's staff code of conduct. Forest Way will not be using any live streaming or live video calls with pupils as part of its home learning policy.

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

## **See Forest Way Home Learning Policy April 2020**

### **Supporting children not in school**

Forest Way is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students, during this period when many of our young people are at home we have set up the following safeguarding measures:

- We have set up home learning using Microsoft Teams. Teachers will be able to set work and activities, as well as having communication with parents through this platform.
- Teachers will be phoning home twice a week to touch base with families and see if everything is ok.
- Leadership Team will be monitoring the layer of pupils we have risk assessed as being potentially more vulnerable due to their home circumstances. They will be putting in extra calls during the week.
- The DSL/Deputy DSLs will be calling daily, the pupils who are our highest risk pupils, where parents and or social worker have agreed it's safer at home.
- We have set up a new [parentsupport@forestway.leics.sch.uk](mailto:parentsupport@forestway.leics.sch.uk) email that LT can monitor out of hours for parents.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that this robust communication plan is in place for each child, their parent(s)/carers and the allocated social worker or placing authority and will monitor its effectiveness.

This plan will be reviewed regularly and where concerns arise, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider any referrals as appropriate, taking into account the local criteria for action.

In addition, the school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Forest Way recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances have a significant potential to affect the mental health of pupils and their parents. Teachers and pastoral staff at Forest Way will be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Forest Way will ensure that if we are unable to care for the child/ren of critical workers, and vulnerable children on site because of staff illness we will liaise with the placing local authority.

### **Supporting children in school**

Forest Way is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

Forest Way will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, maximising safety.

Forest Way 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 coronavirus.

Forest Way will ensure that where we care for children of critical worker and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and will reflect their needs.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

Forest Way 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 the school's safeguarding & child protection policy.

The school will listen carefully, and work with the young person, family and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

**All** concerns and actions taken must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.