

## Annex 1



# **COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at The Orchard's Specialist School, Trafford**

**School Name:** The Orchard's Specialist School

**Policy owner:** Helen O'Brien

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Date shared with staff:**

## **1. Context**

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents were asked 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 - who absolutely need to attend.

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 the The Orchard’s 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
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Head of School	Helen O'Brien	07908877158 / 0161-748-0670	<a href="mailto:h.obrien@theorchards.trafford.sch.uk">h.obrien@theorchards.trafford.sch.uk</a>
Trust Safeguarding Manager	Jayne Carmichael		<a href="mailto:jayne.carmichael@thedunhamtrust.org.uk">jayne.carmichael@thedunhamtrust.org.uk</a>
Chair of Governors	Sue Yardley	via school	<a href="mailto:admin@theorchards.trafford.sch.uk">admin@theorchards.trafford.sch.uk</a>
Safeguarding Governor / Trustee	Nik Clifton	via school	<a href="mailto:admin@theorchards.trafford.sch.uk">admin@theorchards.trafford.sch.uk</a>

## Vulnerable children

All of the children who attend The Orchard's Specialist School have an EHC (Plan) and are therefore considered vulnerable. Many of our children also have a social worker allocated to their family.

All the children who attend The Orchard's have had a risk assessment completed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, personal assistants, therapists or CNT visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children with EHC plans can safely remain at home and we are recommending that where at all possible children do so.

*'If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. It is important to underline that schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society. That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.'*

Where risk assessments have indicated that children may be safer in school we are providing provision to support these children. Decisions about who can attend this provision have been made in conjunction with Trafford Local Authority based on the staffing levels school has available and the following considerations;

#### Children

- whose parent(s) are considered 'Key workers'
- who are subject to a Child Protection Plan
- whose family require significant support from social care (Children in Need)

Decisions about providing school places will be made on the basis of providing a safe environment for children and staff given the Public Health England guidelines we are all following.

In order to support this decision making process children have been RAG rated by considering our knowledge about their exposure to ACE's. After this process children who have flagged as red are considered additionally vulnerable and as such will be offered a school placement.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

The Orchards 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. Each child who has RAG rated as red has been allocated a Senior Leader (key worker) who will co-ordinate their care that this time. The co-ordination of this care began with a virtual TAC meeting during the first week of COVID shut down to ensure a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding these most vulnerable children. Children's plans have been updated to reflect the current circumstances which they are living in. This has included key targets where appropriate.

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

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, The Orchards or allocated social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

The Orchards will encourage our vulnerable children to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

### **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.

If The Orchards has any children in attendance (e.g. because they are vulnerable or their parent(s) / carers are critical workers) we will submit the daily attendance sheet to the DfE by 12 noon – This will be completed by the office manager remotely following a phone call with the Senior Leader on duty.

<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.

The key worker for The Orchards and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. This will be done on a case by case and day by day basis following the guidelines from PHE. The key worker will then follow up on any children that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

To support the above, The Orchards will, when communicating with parents/carers and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available. All staff have been provided with password protected documents containing children's contact details.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, The Orchard's will notify their social worker.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Orchards school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Helen O'Brien

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead are: Helen Walker, Sarah Cattell, Jane Cawood, Imogen Bosmith

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. This has been factored into the duty rota. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

It is important that all The Orchards staff have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day, the staff on site will 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.

### **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concerns 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 (Head of School) & their pathway 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 report the concern to the head of school. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the head of school whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the head of school.

Concerns around the Head of school should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Sue Yardley.

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

### **Safeguarding Training and induction**

The Orchards School has 5 fully trained DSL's whose training remains valid until March 2022. We do not anticipate any requirement for further training at this time.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL 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 The Orchards 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 Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) interim CEO 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.

### **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, The Orchards 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

The Orchards 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 Orchards 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 will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, The Orchards 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**

The Orchards will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where children are using computers or ipads 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, the police.

Online videos and teaching should follow the same principles as set out in The Dunham Trust code of conduct.

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

The Orchards is not delivering virtual lessons, however some staff are uploading learning videos such as stories or attention autism sessions for families to share. We want to encourage this as much as possible however please consider;

- Staff 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.
- 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 our IT network manager / provider to communicate with children. Currently this is class dojo & the class you tube channels.

### **Supporting families whilst children are not in school**

We acknowledge the very significant challenges that having children at home brings to all families. For the families at The Orchards this present different and often very

specific challenges. We are aware that for many of our families school provides a respite provision that is not available elsewhere. It also provides a structure and routine which our children use to regulate themselves. When this is removed we know that this can create significant additional pressures at home for everyone's mental and emotional well being. As such when staff are making phone calls they will be using a risk assessment (appendix 2) to ensure that not only children but parents are coping and staying well. The results of these risk assessments will be shared with senior leaders. Families whose scores cause concern will be discussed at the weekly safeguarding conference call with a view to signposting families to appropriate support services.

All families have been provided with a short well being guide which links them into a number of support agencies (appendix 2). These links are also available on the school website <https://www.theorchards.trafford.sch.uk/home-learning/>.

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

The Orchards is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its Children and families.

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. At the Orchards all children who fall into this category have been flagged as red and have been allocated a key worker. They will act as the central point of contact and create a plan around each child and family. This has been done in conjunction with social care and other agencies which may be involved in the child's care. Other children who have flagged as amber or green will also have a communication plan which reflects the guidance provided to staff

<b>RAG Rating</b>	<b>Type of communication</b>	<b>Amount of Communication</b>
<b>Red</b>	Managed by Senior Leader Individualised plan with SW.	As directed by plan
<b>Amber</b>	Safe and well check 1 x video or photograph of child on dojo	2 x per week
<b>Green</b>	Safe and well check	1 x per week

Details of the plan for all red children must be recorded on CPOMs. All weekly contact sheets should be completed and forward to pathway leads and Head of School by 2pm on Friday. This allows the data to be forwarded to LA's as required.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits (if agreed by social worker). Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The Orchards 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.

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

### **Supporting children in school**

The Orchards is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

The Orchards will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head of school will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The Orchards 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 COVID19.

The Orchards 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 The Orchards 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 and Local Authority.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

The Orchards 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.

### **Support for staff wellbeing**

During the extended period of working from home during the quarantine period of Covid 19 the SLT team put into place the following ideas and strategies to support and offer advice to staff during this period of uncertainty.

SLT risk assessed staff around their mental health and each pathway lead took the responsibility to check in with staff that who we consider may find this more challenging or who perhaps live in isolation. They will be contacted weekly via a phone call or message. All staff now have access to SLACK the information sharing app. SLT created various channels. One for teaching assistants for non-work related conversations, one that was for work related discussions and also a channel specifically for mental health and well-being called Look after you. This channel contains links and threads to various materials from governmental advice, literature and apps for mental health and also links to podcasts.

Teaching staff have been encouraged to join the Teach Together service from the Chartered College and all staff have been provided with the employee assistance number information.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) 0800 882 4102 that is available 24/7.  
Alternatively:

- visit [www.pamassist.co.uk](http://www.pamassist.co.uk)
- or download the app by searching for PAM Assist in the app store

Username: TRAFwell Password: TRAFwell

Staff are also highly aware that SLT are here to support them and they can contact us via slack, email or phone call. As mental health lead, Miss Cattell provided staff with information to contact me personally if they were struggling at this time.

### **Support from the Multi-Academy Trust**

The Dunham Trust will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively.