

COVID-19 School Closure Arrangements Safeguarding and Child Protection at TLG

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Madeleine Meszaros
Deputy DSL	Kiera Carnie
School Development Manager	Helen Laws
Senior Level Safeguarding Lead for Organisation (TLG)	Helen Laws

This addendum of the TLG Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

Contents

1. Context
2. Vulnerable children
3. Attendance monitoring
4. Designated Safeguarding Lead
5. Reporting a concern
6. Safeguarding training and induction
7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
8. Online safety in schools and colleges
9. Children and online safety away from schools and colleges
10. Supporting children not in school
11. Supporting children in school
12. Peer on peer abuse
13. Support from the Education Centre Development Team at National Support

1. Context

From 20th 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.

Throughout the period of school closure, TLG Centres have maintained a continuity of provision of academic work and pastoral support to all our students. Where possible our settings have remained open for our vulnerable students. Where we were unable to provide sufficient staff:pupil ratios to maintain a safe environment (due to illness, self-isolation, child-care restrictions or other relevant COVID-19 factors), our provision continued through remote learning and regular contact with home.

Based on the guidance and information set out by the DfE in their Guidance for the Full Opening of Schools (2nd July 2020) we are expecting all TLG Education Centres to fully re-open at the start of the Autumn Term, which for us is Monday 14th September.

The guidance from the DfE can be found [here](#) and we recommend all TLG Education Centre staff read this guidance.

Whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, protective measures will be in place in each Centre to minimise any risk from coronavirus. These will be set out in a revised risk assessment based on the DfE guidance which is endorsed by Public Health England. This will be initially produced centrally (by the ECD Team) and should be adapted to suit local arrangements in each Centre.

Within this, there remains the possibility that a TLG Centre may need to close due to a local lockdown, or where a student or staff member has had a positive Covid-19 test and all other staff and students are self-isolating as a result.

There may also be small numbers of pupils who require ongoing remote learning, either for part or all of the week – this may be for a range of reasons and may need to be enacted quickly and flexibly.

The above presents us with 3 types of learning scenarios that Centres may need to adopt at different times with agility based on local and individual circumstances.

Scenario 1 - 100% face-to-face: Learning is taking place wholly through attendance at the TLG Centre, with all pupils attending as expected.

Scenario 2 - blended: Some remote learning is taking place with certain pupils alongside continuing face-to-face learning at the TLG Centre. (This could be for an individual pupil who attends TLG for 2 days and learns remotely for the other 3 so as not to be part of a TLG 'bubble' at the same time as a school 'bubble'. This could also be for a pupil who is off entirely for a period of time due to household self-isolation. This scenario could also be applied if staff absences meant that the Centre was unable to operate with full groups or a full timetable for a short period of time.)

Scenario 3 – 100% remote: All learning is taking place remotely due to a temporary closure of the TLG Centre.

This policy applies wherever Scenarios 2 or 3 are in operation at the TLG Centre. Please refer to our main Child Protection Policy for full details of safeguarding arrangements whilst Scenario 1 is operational.

2. Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those 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 1989¹. This may apply to many of our students at TLG.

TLG Head Teachers and deputies (who are also the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy) 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.

TLG Head Teachers should utilise individual risk assessments and vulnerability assessments when making decisions about whether students should be offered a school place, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. Consultation should also take place with parents (where appropriate), referrers and the local authority.

For those remaining at home, vulnerability assessments will help determine the level and frequency of remote support they should receive.

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

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

TLG 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 TLG Head Teacher or deputy will be the lead person for this.

3. Attendance monitoring

Whilst schools are not required to complete the usual statutory attendance recording, TLG will still record 'present' attendance on Lighthouse so that senior leaders can maintain remote oversight. For students working remotely, or not attending due to illness or self-isolation, the attendance code Y should be used.

¹ <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/child-in-need-services/>

Schools should report attendance and school closure status daily to central government using DfE Sign-in.

TLG should follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not by contacting the parent/carer as normal.

To support the above, TLG will continue to confirm emergency contact numbers with parents/carers 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, TLG will notify their social worker.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Each TLG centre has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

Because the DSL and Deputy are the Head Teacher and their deputy or a Classroom Teacher, the majority of the time when the TLG Centre is open, there will be a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case, or when the TLG Centre is supporting students remotely, a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted 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 School Development Manager (DSL trained) or the TLG Education Centres Safeguarding Lead (Helen Laws) will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to Lighthouse Concerns forms 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.

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

5. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, arising either during attendance at school, or through remote contact, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the TLG Child Protection Policy. This includes making a report via the Lighthouse Concerns form, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access Lighthouse from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head Teacher and TLG's Safeguarding Lead (Helen Laws) directly. 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 use the Lighthouse Concerns form to record the concern, following this up with phone-calls or direct emails to immediately notify the Head Teacher and TLG Safeguarding Lead (Helen Laws).

Concerns around the Head Teacher should be made directly and only to the TLG Safeguarding Lead (Helen Laws).

TLG will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations in line with our policy – Dealing with allegations against staff.

6. Safeguarding Training and induction

Face-to-face DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. Where possible, online refresher training through the National Training Academy should be used.

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 it is not possible for them to complete their refresher training.

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, or new volunteers enter TLG, 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 any movement within the organisation, schools should seek assurance from TLG HR 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.

7. 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, TLG 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.

Where TLG are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the TLG's usual processes for recruiting and checking their suitability, which complies with KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

TLG 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.

TLG 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

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, TLG HR will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

8. Online safety in school

TLG will continue to provide a safe environment for students and staff while they are attending the school, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place in accordance with our policies.

9. Children and online safety away from school

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 TLG Staff code of conduct.

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

When communicating with or teaching students TLG staff will do so in accordance with the document 'Staff guidance for distance learning at TLG'.

10. Supporting children not in school

TLG 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 and saved on the TLG centre SharePoint area in a folder called 'Remote working 2020'. All contacts should be recorded on lighthouse in the students contact records.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded 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 key safeguarding messages on its website.

TLG 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 TLG need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home. TLG will signpost students and their families to appropriate support services where possible. One example of this is online help i.e. counselling websites.

11. Supporting children in school

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

TLG 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.

TLG 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.

TLG 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 and saved on the TLG centre SharePoint area in a folder called 'Remote working 2020'.

Where TLG has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – these will be discussed immediately with TLG's ECD national support team.

12. Peer on Peer Abuse

TLG recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

If TLG 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.

TLG 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 Lighthouse and appropriate referrals made.

13. Support from the Education Centre Development Team (ECD)

TLG ECD Team will provide support and guidance as appropriate to enable the DSL to carry out their role effectively. The organisations DSL will lead on this support.

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

The ECD team will also provide regular group meetings and individual sessions. This may take the form of an online meeting or telephone conversation.