COVID-19 Addendum to Safeguarding Policy

2022-2023

Reviewed by Adam Cross: 2 September 2022

Approval by the Board: 20 September 2022

Next review: August 2023 or immediately upon notification of a lockdown period

At the start of Academic Year 2022-23, all schools and colleges are open as normal for the on-site education of children. As such, this policy is not currently active, but remains in "stand-by" for any period of the academic year where our provision is affected by a Covid Lockdown. As soon as any future lockdown is announced, this policy will immediately become active.

Context

The way schools and colleges are currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual. The government's decision of the **(insert date here)** to close schools and colleges to the vast majority of children and to have schools and colleges teach children remotely has meant that all MPW students are now being taught on-line. Government guidance stipulates only those children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home are allowed to be present in school and currently MPW has no such students. Contingency plans are in place to provide face-to-face educational provision for such students should the need arise.

Last year, the college prepared extensively to be in a position whereby it can continue to deliver lessons and other aspects of school life within a remote environment. Since then, members of staff at all levels have worked hard to determine how best to teach students on-line, be this a matter of all participants in the class being on-line or in a "hybrid" learning setting where there is a mix of in-class and on-line participation. The preparation the college has undertaken has included assessing the dangers posed by remote learning, INSET training for all academic staff and relevant support staff, and the provision of additional guidance for parents and students. Our Covid-19 risk assessment is regularly reviewed and the college provides regular updates to parents. Further information regarding the delivery of the curriculum within the remote environment can be found in the college's policies on Online Teaching, E-safety, Acceptable Use of ICT and the Staff Code of Conduct.

This annex to our safeguarding policy sets out details of our safeguarding arrangements for:

- Version control and dissemination
- Safeguarding priority
- Current college position
- Safeguarding partners' advice
- Roles and responsibilities
- Vulnerable children
- Increased vulnerability or risk
- Attendance
- Reporting concerns about students and staff
- Safeguarding training and induction
- Child on child abuse
- Online safety
- Supporting students not in college

Version control and dissemination

This is version 1.4 of this annex and it is consistent with KCSIE 2022 and guidance provided by the Local Safeguarding Partnership. It will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) on a weekly basis as circumstances continue to evolve or following updated Department for Education advice guidance. It is available on the college website and is made available to staff, parents and students via the VLE.

Safeguarding priority

During these challenging times the safeguarding of all students at MPW continues to be our priority. The following fundamental safeguarding principles remain the same:

- The best interests of students continue to come first
- If anyone at MPW has a safeguarding concern, they must act immediately
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy DSL (DDSL) will always be available
- No unsuitable people will be allowed to gain access to students
- Students should continue to be protected when they are online.

Current college position

At the time of writing, no students and almost all staff are not in college. Tutors have set up lesson appointments via MS Teams so that students can be taught on-line. Where a tutor is unable to take the lesson (eg because of illness), another tutor will cover the lesson as per usual.

Safeguarding partners' advice

We continue to work closely with our local safeguarding partners and we will ensure this annex is consistent with their advice. This will include expectations for supporting students with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need. The current advice is below.

Support and reporting arrangements for the Local Safeguarding partnership.

The Safeguarding Partnership's arrangements for providing advice and managing referrals remain the same as those outlined in the main body of the Safeguarding Policy. The contact details for children's services contained in Section 1 also remain unchanged. Children's services may be affected by the impact of the staff on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a student is at risk of significant harm, there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority.

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for safeguarding at the college remain in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The DSL and at least one DDSL will be available by email, phone and/or online video via MS teams during the college day.

- Any member of the college can be contacted on 0121 4549637.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is Adam Cross (adam.cross@mpw.ac.uk)
- The deputy designated leads (DDSLs) are Mark Shingleton, James Bourne, Zoe Snee, Libby Prochorowicz (currently on parental leave) and Ryan Moran and they can be contacted via mark.shingleton@mpw.ac.uk, james.bourne@mpw.ac.uk, zoe.snee@mpw.ac.uk, libby.prochorowicz@mpw.ac.uk, ryan.moran@mpw.ac.uk
- The Principal is Mark Shingleton (mark.shingleton@mpw.ac.uk)
- The CEO is Spencer Coles (spencer.coles@mpw.ac.uk)
- The Chair of Governors and Governor for safeguarding is Steve Boyes (steve.boyes@mpw.ac.uk)

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with 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 1989. MPW does not currently have any students who fall into this category.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend college, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. Where a parent does not want their child to attend college, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will discuss this with the social worker and explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the local authority and parents to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a 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 students and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

The SLT and members of the DSL team know who our most vulnerable students are. We will continue to work with the local authority for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Increased vulnerability or risk

All teaching staff have been informed how the college's pastoral support system is currently operating, and of the part that they play in ensuring that the mental health of the students is given utmost priority. All have been made aware that negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of students and their parents. Staff will be aware of this in setting expectations of students' work where they are at home.

Staff will be aware of the mental health of students and will contact the DSL or a DDSL if they have any concerns.

Mental health support and guidance has been issued by the DSL. In addition, the counselling service will continue to offer counselling sessions (via telephone) during term time.

Information about keeping mentally healthy and general wellbeing has been disseminated to students, parents and staff via email and the VLE.

Attendance

Lesson attendance continues to be mandatory unless an absence has been authorised by a student's Personal Tutor. During term time, the college will continue to register students of compulsory school age remotely; both in the morning and afternoon. In addition, all students will be registered throughout the day at the beginning of every timetabled lesson. Where a student is expected at school or to attend an online lesson but then fails to do so, we will follow our attendance procedure and attempt to contact the family or guardians by telephone or by email. If contact cannot be made, the DSL or a DDSL will be informed and they will decide on the appropriate next steps. This will involve:

- Ensuring that attempts that all contacts held on Cloud School have been used
- Notifying the Principal
- Informing the Local Safeguarding Partnership for further advice

When accessing remote lessons, staff and students should use their college email accounts to do so, not their personal ones. In addition, all staff and students should ensure that they are situated in an area suitable for learning and dressed appropriately at all times. Full details can be found in the Remote Teaching and Learning Policy.

Reporting concerns about children or staff

The importance of all staff acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns remains. Staff will continue to follow the Safeguarding Policy and advise the DSL of any concerns they have about any student.

The varied arrangements in place as a result of the COVID-19 measures do not reduce the risks that students may face from staff. As such, it remains extremely important that any concerns about staff behaviour or allegations of abuse made against staff should be raised immediately with the Principal, who will then ensure the matter is dealt with expeditiously and thoroughly and in accordance with this policy and the guidance contained within KCSIE 2022.

The college will continue to consider and make referrals to the DBS and/or 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

Staff training and induction

The DSL and Deputy DSLs all have up to date training which does not need to be renewed before the end of the current academic year. Members of the DSL team will continue to access online training and webinars in order to maintain their knowledge and update their understanding, particularly with regards issues which are pertinent to online safety, remote learning and communications and child-on-child abuse.

All current college staff have received safeguarding training and have read and understood Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. Staff who require their three yearly update safeguarding training prior to the lockdown being lifted will be required to complete appropriate Handsam training modules and details of this training will be added to the college's training log by the DSL.

Any new staff who are appointed during the period of closure will also be required to complete a number of safeguarding training modules and will additionally attend a MS Teams one-to-one or group induction meeting with a member of the DSL team during which all the content outlined in Section 9 of this policy will be covered. Once the college is fully open, a face-to-face induction will occur for each new member of staff.

Safer recruitment 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.

During this lockdown period, MPW will continue to follow the protocols set out in its Safer Recruitment Policy and adhere to the guidance contained in Part 3 of KCSIE 2022. Those who require DBS checks during this period will be contacted by the HR and Compliance Officer who will explain the procedures in place for the checking of original documentation.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current national emergency, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that we are aware, on any given day, which staff are on our college site and that the appropriate checks have been carried out on those individuals. We will continue to maintain our single central record (SCR) during these measures to ensure we have this awareness.

Child-on-child abuse

We recognise that students can abuse their peers and our staff are clear about the college's policy and procedures regarding child-on-child abuse. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We also recognise that abuse can still occur during a college closure or partial closure and between those students who do attend the school site during these measures. Indeed, whilst students are learning and socialising online during the pandemic, the risk of online bullying or sexual abuse between peers becomes greater.

Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of child-on-child abuse and will follow the process set out in our Safeguarding Policy, which can be accessed via the MPW website and the VLE.

Online safety

It is likely that students will be using the internet and engaging with social media far more during this time. Our staff are aware of the signs of cyberbullying and other online risks and our filtering and monitoring software remains in use during this time to safeguard and support students.

Our staff will follow the protocols for online safety set out in the college's Safeguarding, Cyber-Bullying and E-Safety and Acceptable Use of ICT Policies.

Staff who interact with students online will continue to look out for signs a student may be at risk. If a staff member is concerned about a student, that staff member will follow the approach set out in this annex and report that concern to the DSL or to a deputy DSL.

Full and comprehensive details regarding the delivery of lessons within a remote environment can be found in the college's On-line Teaching Policy which is available on the VLE.

Supporting students not in college

Where the DSL has identified a student to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive additional pastoral support in college, they will ensure that a communication plan is in place to support that student. Details of that plan will be recorded in the safeguarding file for that student. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current during these measures.

MPW recognises that college is a protective factor for many young people and not being able to attend may affect their mental health. Family circumstances may also affect the mental health of parents and siblings. Academic and pastoral staff need to be acutely aware of this when interacting with students online and vigilant for signs of mental health problems.

New students at the school

Where a student joins the college from another school, we will require confirmation from the DSL whether they have a safeguarding file or an EHC plan. This file **must** be provided securely **before** the student commences their studies at MPW and a call made from a member of the DSL team to the placing school's DSL to discuss how best to keep the child safe. Information provided must include contact details of any appointed social worker and, where relevant, for the Virtual School Head. All relevant information will be recorded on MyConcern.

The DSL will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information.

Resources and useful publications

Government guidance on Covid-19 guidance for education settings:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19

Government guidance on safeguarding:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers

Government guidance on vulnerable children and young people:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people

Government guidance on maintaining social distancing in education:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings

Ways for children to raise concerns online

- https://www.childline.org.uk
- https://reportharmfulcontent.com/ (to report harmful content)
- https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/ (for advice on making a report about online abuse)

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online:

- https://www.internetmatters.org/ (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- http://www.lgfl.net/online-safety/ (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- https://www.net-aware.org.uk/ (for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC)
- https://parentinfo.org/ (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/ (for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers (advice for parents and carers)

Mental Health Guidance for Parents and Carers:

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak
- https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/21/opinion/scott-kelly-coronavirus-isolation.html
- https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html

Supporting student mental health:

- https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html
- https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/filter/?categories=Mental%20health - a list of apps which can support good mental health
- https://www.childline.org.uk/
- https://kooth.com (an online counselling and wellbeing platform for young people offering advice and support.)
- www.youngminds.org.uk
- https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/ (Mind provides a lot of really helpful detailed information on mental health issues and how to deal with them.)
- https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org/
- https://papyrus-uk.org/ (support if you are feeling suicidal.)