

COVID-19 Response

Last edited: 2nd April 2020

Please refer to the latest DfE Government Guidance [Coronavirus: \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in school, colleges and other providers \(27th March 2020\)](#)

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID- 19) outbreak, Blossom House School is only open for children whose parents are critical workers, and those who are considered to be most vulnerable. Many of our staff are now working remotely, and children are participating in online learning within their family homes. Whilst continuing to provide educational provision and pastoral support for children and families is of utmost importance, safeguarding and the acting in the best interests of the child remains our priority. In order to ensure that our new policies and procedures are in line with our current safeguarding approach, Blossom House School has taken a whole institution response to safeguarding.

This document has been created to list the current changes to provision, and the safeguarding measures that are in place to support these. Blossom House School will continue to act upon any advice issued from the Government, DfE, LAs, or Merton MSCP, and this document may be changed to reflect these.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Joanna Burgess is the Principal and named onsite DSL.

Fiona Roberts is the named DSL, available during school hours via email, phone or video link.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding concerns, whether raised onsite or remotely, will be continue to be reported and acted on immediately. Blossom House School uses the SchoolPod system for logging concerns, which can be accessed via web browser. The DSL will continue to respond to any safeguarding reports via SchoolPod or by email, during the hours of the school day. Staff who are onsite can also speak to Joanna Burgess, Principal and DSL, who will be available in person during school hours. In the unlikely event that the DSL cannot be contacted, staff are aware that they can report any concerns directly to children's social care.

Supporting Children Known to Social Care

All children with an allocated social worker are continuing to attend onsite provision, unless it has been agreed by the social worker and the family that this is not in the best interests of the child. Where children are known to social care, regular contact is maintained with the will be

allocated social worker, and/or virtual school head for children who are looked-after, to ensure that any CP, CIN, or support plans are adhered to as far as possible. Where a child does not have an allocated social worker but is known to be most at risk of harm, the DSL and Specialist Adviser are maintaining regular contact and monitoring.

Supporting Children with EHCPs

Whilst we recognise that any child with an EHCP is considered to be vulnerable, it has not been possible to provide places for all our pupils, due to the significant fall in staff numbers meaning that the school could not operate safely. A multi-disciplinary team risk assessment has therefore been drawn up, and each pupil has been carefully scored by the DSL, SLT, OT, Physiotherapy, Arts Therapy and Behaviour departments. This risk assessment has helped us to determine which of our pupils would be most at risk of harm from abuse or neglect, and those whose health and development would be significantly impaired, should they not have access to onsite teaching, therapies and pastoral support until the summer half term. This risk assessment will also be shared the LA and used to determine a longer term plan if the school remains shut for an extended period of time.

Supporting Children who are Eligible for Free School Meals

Parents whose children usually access Free School Meals have been offered a supermarket voucher to cover the cost of school lunches for the remainder of the term.

Attendance Monitoring

Blossom House School Admin Team are reporting attendance directly to the DfE using the online form. Any children identified as most at risk (including those with an allocated social worker) will be expected to attend school. Where they do not, contact will be made with parents to ascertain the reason behind this, and if necessary, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Support for Non-Pupils

Where non-pupils attend Blossom House School, parents are asked to complete a Health and Safety form upon arrival. This form contains personal details including name, address, date of birth, emergency contacts, child's diagnosis (if they have one), medications, allergies and dietary requirements, and if they have an allocated social worker. Where children are known to social care, contact will be made with the allocated worker to ensure that any CP or CIN plans are adhered to as far as possible. For any looked-after children, contact will also be made with the Virtual School Head (VSH), to ascertain the reason that the child is vulnerable and any arrangements that are in place to support them.

Safer Recruitment

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. Where new staff are recruited the HR Team will continue to follow the School safer recruitment policy and existing processes including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of KCSIE.

ID Document Checking for DBS Certificates

The HR Team has noted the response made by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in response to COVID-19, and has changed ID document checking appropriately to minimise the need for face-to-face contact. This means that ID documents will first be sent by email to the HR Team then viewed over video link. **The new starter must bring in the original documents the first time they are in School.**

Volunteers

Blossom House School does not intend to utilise volunteers, but should the School find that it should need to do this then the same safer recruitment checks will take place as for new staff and a risk assessment undertaken by the HR Team and DSL put in place where appropriate (as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE). Under no circumstances would a volunteer who had not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Staff on Loan from Other Settings

Having a large workforce, it is unlikely that Blossom House School will require support from staff engaging in regulated activity employed at other educational settings. However, in the event that this does happen the HR Team and DSL will risk assess as for volunteers. The guidance is clear that there is no expectation that a new DBS check should be obtained for this transferring workforce. The same principle applies if childcare workers move to work temporarily in our School setting. The School must seek to satisfy itself that the temporary workforce has had the required checks, including those set out in part 3 of KCSIE. In the above scenario this can be achieved via seeking assurance from the current employer rather than requiring new checks.

Referrals to DBS and TRA

The School will continue to follow its legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult (paragraph 163 of KCSIE). The School 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 will be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

Attendance on Site and Single Central Record

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the 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. **At present, the Administration Team are recording which staff are on site each day and this is saved centrally on the computer system: Office docs/Covid-19/Daily Staff Attendance.** All these members of staff have appropriate checks and are recorded on the single central record (SCR). No new members of staff, volunteers or staff from other settings will be permitted on site without the HR Team having notified the Administration Team that all checks have been made satisfactorily. New members of staff, volunteers or staff from other settings must be recorded on the SCR, including a record of all the relevant checks having been completed. The SCR will also be used to log details of any risk assessments carried out on volunteers and staff on loan from elsewhere.

Safeguarding Induction

For any new staff joining Blossom House, or for any staff who have been redeployed from other schools, the DSL will conduct a safeguarding induction over video conferencing. In addition to the material outlined in KCSIE, this induction will include the most up to date response to COVID-19, written out in this guidance.

Protecting Children Online (please see Remote Working Policy)

IT filtering and controls are in place for children accessing onsite provision. Should our IT technicians become unavailable, we will use XMA, a bought in service which has been used previously. Blossom House School has created a Remote Working Policy which covers all aspects of online working, teaching and learning for those children accessing provision from home. This includes a risk assessment, code of conduct for pupils, parents and staff, and what to do if safeguarding concerns are raised online.

Supporting Mental Health

Blossom House School recognises that the current circumstances will have an impact on our pupils' mental health and wellbeing, largely due to their diagnoses and difficulty managing change. Many parents also have their own mental health difficulties, and/or may find these difficult life events hard to manage. Pupils with SEMH needs are considered to be most vulnerable, and school places have been offered to support those most at risk. Our TaMHS clinician is continuing to work remotely. We have also sent guidance home for parents and carers, which includes a link the latest [government guidance](#). We are aware that with this outbreak, many of our families will be sadly be affected by bereavement. Any bereavements will be addressed personally by the Principal or a member of SMT, and families will be directed to the most appropriate support services (*please see Grief and Trauma Policy*).