

COVID-19 School closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Date: 8th April 2020

To be reviewed as necessary

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Context

From 20th 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.

Key contacts

| Role | Name | Contact Number | Email |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead | Stefanie Haberland | | stefanie.haberland@dslondon.org.uk |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Jutta Hepworth | | jutta.hepworth@dslondon.org.uk |
| Headteacher | Christian Nitschke | | christian.nitschke@dslondon.org.uk |
| Safeguarding Governor | Colin Thomann | | colin.thomann@dslondon.org.uk |
| Chair of Governors | Jan Peter Weiland | | peter.weiland@dslondon.org.uk |
| AfC Education Safeguarding Adviser | Linda Sheehan | 07774686362 | linda.sheehan@achievingforchildren.org.uk |
| AfC Adviser for Online Services and Safety | Peter Cowley | 07595173975 | peter.cowley@achievingforchildren.org.uk |
| AfC Virtual School Headteacher | Suzanne Parrott | 07827895894 | suzanne.parrott@achievingforchildren.org.uk |

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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.

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 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.

The members of our safeguarding team 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 German School 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 Headteacher (VSH) for children looked-after and previously looked-after.

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 The German School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

The German School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people 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, however, the German School will ask students to check in on a daily basis (Monday-Friday) where possible (e.g. on Microsoft Teams for Primary and Secondary School).

The German School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – The German School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The German School will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child(ren) and the child(ren) subsequently do not attend.

To support the above, The German School will, when communicating with parents/carers 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, The German School will notify their social worker.

The German School will supply any information regarding attendance requested by Achieving for Children.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The German School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Stefanie Haberland

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Jutta Hepworth

The DSL and deputy will be available to be contacted via phone or online video. Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader (Matthias Krauss) will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection files, 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.

It is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). Staff on site are aware of who that person is and how to speak to 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 concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection 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 Headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Headteacher.

Concerns regarding the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Jan Peter Weiland

Safeguarding training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID19 virus.

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 part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). The DSL will 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 The German School, 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

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of The German School's Safeguarding and 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 German School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes, including relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

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 The German School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019). Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The German School 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 Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

The German School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) 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, The German School will continue to ensure that all staff, volunteers and essential visitors sign in and out of the premises and will continue to keep the Single Central Record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

Online safety

The German School Online Safety Lead is: Douglas Ritchie. If the Online Safety Lead is unavailable, advice can be sought from Peter Cowley (AfC Adviser for Online Services and Safety).

The German School will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect pupils when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources.

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 in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

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

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- Avoid 1:1s, groups only (*if you cannot avoid 1:1 situations, either record them, as long as parents give their permission, or ask parents to stay within earshot*).
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, preferably in the study.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.

- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff should keep a record of, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

Supporting children not in school

The German School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Where the DSL has identified a pupil to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that pupil. All contacts with the pupil must be recorded.

The communication plans can include: remote contact; phone contact; door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded. The German School 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 any communications to families.

The German School 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 German School will take this into consideration when setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Supporting children in school

The German School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. We 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.

The German School 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 German School 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 pupil.

Children moving schools

If any pupils are temporarily attending other schools or transfer to another school, we will ensure that they provide the receiving school with all relevant welfare and child protection information.

Any change of school for children looked after will be led and managed by the Virtual School Headteacher with responsibility for the child.

The German School continues to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR and are aware that they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Mental health

The German School is aware that negative experiences and distressing life events such as the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents.

We will ensure that appropriate support is in place for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children whilst on site and we will continue to offer support to pupils who are not on site, this will be done remotely or by phone. Members of the “BQ” are available through Microsoft Teams as well as Email for students and Skype for parents. Students and parents have been informed about how they can contact the team and safeguarding updates are published regularly through Microsoft Teams for our students and the DSL Weekly as well as the DSL website for our parents.

Peer on peer abuse

The German School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. We will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The school will listen and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person. Concerns and actions must be recorded using the school’s procedure and appropriate referrals made.

Linked policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-bullying
- Health & safety
- E-Safety
- Recruitment and selection