



## NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SCHOOL

### **COVID-19 Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy Update** **(to be read in conjunction with Newcastle under Lyme School's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy)**

This policy relates to Newcastle-under-Lyme School, including the EYFS. This policy is available upon request to parents and prospective parents and is published to parents and prospective parents on the School's website.

*The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are:*

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*Chair of Governors and Designated Safeguarding Governor: Mr David Wallbank*

#### **1) Context**

From 5 January 2021 parents were asked to support public health efforts by keeping 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 is an addendum to Newcastle under Lyme School's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy.**

#### **2) 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. Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers

Others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

[Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-of-critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

Newcastle under Lyme School recognises that previously looked after children are a potentially vulnerable group who may not have a social worker and will consider the support and offer to this cohort of children. In particular families and friend's carers may need additional support. Some previously looked after children may still have significant emotional wellbeing needs linked to their journey into care. We have a key role in supporting the stability of those children with special guardianship orders or in adoptive homes.

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 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 will not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

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

Newcastle under Lyme 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 head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. We will work with social workers

to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children are up to date with the current education offer that looked after children are accessing.

The DSL will continue to provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and families) who are not attending school.

The School allows and strongly encourages vulnerable children and young people to attend. Parents/carers of vulnerable children and young people are strongly encouraged to take up the place. If vulnerable children and young people do not attend, Newcastle under Lyme School will:

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests
- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate

Where the School grants a leave of absence to a vulnerable child or young person we will speak to parents and carers, and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions will focus on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.

Where providers have had to temporarily stop on-site provision on public health advice, they should inform the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people and work towards welcoming back pupils as soon as possible, where feasible to do so.

Newcastle under Lyme School will work collaboratively with other schools and education providers and other local partners (including the local authority, social workers, police, youth services, key workers etc.) to maximise opportunities for face-to-face provision for vulnerable children.

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

Newcastle under Lyme School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed. The DSL will continue to provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and families) who are not attending school.

### **3) Attendance**

During this period of national lockdown, the School will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers only. All other pupils will receive remote education. Pupils who are self-isolating should not attend school. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are also advised not to attend school.

Newcastle under Lyme School will continue to record attendance in the register. We will follow up on absences of the pupils who are expected to be in school but where a parent wishes for their child to be absent, we may authorise the absence during this national lockdown period.

All pupils who are not eligible to be in school will be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice. As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they will not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know. The DfE expects schools to grant applications for leave of absence given the exceptional circumstances. This will be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the School) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Shielding advice is currently in place, and so all children still deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

Newcastle under Lyme School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school and we will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

We 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.

Phone calls will be made to the parents/carers in these circumstances.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the School will notify their social worker.

#### **4) Critical workers**

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can. The full list can be found at:

[Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/critical-workers-and-vulnerable-children-who-can-access-schools-or-educational-settings)

#### **5) Safeguarding and reporting of concerns**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in our Safeguarding Policy

([https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1600778051/nulsorguk/weonhtlaueisro9f9evc/SafeguardingPolicy-September\\_2020.pdf](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1600778051/nulsorguk/weonhtlaueisro9f9evc/SafeguardingPolicy-September_2020.pdf))

Staff are reminded of the need to report and record any concern immediately and without delay (via email or through CPOMS).

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Headmaster.

If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Headmaster whilst away from school, this should be done verbally over the phone and followed up with an email to the Headmaster to confirm the discussion.

Concerns around the Headmaster should be directed to the Chair of Governors (Mr David Wallbank).

The School will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All staff are required to read this addendum.

#### **6) Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Newcastle under Lyme School will have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site every day (Monday – Friday). If the DSL (or one of the deputies) is unable to be on site then they will be available to be contacted by telephone.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above option, a member of SMT will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online systems 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 ensure all relevant safeguarding and welfare information held on children remains accurate, and complete. If a child from our school attends another setting, we will do what we can reasonably to provide the receiving institution with relevant welfare and child protection information

All staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) and staff will be made aware of who is available each day in school.

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

#### **7) Safeguarding Training and Induction**

All existing school staff at Newcastle under Lyme School have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). 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 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 consider the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current school 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
- that the member of staff has received appropriate safeguarding training.

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of our Safeguarding Policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

## **8) 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, Newcastle under Lyme School 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 (2020) (KCSIE). The School will comply with our legal duties regarding pre-appointment including having regard to part three of the statutory safeguarding guidance keeping children safe in education.

Where the School is utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 167 to 172 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Newcastle under Lyme 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 KCSIE.

Newcastle under Lyme School will also 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 the School is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in school, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Newcastle under Lyme School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers may be used to support the work of the School, as would usually be the case. They will be properly supported and given appropriate roles. The School will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in the volunteer section in part 3 of keeping children safe in education.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Mixing of volunteers across groups will be kept to a minimum, and they should remain 2 metres from pupils and staff where possible.

Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not need to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

Supervision must be:

- by a person who is in regulated activity.
- regular and day to day; and
- reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

## **8) Online safety in Newcastle under Lyme School**

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

### **9) Children and online safety away Newcastle under Lyme 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 Safeguarding 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 online teaching and learning policy and all live lessons must be recorded. Lessons are quality assured (through appropriate training and monitoring) by SMT.

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

Where webcams are involved:

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in staff bedrooms; and the background should be neutral.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by SMT and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils eg Google Classroom / Google Meet
- Staff should report any safeguarding concerns.

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 School's Safeguarding 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 School's Staff Behaviour Policy.

Newcastle under Lyme School will ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

### **10) Delivering remote education safely**

Keeping children safe online is essential.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

The statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education provides schools and colleges with information on what they should be doing to protect their pupils online. Support on delivering online remote education safely is available from:

- safe remote learning safe remote learning, published by SWGfL
- online safety online safety and safeguarding, published by LGfL, which covers safe remote learning

- the National Cyber Security Centre, which includes which video conference service is right for you and using video conferencing services securely video conferencing
- annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

### **11) Supporting children not in School**

Newcastle under Lyme School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all their 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 will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan will be recorded as will a record of contact that has been made.

The DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan. This plan will be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

Newcastle under Lyme School recognises that the School is a protective factor for children and young people, and that the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. All school staff are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Newcastle under Lyme School will ensure that where they care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, they ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

### **12) Supporting children in School**

Newcastle under Lyme School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. Our pupils will continue to have a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. Our Governors and Headmaster ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Newcastle under Lyme School refers 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. We ensure that where we care for children of critical workers, vulnerable children and returning pupils on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Where the School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – we will discuss them immediately with the Chair of Governors.

### **13) Mental Health**

The School is aware of the impact of the negative experiences and distressing life events on the mental health of children, parents and staff. We will, as we always have, ensure there is appropriate support and signposting to relevant support agencies in place, and also supporting those children who continue to work from home.

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust, either to a return to learning at home or being in school without their peers, and some may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be content with the change in circumstances.

The return to remote learning for most will limit pupils' social interaction with their peers, carers and teachers, which may have an impact on wellbeing.

To support school staff to understand how coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, and what they can do to look after, promote and support their own, other staff's and children and young people's wellbeing and mental health.

The School will also provide more focused pastoral support where issues are identified that individual pupils may need help with, drawing on external support where necessary and possible. The School will also consider support needs of particular groups they are already aware need additional help (for example, children in need.)

The School will also make sure that parents and pupils are aware of who in the school to contact if they have a new concern about mental health and wellbeing.

We have considered and offer the provision of pastoral and extra-curricular activities to all pupils, including those learning at home (for example through online activities and assemblies).

We have our School counsellor, as well as pastoral staff, available to support the health and wellbeing of our pupils; our pastoral support offers a range of support including:

- support for resilience, mental health and wellbeing
- support for pupils with additional needs
- supporting vulnerable children and keeping children safe

#### **14) Peer on Peer Abuse**

Newcastle under Lyme School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where the 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 the School's Safeguarding Policy. Our 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 will be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

#### **Useful Contact Numbers:**

The key agencies with which the School is involved are:

- LADO (at SSSCB) 0800 1313 126
  - Staffordshire First Response 0800 1313 126
  - Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Board 01782 235100
- Out of hours: 0345 6042886

Out of hours: 01782 234234

- Cheshire East  
Safeguarding Children in Education Settings Team 0300 1235012  
Out of hours 0300 1235022
- Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership  
**0345 678 9021.**  
Out of hours **0345 6789040**

#### Prevent and Counter Extremism

Helplines for non-emergency advice on religious or political extremism:

- Department for Education 020 7340 7264  
[counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)
- Police 101

The following numbers may be useful to pupils:

- Childline 0800 1111
- NSPCC 0808 800 5000
- Barnardo's 0800 942 8787

SMT Policy Lead: J A Simms

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