



Birches First School

Believe, Grow, Succeed



COVID-19 BIRCHES FIRST SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY UPDATE (TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH BIRCHES FIRST SCHOOL'S MAIN POLICY);

<http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Staffordshire-Safeguarding-Education-Policy-Sep-2019.doc-WEBSITE.pdf>

Updated 30th March 2020, in line with DfE Covid 19 safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers guidance;

[safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#)

SCHOOL NAME:- BIRCHES FIRST SCHOOL

POLICY OWNER:- J FERRETTI (ACTING HEAD) ANDREW HOLMES (CHAIR OF GOVS)

DATE OF UPDATE:- 30/03/2020

DATE SHARED WITH STAFF:- 31/03/2020

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.

This is an addendum to the **Birches First School Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy.**

Name of **Birches First School**

Key contacts Mrs Jennifer Ferretti (Acting Headteacher)

Designated Safeguarding Lead Mrs Jennifer Ferretti

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Mrs Nicola Stubbs / Mrs Celia Banks

Chair of Governors Mr Andrew Holmes

Safeguarding Governor Mrs Rachel Green

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.

Birches First 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. Education settings 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 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.

Senior leaders, especially 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.

Birches First 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.

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 school name will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Our 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. The department has introduced a [daily online attendance form](#) to keep a record of children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are attending school. This allows for a record of attendance for safeguarding purposes and allows schools to provide accurate, up-to-date data to the department on the number of children taking up places

Birches First School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school. **Birches First School** will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. They 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, **Birches First School** will, when communicating with parents/carers and 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, **Birches First School** will notify the relevant social worker.

In **Birches First School** the optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case 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 senior leader will assume 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 Academy.

It is important that all staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made aware of 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 **Birches First School** Safeguarding Policy.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. This may mean by email to the DSI/DDSL to ensure the concern is captured.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in **Birches First School**, they should report the concern to the Head Teacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head Teacher whilst away from the site, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email.

Concerns around the Head Teacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors. **Birches First School** will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL training is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 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 **Birches First 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. This will include contact numbers and emails for DSL's/DDSLs' if not on site.

Where new staff are recruited they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting **OUTSIDE Birches First School**, that **Birches First School** will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the original 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

For movement amongst schools, then **Birches First School** should seek assurance from the donor school 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.

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, **Birches First 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 (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 **Birches First School** are utilising volunteers, that **Birches First School** 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.

Birches First 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.

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

Online safety in **Birches First School**

Our Academies will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system. Where pupils are using computers in **Birches First School**, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Children and online safety away from **Birches First 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 **Birches First School** 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 **Birches First School** code of conduct.

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

Supporting children not in **Birches First School**

Birches First 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 **Birches First 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 as should a record of contact have made.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, door-step visits. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

Birches First School 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. **Birches First School** will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages.

Birches First School recognises that **Birches First 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 **Birches First School** staff are aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

Birches First 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.

Supporting children in **Birches First School**

Birches First School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils. Our pupils will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. Our Governors and Head Teacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

Birches First 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. They 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.

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

Peer on Peer Abuse

Birches First School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims. Where **Birches First 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 **Birches First**

School Child Protection Policy. Our Academies 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 appropriate referrals made.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

FIRST RESPONSE PHONE NUMBER :- 08001313126

DUTY LADO :- Contact First Response, 0800 1313126

NSPCC :- 0808 800 5000

virtual.school@staffordhsire.gov.uk