



COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Thorplands Primary School UPDATED JANUARY 2021



School Name: Thorplands Primary School

Policy owner: Samantha Mawer

Date: 07/01/21

Date shared with staff: 10th January 2021

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible. At that time, schools and all childcare providers provided care for a limited number of children: those who were vulnerable, and children whose parents were critical to the COVID-19 response and could not be safely cared for at home.

The government announced on 11th May 2020 that schools should plan to re-open for children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1st June 2020.

To reflect the adjustment of safeguarding arrangements, this addendum was updated in May 2020. At this point, NPAT schools also wrote a separate safeguarding risk assessment, to identify areas to action in light of the changes to provision, as identified both through DfE guidance and by school leaders.

Following the continued reduction in infection rates across the country, the DfE announced in June 2020 that schools would be fully open to all children at the start of the new academic year in September 2020. However, there remained the probability that, at some point during the course of the next academic year, there could be further disruption resulting in individuals, classes or cohorts of children being educated at home.

At the start of the Spring Term in January 2021, the Government announced another lockdown meaning that, once again, schools are only open to a limited number of children: those who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response.

This risk assessment has been updated to reflect the updated position in schools. This addendum sits alongside the school's main 'Safeguarding and Child Protection' policy, with the aim of ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are clear and risk appropriately assessed and managed.

This addendum of the Thorplands Primary School's Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas.

1. Key Contacts
2. Vulnerable children
3. Attendance monitoring
4. Designated Safeguarding Lead
5. Reporting a concern
6. Safeguarding Training and induction
7. Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff
8. Online safety in schools
9. Children and online safety away from school and college
10. Supporting children not in school
11. Supporting children in school
12. Peer on Peer Abuse
13. Support from NPAT

2. Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact Number	E-mail
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sam Mawer	07900955530	head@thorplandsprimary.net
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Charlotte O'Reilly Liz Martin Paul Stewart Rachel Winterburn	07896665592 07500928214 07950411785 07786984648	charlotteoreilly@thorplandsprimary.net lizmartin@thorplandsprimary.net paulstewart@thorplandsprimary.net rachelwinterburn@thorplandsprimary.net
Headteacher	Sam Mawer	07900955530	head@thorplandsprimary.net
Chair of Governors	Sally Perkins		sally.perkins@npatschools.org
Trust Safeguarding Leads	Julia Kedwards Mark Rapps	07766 490860 07849 962767	Julia.kedwards@npatschools.org mark.rapps@npatschools.org

3. 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.

From January 2021, the school is applying the DfE definition of vulnerable children which includes the following criteria to be eligible to attend school during the lockdown:

- 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

For full details, please refer to the DfE Guidance **Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

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.

Thorplands Primary 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. The lead person for this will be: Rachel Winterburn.

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 Thorplands Primary School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Thorplands Primary School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed.

4. 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.

Thorplands Primary School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should be attending school – the school will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Thorplands Primary 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, Thorplands Primary 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, Thorplands Primary School will notify their social worker.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Thorplands Primary School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and four Deputy DSLs.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Samantha Mawer

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Liz Martin, Charlotte O'Reilly, Paul Stewart and Rachel Winterburn.

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 management system, MyConcern 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 or college.

It is important that all school staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). On each day staff on site will be made 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.

6. Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via MyConcern, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access MyConcern from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher. This will ensure that the concern is received and updated.

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 follow the Trust Whistleblowing Policy and **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 around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors, Sally Perkins. Or alternatively, the Trust CEO, Julia Kedwards.

NPAT will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

7. Safeguarding Training and induction

DSL face-to-face training is less likely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus. However, refresher training opportunities will take place through remotely, and school DSLs should take the opportunity to access this training in order to ensure that that DSL training is up-to-date.

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 (2020). The DSL should 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 Thorplands Primary 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

For movement within the Trust, schools should seek assurance from CEO Julia Kedwards 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.

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, Thorplands Primary 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).

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 Thorplands Primary School are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 164 to 175 of KCSIE and the NPAT Covid-19 visitor in school update guidance. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Thorplands Primary 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 in Part 3 of KCSIE.

Thorplands Primary School will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per Part 3 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 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. As such, Thorplands Primary School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 164 to 171 in KCSIE.

9. Online safety

Thorplands Primary School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

10. Children and online safety away from 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 Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

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

Where appropriate, DSLs in schools can use online communication in the form of video calling to check on the welfare of vulnerable children. When online technology is used in this way:

- The number of the call should always be withheld.
- DSLs should ensure that only platforms approved by NPAT are used to communicate with pupils and families. Schools should check for suitability with Julia Kedwards or Mark Rapps if planning to use an online platform for video calling.
- DSLs should also consider carefully their own location, ensuring that it is neutral and free from any potential distractions.

- All communication must be professional and appropriate.
- DSLs should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

11. Supporting children not in school

Thorplands Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Thorplands Primary School will refer to the Local Authority guidance for assessing safeguarding risks for all children and put in place systems for ensuring the school is taking appropriate action to minimise these risks.

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 should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on MyConcern, 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.

Thorplands Primary 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.

Thorplands Primary School will also ensure that there are clear systems in place for communicating with all children who are not in school during this period of limited opening. Communication will take several forms; including dialogue with a teacher on progress in set work; well-being checks via a communication platform; telephone calls by teachers and/or members of family support and/or home visits. The safeguarding team will regularly review contact to ensure that where there are any concerns, including a period of 'silence', positive action is taken to contact the child. This is likely to involve visiting the family home. All concerns around contact will be recorded on MyConcern.

Thorplands Primary School will follow the usual procedures of referring to the Northamptonshire MASH when there are serious concerns over the welfare or safety of a child.

The school will share safeguarding messages on its website and social media pages. Thorplands Primary School will ensure parents are clear on how they are able to contact the school during this period. The 'Childline' contact number will be displayed on the front page of the website.

Thorplands Primary 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/or their parents/carers. Teachers at Thorplands Primary School need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

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Thorplands Primary School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Thorplands Primary School will refer to the Local Authority guidance for assessing safeguarding risks for all children and put in place systems for ensuring the school is taking appropriate action to minimise these risks.

Thorplands Primary School 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.

Thorplands Primary 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.

Thorplands Primary School will ensure that there is clarity on First Aid trained members of staff on site.

Thorplands Primary School will ensure that where we care for vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them. This will be bespoke to each child and recorded on MyConcern.

Where Thorplands Primary School has concerns about the impact of staff absence – such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead or first aiders – they will discuss them immediately with Julia Kedwards, CEO.

13. Peer on Peer Abuse

Thorplands Primary School recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where a 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 Child Protection Policy.

The school will listen and work with the child, parents/carers and any multiagency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that child.

Concerns and actions will be recorded on MyConcern and appropriate referrals made.

14.Support from NPAT Central Team

Julia Kedwards (CEO) and Mark Rapps (School Improvement Leader) are the key points of contact during this period for all issues relating to safeguarding.

A file 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Children' has been added to the Headteacher and DSL Teams on Office 365. Regular updates will appear in documents within these Teams, with guidance and advice from the DfE and Local Authority added to the appropriate folders.