

COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Ditcham Park School



Date: 30th March 2020

1. 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.

The way our school is currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, a number of important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- with regard to safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in our school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online

This addendum of the Ditcham Park School Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements in the following areas:

- *Vulnerable children*
- *Attendance monitoring*
- *Designated Safeguarding Lead*
- *Reporting a concern*
- *Safeguarding Training and induction*
- *Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff*
- *Online safety in schools and colleges*
- *Children and online safety away from school and college*
- *Supporting children not in school*
- *Supporting children in school*
- *Peer on Peer Abuse*

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mark Philips	07730 130093	mark.philips@ditchampark.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jane Langdon-Shreeve		jane.langdon-shreeve@ditchampark.com
Headmaster	Graham Spawforth	07889 116512	graham.spawforth@ditchampark.com
Head of Juniors	Helen Parrott	07730 130092	helen.parrott@ditchampark.com
Chair of Governors	Chris Pickett	07831 301535	chairofgovernors@ditchampark.com
Safeguarding Governor	Lorraine Albon		lorrainealbon@gmail.com

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.

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.

Ditcham Park 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 for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Mark Philips DSL

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 Ditcham Park School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

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

Ditcham Park School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school.

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.

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

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

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Ditcham Park School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy DSL. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mark Philips

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Jane Langdon-Shreeve

A member of staff paid on the leadership scale will always be in school. Where there is not a trained DSL (or deputy) on site, they will be available to be contacted via phone or email - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a member of SLT will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS 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.

It is important that all Ditcham Park School staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). All staff can check the rota to ascertain which member of the leadership team is available on that day.

If necessary, the DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multiagency 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 Child Protection Policy; this includes making a report via CPOMS, which can be done remotely.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff cannot access their CPOMS from home, they should email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, (mark.philips@ditchampark.com) marking the email as high priority. This will ensure that the concern is received.

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 use email the headteacher immediately to report the concern.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Chris Pickett.

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 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.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter Ditcham Park 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 receiving setting's child protection policy, confirmation of local processes and confirmation of DSL arrangements.

Children moving schools and colleges

Where children are attending another setting, Ditcham Park School will do whatever we reasonably can to provide the receiving institution with any relevant welfare and child protection information. This will be especially important where children are vulnerable. The receiving institution will be made aware of the reason the child is vulnerable and of any arrangements in place to support them. As a minimum the receiving institution will, as appropriate, have access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or, for looked-after children, their personal education plan and know who the child's social worker. This will ideally happen before a child arrives and, where that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. Any exchanges of information will ideally happen at DSL (or deputy) level, and likewise between special educational needs co-ordinators/named individual with oversight of SEN provision for children with EHC plans. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible. Where this is the case senior leaders will take responsibility.

While Ditcham Park School will continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR, they do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Online safety in schools and colleges

Ditcham Park School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

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. Ditcham Park School will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of 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 Ditcham Park 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.

Ditcham Park School will follow our 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.

Ditcham Park 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 should be made by emailing Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

Whilst acknowledging the challenge of the current environment, it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school or college 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, Ditcham Park 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 schools and colleges

Ditcham Park School will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

Children and online safety away from school

Ditcham Park School will continue to do all it reasonably can to keep all of our children safe. In most cases, the majority of children will not be physically attending our 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.

Ditcham Park School will consider the safety of our children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching will be that the same principles as set out in the school's staff code of conduct. This policy includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy will apply equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

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

An essential part of the online planning process will be ensuring children who are being asked to work online have very clear reporting routes in place so they can raise any concerns whilst online. As well as reporting routes back to the school this will also signpost children to age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support

- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

School communications with parents will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. We will ensure that parents and carers are aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from the school their child is going to be interacting with online.

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Supporting children not in school

Ditcham Park School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its 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 should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child or young person.

Details of this plan must be recorded on CPOMS.

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

Ditcham Park 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.