Good Shepherd Nursery School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum during Covid

Ratified by board of Governors

september 2020

Review date-January 2021

Chairperson ------------------



**Addendum to Good Shepherd Nursery School Child Protection Policy**

**Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**CONTEXT**

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

This addendum reflects updated advice from DENI and interim measures the school put in place during lockdown. It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of coronavirus and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal child protection and Safeguarding policy continues to apply.

This addendum is subject to change in response to any new or updated guidance and will be kept under review.

**Procedures**

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is available on our school website and advise the safeguarding leaders immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. Children’s services may be affected by the impact of the virus on their staff as well as an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm the school will be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The arrangements for raising a concern are:

Education Authority – Child Protection Support Services (CPSS) 028 95985590

Social Services Gateway Team (SE Trust) 0300 1000 300

Gateway (out of hours) 028 90565444

**If a parent has a concern about his or her child or another child’s safety, they may take the following action:**

I have a concern about my child oranother child’s safety



I can talk to the CLASS TEACHER



If I am still concerned, I can talk to  the Designated teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Le Mahieu

or

the Deputy Designated teacher Mrs Murney



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the, Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mrs Ellen Farren at either the school or 90592848



At any time, I can talk to the to Susan Sullivan, CCMS Tel: 02890327975 or the gateway team SE EA region or the Duty Social Worker Down and Lisburn Trust (028902665181) or the PSNI at Woodburn Station, Child Protection and sexual offences Unit (02890650222) Social Services Trust

Please do not hesitate to contact the Nursery if you have a concern or complaint. We all have a duty of care to protect childrenand their welfare must be paramount

**Core Safeguarding Principles**

We will follow the statutory safeguarding guidance and will always have regard for these important safeguarding principles.

* The safety and best interests of the pupils is paramount
* If anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they must act on it immediately.
* The designated child protection teacher or deputy should be available at all times.

**Reporting Concerns**

All staff must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children at school and those at home.

During any periods of lockdown staff and parents will be supplied with contact details of

* Child Protection Teacher
* Deputy Child Protection teacher
* Governor with special responsibility for Child Protection

who will act on any concerns accordingly.

All staff will continue to work with Gateway and children’s’ named social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

If the occasion arises where either the Child Protection Teacher or deputy are not available to undertake their duties the Chair of the Board of Governors will liaise with the DE and EA to assess if the nursery can remain operational and activate necessary protocols.

**Working with Other Agencies**

We will continue to work with Gateway and with any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners to help keep our children safe.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary.

**Monitoring Attendance**

All pupils on roll will be expected to attend Good Shepherd Nursery School unless one of the following reasons apply

* Is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health
* Is unable to attend because of sickness
* Is granted a leave of absence pre agreed with parent/carer and Board of Governors

Where any child we expect to attend school is absent or stops attending we will

* Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers using existing systems in place
* Notify their social worker if they have one
* Ensure we have up to date emergency parent and carers contact details (tested on a monthly basis) and additional contact details where possible.

**Contact Plans**

Contact plans will be drawn up for children with a social worker and other children who we have safeguarding concerns about for circumstances where the child is at home.

This plan will detail

* How often the school will make contact
* Which member of staff will make contact
* How contact will be made
* As well as any other relevant information

These plans will be agreed with children’s parents/carers and social care where relevant.

If we cannot make contact we will contact Gateway and the Police.

**Safeguarding All Children**

Staff are aware that this difficult time may potentially put children at greater risk. Staff continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils’ mental health that are also safeguarding concerns and act on concerns immediately in line with our agreed procedures.

**Children returning to school**

The Child Protection Designated Teacher (or deputy) will do all they reasonably can to find out from parents and carers whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and wellbeing that they should be aware of prior to a child’s return.

Staff will be alert to any new safeguarding **concerns**

**Staff will be aware of increased risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. Staff will consider these issues when sending learning activities for home learning through Seesaw. Any concerns should be reported to the DT.

In addition the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety:

Nursery E-Mail :

[clemahieu001@goodshepherdns.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:clemahieu001@goodshepherdns.belfast.ni.sch.uk)

Nursery Phone number-90301684

Out of hours Designated Teacher: Claire le Mahieu – 07748022718

Teachers will provide online learning/daily challenges via the seesaw app and be responsive during the school day to respond to parents and children.

The nursery website is abundant with a range of resources and links to additional online learning, support and guidance.

Additional links and support will be posted via seesaw message.

We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.

Teachers may make phone calls or send private messages via seesaw to parents. These will be pastoral in nature and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents.

Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding team.

If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff

**Online Safety**

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication or sharing any videos or messages.

Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas /sleep wear during the arranged session.

Parental consent will be sought before their child participates in any online communication. (parents will sign to give agreement at the beginning of the year)

A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school.

Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

**If there is a breach to any of these procedures the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.**

**Mental Health**

**Children returning to school**

Staff are aware of the possible effects that this period and subsequent periods may have had on pupil’s mental health. They will look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive or extremely clingy to help identify where support may be needed.

Mindful of emerging from lockdown the school will be prioritising strategies/support to promote good mental health.

Our parent Support Worker will signpost parents/carers to a range of services/resources to assist at this time. She will also offer one to one support and activities/courses/classes to minimise the potential impact of the current situation on both children’s and adult’s mental health.

**How a parent can raise an issue or express a concern**

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child’s well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the safeguarding team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

**If the nursery is open during Covid-19 closures.**

If nursery is open for vulnerable pupils and key worker children the nursery will adhere to the EA guidance, click the link for information regarding cluster

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/REGISTERED%20C-19%20CLUSTERS%20-%205%20June%202020.pdf>

This may be updated during differing periods of closure

If our school is part of a cluster of schools which are open we will share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Teacher and/or Principal. In accordance with our Child Protection procedures this information will be shared on a need to know basis.

In any event, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

**How a child can raise a concern**.

We know that while many children will be enjoying their time at home and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school.

Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children as well as signpost families to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our parents and young children :

* Respond to emails via the c2k email addresses only
* Respond to messages via seesaw
* Follow up with a phone call if appropriate and ask to speak to their child

Other Agencies

* NSPCC Childline
* CEOP
* Safer Schools App
* parentni
* Familysupportni

Further links regularly updated on website

**SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:** –

* + - <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
    - <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
    - <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
    - <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
    - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

**Monitoring and review**

The Safeguarding team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the period of Covid-19 school closure in line with Departmental guidance and advice.

**Links with other Policies**

Child Protection Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Health & Safety Policy

Ratified in October 2020.

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| --- | --- |
| SIGNED:  Claire Le Mahieu | Designated Teacher |
| SIGNED:  Claire Le Mahieu | Principal |
| SIGNED:  Mrs Ellen Farren | Chair of Board of Governors |
| DATE:  October 2020 | |