



**COVID-19 school closure arrangements for
Safeguarding and Child Protection at Hillcrest
School**

School Name: Hillcrest School

Date of policy: April 2020

Date shared with staff: April 2020

Date of Review: May 2020

Section 1 - Context

From 23rd March 2020 parents/carers 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 addendum of our Safeguarding, and Child Protection policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements.

Section 2 - Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Leader	Steven Connor-Hemming	07538245067	safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Julie Penn (SENDSCO)	07538245067	safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Mary Bunce (Looked After Child Co-ordinator)	07538245067	safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Yvette Preston	07538245067	safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Headteacher	Julie Davies	07538245067	jdavies@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Chair of Governors / Safeguarding Governor	Dee McIlmurray	07538245067	dmcllmurray@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Oaks Well-Being Co-ordinator	Danielle Haslam	N/A	danielle@circlewellbeingservices.co.uk

The Designated Safeguarding Leader will be available to contact on the telephone number above during school hours (8.30am-4.00pm Monday-Friday).

Section 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 by the DSL/SENDSCO, 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.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leaders, 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.

Hillcrest 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 is Steven Connor-Hemming (DSL).** However, if the DSL is not available at any stage, parents/carers and agencies can contact any member of the safeguarding team at safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social or family support worker will attend an education setting, where possible, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them or others at risk. This provision may be at Hillcrest School or pupils may be asked to attend another Oaks hub or alternative local school.

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 Hillcrest School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, Hillcrest School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England. If all parties involved agree it is not appropriate for a vulnerable child to attend any form of educational setting, it will be agreed that the child will work remotely at home and a member of the safeguarding team will contact the parent/carer twice each week and speak to the pupil on each occasion to monitor their well-being and academic progress (see section 10).

Hillcrest School may decide it is not appropriate to open the school to pupils due to staffing shortages. In this event, the school will explore opportunities for vulnerable and children of frontline workers to attend another Oaks hub or alternative local school. Under these circumstances, the Designated Safeguarding Leader (and deputies) will contact the parent/carer and relevant support worker to confirm arrangements and agree plans to ensure the child can get to and from the designated school each day.

If Hillcrest School are unable to provide education at school or another Oaks hub/local school, the Designated Safeguarding Leader (and deputies) will contact the parent/carer and relevant support worker to explain the reasons behind this decision and agree appropriate monitoring provision with the social or family support worker, as outlined in section 10 of this policy. Appropriate work will be set for the pupil remotely on Show My Homework.

Section 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. Hillcrest School and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether any vulnerable children should be attending school.

Hillcrest School will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. Hillcrest 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, Hillcrest 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, Hillcrest School will notify their social worker.

Section 5 - Designated Safeguarding Leader

If the Hillcrest School site is open to pupils, we will endeavour to ensure 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 email.

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 (CPOMS), 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 school.

If the school is open, staff on site will be made aware of safeguarding provision and how to contact team members for advice. The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

All staff have access to the DSL (or deputy) when working remotely from home. Staff will set work for pupils on Show My Homework. They will not have any contact with pupils through email, phone or any form of Apps. Pupils will be allowed to send messages to their teachers through Show My Homework if they find any aspect of the work set difficult. Staff will follow standard safeguarding procedures on CPOMS if this communication indicates any potential safeguarding concerns and a member of the safeguarding team will follow up the concern and take appropriate action. The same principles apply if a pupil sends an email to a member of staff whilst working from home. Staff are not encouraged to communicate with a pupil through email and should refer their concerns to a member of the safeguarding team immediately.

Section 6 - Reporting a concern

As above, 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 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 at safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk

This will ensure that the concern is received. Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay. The safeguarding team will follow standard safeguarding guidance to make a decision on the most appropriate course of action, including referrals, as required.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern immediately to the headteacher. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the headteacher whilst away from school, this should be done verbally (where possible) and followed up with an email to the headteacher.

Concerns around the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors: Dee McIlmurray.

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

Section 7 - 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 or volunteers are recruited, Hillcrest School will ensure they receive appropriate on-line safeguarding training as part of their 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, as well as receiving on-line safeguarding training, they will be given a copy of our Child Protection policy, confirmation of local processes and DSL arrangements.

Section 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, Hillcrest 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.

When we are 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.

Hillcrest 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.

Hillcrest 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 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 or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, Hillcrest School will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 148 to 156 in KCSIE.

Section 9 - Online safety

Hillcrest 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 or at another local school, appropriate supervision and monitoring will be in place.

Children and online safety away from school and college

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. Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the Hillcrest School staff code of conduct and Child Protection policy.

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

Below are some things to consider when delivering any form of virtual lessons;

- No 1:1s, groups only
- 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 bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- Any on-line class lesson should be pre-recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by Hillcrest School to communicate with pupils (Show My Homework)

Section 10 - Supporting children not in school

Hillcrest School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its children and young people. Information has been added to the school website about how children and parents/carers can contact the safeguarding team if they have any concerns during this period.

The school website also contains guidance on various on-line support they can access during this time, i.e. – The Waiting Room, Forward Thinking Birmingham, PAUSE, Anna Freud Centre. Barnardo's, ChildLine, Spurgeons. Guidance will be sent to all parents/carers through ParentMail and members of the safeguarding team will email or phone specific parents/carers with links to sources of support as required (i.e. – Local Food Banks/Housing support)

Prior to the government's decision to close schools, the safeguarding team at Hillcrest School identified our most vulnerable children and devised a support plan for each pupil. All social

workers and family support workers were contacted during wb 16th March 2020 and notified of methods of communication with the safeguarding team after 20th March 2020. All contact details of social/family support workers, and other key agencies involved, were added to a centralised contact list that is accessible to all members of the safeguarding team. This list will be reviewed and updated on a weekly basis. Details of all contact with key support workers have been recorded on CPOMS from 23rd March onwards.

During the wb 16th March 2020, the safeguarding team contacted the parents/carers of all vulnerable pupils to check contact details and those of second/third contacts. Any changes to contact details were recorded on Progresso and parents/carers were advised to contact the safeguarding team via the school safeguarding email address during the period of closure if they required any additional or specific support.

As outlined in BCC guidance, the safeguarding team will endeavour to follow the guidance below:

Children on a Child Protection Plan

- Telephone contact will be made by a member of the safeguarding team twice a week. During these conversations, the child should be spoken to.
- Any concerns raised during these conversations, will be referred immediately to the allocated social worker
- If there is the need for a home visit, the DSL (or deputy) will contact the Social Worker and agree plans to visit the family home, if deemed necessary to do so.
- Where possible, children should be seen weekly by a professional. This can be at a safe distance on the doorstep but only where a risk assessment has been completed in line with most up to date Public Health guidelines.
- Where families are self-isolating due to illness and direct contact is not possible, sight of the child through a window may be necessary.

Children on a Child in Need Plan

- Telephone contact will be made by a member of the safeguarding team twice a week. During these conversations, the child should be spoken to where appropriate.
- Any concerns raised during these conversations, will be referred immediately to the allocated social worker
- If there is the need for a home visit, the DSL (or deputy) will contact the Social Worker and agree plans to visit the family home, if deemed necessary to do so.
- Where necessary or possible, children should be seen weekly by a professional. This can be at a safe distance on the doorstep but only where a risk assessment has been completed in line with most up to date Public Health guidelines.
- Where families are self-isolating due to illness and direct contact is not possible, sight of the child through a window may be necessary.

Children with a Family Support Worker

- Telephone contact will be made by a member of the safeguarding team twice a week. During these conversations, the child be spoken to where appropriate.
- Any concerns raised during these conversations, will be referred immediately to the allocated family support worker
- If there is the need for a home visit, the DSL (or deputy) will contact the Family Support Worker and agree plans to visit the family home, if deemed necessary to do so.
- Where possible, children should be seen weekly by a professional. This can be at a safe distance on the doorstep but only where a risk assessment has been completed in line with most up to date Public Health guidelines.

- Where families are self-isolating due to illness and direct contact is not possible, sight of the child through a window may be necessary.

Vulnerable Children without a Social Worker/Family Support Worker

- It is advised that families are contacted by telephone once a week and the pupil spoken to where appropriate to do so.
- If any concerns are identified the safeguarding team will discuss any appropriate follow up actions. This may involve increased telephone monitoring or a member of the safeguarding team visiting the family home if the family **are not** being required to self-isolate through illness.
- Where families **are** self-isolating due to illness and direct contact is not possible, conversation with the parent/carer and sight of the child through a window may be necessary.
- The safeguarding team will decide on the most appropriate course of action as a result of this communication, i.e. – direction to appropriate on-line support agencies, signposting to Food Banks, referral to police, Early Help assessment, referral to Children’s Social Care, etc

We would advise that staff use school phones but appreciate that this may not always be possible. If staff need to use their mobile phones they should turn off “show my caller ID” in the phone setting of your smart phone so that your number is protected. Alternatively, they should can 141 in front of the pupil number, and this will withhold your home number if calling from a landline.

In addition, the school will ask our Educational Welfare Officers to support the safeguarding team in trying to make contact with vulnerable families and undertake home visits if we are unable to make contact at least once a week with any of our vulnerable families. The Educational Welfare Officers will follow the Public Health guidance outlined above.

All children

Hillcrest 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 their parents/carers. Teachers need to be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils’ work where they are at home. If a member of staff reports a concern about a pupil’s emotional well-being or physical safety, the safeguarding team will follow standard safeguarding procedures and the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

Section 11 - Supporting children in school

Hillcrest is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its students.

We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish (this may be at Hillcrest school or another Oaks hub / alternative local school). The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

If any pupil attends a hub / alternative local school to access their education, the Headteacher will ensure relevant information is shared with the hub school about the pupil in advance (i.e. – parent contact details, health information and any medication required, FSM information, appropriate safeguarding information and contact details of support workers/DSL at Hillcrest, etc). The Headteacher will ensure appropriate staff from Hillcrest school attends/visits the hub/alternative local school to support and monitor the pupil.

Whether a pupil accesses their education at Hillcrest or an Oaks hub / alternative local school, we 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.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, appropriate support is in place for them. This will be individual to each child and recorded on CPOMS.

Where the Headteacher has concerns about the impact of staff absence on the ability of the school to provide access to education on site or at a hub/alternative local school – such as our Designated Safeguarding Leader, other members of the leadership or pastoral teams, first-aider – the Headteacher will discuss concerns with Chair of Governors to agree the most appropriate course of action to best meet the needs of vulnerable or children of critical workers. Under these circumstances the Headteacher may explore provision in part of the city.

Section 12 - Peer on Peer Abuse

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

If we receive a report of peer on peer abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within our Child Protection and Anti-Bullying policies. The 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 must be recorded on CPOMS and appropriate referrals made.

Section 13 – Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being

Our Emotional Well-Being Co-ordinator, Danielle Haslam, will continue to monitor pupils she is working with and maintain weekly telephone contact with pupils and their families. She will also continue to do this for any pupils she has worked with during the academic year.

Danielle will continue to provide the school link to Forward Thinking Birmingham during this time and will participate in any multi-agency meetings via telephone and video links. In addition, Danielle will provide the safeguarding team with advice and guidance if the team have any concerns about the emotional well-being of any pupil during this time.

Guidance will be sent to pupils through Show My Homework and parents/carers through ParentMail about on-line and local support that can be accessed to support mental health and emotional well-being.

Prior to the government's decision to close schools from 23rd March onwards, meetings were held with targeted pupils to put appropriate risk assessments and support plans in place. This information was communicated with parents/carers and any relevant agencies involved.